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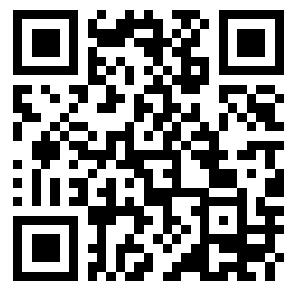

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AN

ENTIRE COLLECTION

OF

MATTHEW HENRY'S WORKS,

IN

SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

CONTAINING

THE MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS;

viz.

THE LIFE OF HIS FATHER,

SERMONS, TRACTS, BIOGRAPHY OF EMINENT CHRISTIANS,

&c. &c.

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THE

Miscellaneous

WRITINGS

OF

MATTHEW HENRY,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL:

A NEW EDITION,

COMPLETE,

IN ONE VOLUME:

CONSISTING OF

THE LIFE OF HIS FATHER,

SERMONS, TRACTS,

AND BIOGRAPHY OF EMINENT CHRISTIANS.

TOGETHER WITH

THE SERMON ON THE AUTHOR'S DEATH

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM TONG.

VOL. VII.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SAMUEL BAGSTER, IN THE STRAND.

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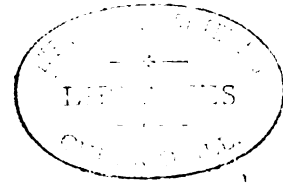

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

OF THE

REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY;

CONSISTING OF

THE LIFE OF HIS FATHER,

SERMONS, TRACTS,

AND

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF EMINENT CHRISTIANS AND MINISTERS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE SERMON PREACHED ON THE AUTHOR'S DEATH,

BY THE

REV. W. TONG.

THIS VOLUME, UNITED WITH THE EXPOSITION ON THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, COMPLETES THE AUTHOR'S WORKS.

London:
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THE PUBLISHERS
TO THE
READER;
ANNEXED TO THE FOLIO EDITION 1726.

THE Character of the late Reverend Mr. MATTHEW HENRY being so well recommended to the World, by the worth and excellency of his Writings, as well as fully established by the great approbation with which they have been received, renders it altogether unnecessary to say any thing here concerning him, by way of *Encomium*. All that is hereby designed, being only to inform the Reader, that this Volume contains all the several Treatises and small Tracts that were ever published by Mr. HENRY, however scarce divers of them were become, and difficult to be procured; and, if timely care had not been taken to preserve by this Collection, Posterity might have suffered the entire loss of them. But now all his minor performances, by being printed, are effectually secured for the benefit of succeeding generations, and being added to his other Volumes, will make both a commodious and complete collection of his *whole Works*; and the detached form of this Volume will be no less agreeable to those who are desirous of having it without the others. As for its coming out no sooner, many things might be alledged, but it shall be sufficient to say, that it has been retarded by some unforeseen incidents, as well as divers of those obstructions, which too commonly attend Publications of this nature.

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AN

ACCOUNT,

BY THE

Rev. MATTHEW HENRY,

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH OF HIS FATHER,

MR. PHILIP HENRY,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, NEAR WHITCHURCH, IN SHROPSHIRE;

Who died June the 24th, 1696, in the 65th Year of his Age.

TO HIS MUCH HONOURED FRIEND, SIR HENRY ASHURST, BART.

SIR,

THE ministers of the Gospel are, in scripture-language, *stars in the right-hand of Christ*; to signify their diffusive light, and beneficial influences. As, in the future state of the resurrection, *some stars shall differ from others in glory*; so, in the present state of the regeneration, some ministers are distinguished from others, by a brighter eminence in their endowments, and a more powerful emanation of light in their preaching. Of this select number was Mr. PHILIP HENRY; in whom there was a union of those real excellencies of parts, learning, and divine graces, that signalized him among his brethren. This does evidently appear in the narrative of his life, drawn by one very fit to do it: as having had entire knowledge of him, by long and intimate conversation; and having, by his holy instructions, and the impression of his example, been made partaker of the same sanctifying Spirit. To describe the external actions of saints, without observing the holy principles and affections whence they derived their life and purity, is to give a defective and irregular representation of them. It is as if an account were given of the riches and fecundity of the earth, from the flowers and fruits that grow upon it, without considering the mines of precious metals contained in its bosom. Now only an *inward* christian, who has felt the power of religion in his heart, can, from the reflection upon himself, and his uncounterfeit experience, discover the operations of grace in the breasts of others.

Mr. HENRY was dedicated to the service of Christ by his mother, in his tender age. His first love and desires (when he was capable of making a judicious choice) were set upon God. He entered early into the ministry, and consecrated all the powers of his soul, understanding, memory, will, and affections, with his time and strength, to the service of Christ. And such were the grace and favour of God to him, that he lost no days in his flourishing age, by satisfying the voluptuous appetites; nor in his declining age, by diseases and infirmities, but incessantly applied himself to his spiritual work. He was called to a retired place in Wales; but his shining worth could not be shaded in a corner; a confluence of people from other parts attended on his ministry. Indeed the word of truth, which dies in the mouths of the cold and careless, (for they are not all saints that serve in the sanctuary,) had life and spirit in his preaching; for it proceeded from a heart burning with zeal for the honour of Christ and salvation of souls. Accordingly, he suited his discourses to the wise and the weak; and imitated the prophet, who contracted his stature to the dead body of the widow's son, applying his mouth to the mouth of the child, to inspire the breath of life into him. The poor and despised were instructed by him, with the same compassionate love and diligence as the rich, notwithstanding the civil distinction of persons, which will shortly vanish for ever; for he considered that their souls were of the same precious and immortal value. In the administration of the Lord's Supper, he expressed the just temperament of sweetness and severity: with melting compassion he invited all relenting and returning sinners to come to Christ,

and

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and receive their pardon sealed with His blood; but he was so jealous of the honour of Christ, that he deterred, by the most fearful consequences, the rebellious that indulged their lusts, from coming to partake of the feast of the unspotted Lamb. He was not allured by temporal advantage, (which is the mark of a mercenary,) to leave the first place, where, by the Divine Disposal he was seated.

When the fatal *Bartholomew-Day* came, though he had fair hopes of preferment, by his attendance upon the king and duke of York, in their early age, of which the remembrance might have been revived; yet he was guided by a superior spirit, and imitated the self-denial of *Moses*, (a duty little understood, and less practised, by the earthly-minded,) *rather choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the good things of this world.* As the light of heaven, when the air is stormy and disturbed, does not lose the rectitude of its rays; so his enlightened conscience did not bend in compliance with the terms of conformity, but he obeyed its sincere judgment.

After his being expelled from the place of his public ministry, his deportment was becoming a son of peace. He refused not communion with the church of England, in the ordinances of the gospel, so far as his conscience permitted. Yet he could not desert the duty of his office, to which he was, with sacred solemnity, set apart. He was faithful to improve opportunities for serving the interest of souls, notwithstanding the severities inflicted on him. And after the restoration of our liberty to preach, he continued in the performance of his delightful work, till death put a period to his labours.

After this account of him as a minister of Christ, I will glance at his demeanour as a christian. His conversation was so holy and regular, so free from taint, that he was unaccusable by his enemies: his only crime, even they being judges, was, his nonconformity. But his vigilant and tender conscience discovered the spots of sin in himself, which so affected his soul, that he desired repentance might accompany him to the gate of heaven: an excellent testimony of humility, the inseparable characteristic of a saint. His love to God was supreme; which was declared by his chosen hours of communion with him every day. The union of affections is naturally productive of union in conversation. Accordingly, our Saviour promises, *He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.* And he repeats the promise, *If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him.* To his special and singular love to God, was joined an universal love to men. He did good to all, according to his ability. His readiness to forgive injuries, that rare and difficult duty, was eminently conspicuous in the sharpest provocations. When he could not excuse the offence, he would pardon the offender, and strive to imitate the perfect model of charity expressed in our suffering Saviour, who, in the extremity of his sufferings, when resentments are most quick and sensible, prayed for his cruel persecutors. His filial trust in God was correspondent to God's fatherly providence to him: this was his support in times of trial, this maintained an equal temper in his mind, and tenor in his conversation. In short, he led a life of evangelical perfection, most worthy to be honourably preserved in the memory of future times. The following narrative of it, if read with due attention, how instructive and affecting will it be to ministers, how well calculated to transform them into his likeness!

Thus, Sir, I have given a short view of the life of that man for whom you had such a high veneration, and tender love. It argues a clearer spirit, and a diviner temper, than is usual in persons of conspicuous quality, (when holiness is so despicably mean in the esteem of carnal men,) to value it above all titles and treasures, and the perishing pride of this world. I am persuaded it will be very pleasing to you, that your name, and the excellent Mr. HENRY's, are joined in the same papers.

I am,

SIR,

Your very humble and faithful Servant,

WILLIAM BATES.

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PREFACE.

THAT which we aim at in this undertaking, and which we would set before us, at our entrance upon it, is, not so much to embalm the memory of this good man, (though that also is blessed,) as to exhibit to the world a pattern of that primitive Christianity, which all who knew him, observed to be exemplified in him, while he lived. They, seeing the end of his conversation, desired, or rather demanded, as with one consent, a public and lasting Account of it, as a just debt owing to the world, by those into whose hands his papers came; as judging such an account likely to conduce much to the glory of God's grace, and to the edification of many, especially of those that were acquainted with him. He was one whom the Divine Providence did not call out (as neither did his own inclination lead him) to any very public scene of action: he was none of the forward men of the age, that make themselves talked of: the world scarcely knew that there was such a man. But in his low and narrow sphere, he was a burning and shining light; and therefore we think his pious example is the more adapted to general use, especially as it consisted, not in the ecstasies and raptures of zeal and devotion, which are looked upon rather as admirable than imitable; but in the long series of an even, regular, prudent, and well-ordered, conversation, which he had in the world, and in the ordinary business of it, with simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. It has been said, that quiet and peaceable reigns, though they are the best to live in, yet they are the worst to write of, as yielding least variety of matter for the historian's pen: but a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty being the sum and substance of practical Christianity, the recommending of the example of such a life, in the common and familiar instances of it, together with the kind and gracious providences of God attending it, may be, if not as diverting to the curious, yet every whit as useful and instructive to the pious reader. If any suggest, that the design of this attempt is to credit and advance a party, let them know, that Mr. HENRY was a man of no party; but true Catholic Christianity (undebauched by bigotry, unleavened by any private opinions or interests) was his very temper and genius. According to the excellent and royal laws of this holy religion, his life was led with a strict and conscientious adherence to truth and equity; a great tenderness and inoffensiveness to all mankind; and a deep tincture of sincere piety and devotedness to God: according to those sacred rules, we shall endeavour, in justice to him, as well as to our readers, to represent him in the following *Account*; and if any thing should drop from our pen, which might justly give offence to any, (which we promise industriously to avoid,) we desire it may be looked upon as a false stroke; and, so far, not truly representing him, who was so blameless and harmless, and without rebuke. Much of our materials for this structure we derive from his own papers, (especially his *Diary*,) for, by them, his picture may be drawn nearest to the life; and thence we may take the truest idea of him, and of the spirit he was of. Those notes being intended for his own private use in the review, and never communicated to any person whatsoever, and appearing here (as they ought to do) in their own native dress, the candid reader will excuse it; if, sometimes, the expressions should seem abrupt; they are the genuine, unforced, and unstudied, breathings of a *gracious* soul, and, we hope, will be rather the more acceptable to those, who through grace are conscious to themselves of the same devout and pious motions; for as in water, face answers to face, so does one sanctified and renewed soul to another; and (as Mr. Baxter observes in his Preface to Mr. Clark's Lives) "God's graces are much the same in all his holy ones; and, therefore, we must not think that such instances as these, are extraordinary rarities: but God has, in wonderful mercy, raised up many, by whose graces even this earth is perfumed and enlightened." But if *one star* be allowed to *differ from another star in glory*, perhaps our reader will say, when he has gone through the following Account, that Mr. HENRY may be ranked among those of the first magnitude.

POSTSCRIPT ADDED IN THE THIRD EDITION.

THIS Account of the life and death of my honoured father, was first published the year after he died; and in a little time there was a second impression of it, in which many considerable errors of the first were amended: it having now been long out of print, and often inquired for, this third edition comes abroad at the request of many who have found this portraiture of a Nathaniel—an Israelite indeed, a genuine son of faithful Jacob that plain man dwelling in tents—very serviceable to themselves and others, both for direction, and quickening, and for encouragement, in the ways of God and godliness; for even, this way, as well as in conversation, *as iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.*

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Frequent mention being made in the narrative, of the comfort he had in all the branches of his family, whom with satisfaction he saw planted in families of their own, it may not be amiss here to mention the changes which the Divine Providence made among them, soon after the Lord had taken away our master from our head, who was a daily intercessor for us.

In the year 1697, (the year after my father died,) two of his four daughters died in Chester, of a malignant fever, within three weeks of each other: both excellent Christians; and one of them, by some papers of her writing, found after her death, appearing to have had such an experimental acquaintance with the principles, powers, and pleasures, of the spiritual and divine life, as Christians, more than double her years, rarely attain.

In the year 1699, two of his four sons-in-law died likewise in Chester, within four or five months of each other, both of them useful good men in their places, and blessings to their families. One of them was Dr. John Tylston, a physician,—like St. Luke, a beloved physician; some time of Trinity College, in Oxford. Though he died at thirty-five years of age, he was, for several years, very eminent, and of great repute in his profession. He was a universal scholar, had abundance of knowledge, and used it aright; he was also a very devout, serious, and conscientious, Christian, and one that made it his business to do good. Many excellent papers he also left behind him, full fraught with proofs both of his learning and piety. He was greatly and generally lamented, and his memory is, and will be, very precious in this city. Having this occasion, I cannot forbear (even at this distance of time) dropping some tears afresh over his dust, thus publicly; for he was to me as my own soul; and, upon every remembrance of him, I must still say, as I did then, what David said of Jonathan, *I am distressed for thee, my brother; very pleasant hast thou been unto me.*

It pleased God, graciously to prolong the life of my dear and honoured mother, almost eleven years after my father, very much to the comfort of all her relations; she continued, to the last, at her house at Broad-Oak, where she was born, a great example of wisdom, piety, and usefulness, and abounding in good works: I think I may say that in her sphere and capacity, she was not inferior to what my father was in his. She was very happy in a constant calmness and serenity of mind, not easily disturbed; which, as it was a singular gift of the Divine Grace, and an instance of her wisdom, so it contributed very much to her close and comfortable walking with God, and her doing good: she lived and died rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and in a pleasing expectation of the glory to be revealed. Dr. Benyon preached her funeral sermon in the meeting-place at Broad-Oak, not a year before I preached his at Shrewsbury, on Heb. 6, 12. *Be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* The first sermon I preached at Broad-Oak after that sad occasion, I transcribed for the benefit, not only of her children, but of her grand-children, of whom she had twenty-three following her to her grave. They have had it in MS. among them; and now, in compliance with the desire of many of my friends, I have added it to this edition of my father's life, and it is all I have thought fit to add to it.

I confess, I am not so solicitous as some perhaps may think I should be, to make an excuse, and to ask pardon, for troubling the world with the little affairs of my poor family, and with the indulgences of my natural affection to it; I design nothing by it, but (if it may be by the grace of God) to do good to plain people, like myself.

MAT. HENRY.

Chester, Feb. 27, 1712.

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LIFE AND DEATH
OF
MR. PHILIP HENRY.

CHAP. I.

From his Birth, to his Election to College.

HE was born at Whitehall, in Westminster, on Aug. 24, 1631, being Bartholomew-Day. I find, usually, in his diary, some pious remark or other upon the annual return of his birth-day. One year, he notes that the scripture mentions but two, who observed their birth day with feasting and joy, and they were neither of them copies to be written after; viz. Pharoah, Gen. 40. 20. and Herod, Mat. 14. 6. "But," says he, "I rather observe it as a day of mourning and humiliation, because shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin." And when he had completed the thirtieth year of his age, he noted this: "So old, and no older, Alexander was, when he had conquered the great world; but I have not yet subdued the little world—*myself*." When he had completed his thirty-third year, he made this humble reflection: "A long time lived to small purpose; What shall I do to redeem it?" And, at another, "I may mourn, as Cæsar did, when he reflected upon Alexander's early achievements—that others, younger than I am, have done much more than I have done for God, the God of my life." And, (to mention no more,) when he had lived forty-two years, he writes thus: "I would be loth to live it over again, lest, instead of making it better, I should make it worse; and, besides, every year and day spent on earth is lost in heaven." This last note reminds me of what I have heard him relate of a friend of his, who, being asked how old he was, answered, "On the wrong side of fifty;"—"Which," said Mr. Henry, "he should not have said; for, if he was going to heaven, it was the right side of fifty."

He always kept a Will by him ready made; and it was his custom yearly, upon the return of his birth-day, to review, and, if occasion were, to renew and alter it; for it is good to do that at a set time, which it is very good to do at some time. The *last* Will he made, bears date, "This 24th day of Aug. 1695, being the day of the year on which I was born, 1631, and also the day of the year on which, by law, I died; as did also near two thousand faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, 1662:" alluding to that clause in the *Act of Uniformity*, which disposes of the places and benefices of ministers not conforming, "as if they were naturally dead."

His father's name was John Henry, the son of Henry Williams, of Brittons Ferry, betwixt Neath and Swansea in Glamorganshire. According to the old Welch custom, (some say conformable to that of the ancient Hebrews, but now almost in all places laid aside,) the father's christian-name was the son's surname. He had left his native country and his father's house, very young, unprovided for by his relations; but it pleased God to bless his ingenuity and industry, with a considerable income afterwards, which enabled him to live comfortably himself, to bring up his children well, and to be kind to many of his relations. Public events making against him in the latter part of his life, he left little behind him for his children, but God graciously took care of them. Providence brought this Mr. John Henry, when he was young, to be the earl of Pembroke's gentleman, whom he served many years. The earl, coming to be lord-chamberlain, preferred him to be the king's servant. He was first made keeper of the orchard at Whitehall; and afterwards page-of-the back-stairs to the king's second son, James duke of York, which place obliged him to a personal attendance upon the duke in his chamber. He lived and died a courtier; a hearty mourner for his royal master, king Charles the First, whom he did not long survive. He continued, during all the war-time, in his house at Whitehall, though the profits of his places ceased. The king, passing by his door, under a guard, to take water to Westminster, when he was going to that which they called his trial, inquired for his *old servant*, Mr. John Henry, who was ready to pay his due respects to him, and prayed God to "Bless his majesty, and to deliver him out of the hands of his enemies;" for which the guard had like to have been rough upon him.

His mother was Mrs. Magdalen Rochdale, of the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, in Westminster. She was a virtuous, pious, gentlewoman, and one that feared God above many. She was altogether dead to the vanities and pleasures of the court, though she lived in the midst of them. She looked well to the ways of her household; prayed with them daily; catechized her children, and taught them the good knowledge of the Lord betimes. My father often spoke of his learning *Mr. Perkins's Six Principles*, when he was very young; and he often mentioned, with thankfulness to God, his great happiness in having such a mother, who was to him as Lois and Eunice were to Timothy,—acquainting him with the scriptures from his childhood; and there appearing

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appearing in him early inclinations both to learning and piety, she devoted him, in his tender years, to the service of God, in the work of the ministry. She died of a consumption, Mar. 6, 1645, leaving behind this her only son and five daughters. A little before she died, she said to those around, " My head is in heaven, and my heart is in heaven; it is but one step more, and I shall be there too."

His susceptors in baptism were Philip earl of Pembroke, (who gave him his name, and was kind to him as long as he lived, as was also his son Philip after him,) James earl of Carlisle, and the countess of Salisbury.

Prince Charles and the duke of York being somewhat near of an age to him, he was, in his childhood, very much an attendant upon them in their play; they were often with him at his father's house, and were wont to tell him what preferment he should have at court, as soon as he was fit for it. He kept a book to his dying day, which the duke of York gave him; and I have heard him bewail the loss of two curious pictures, which the duke gave him likewise. Abp. Laud took a particular kindness to him, when he was a child, because he would be very officious to attend at the Water-gate, which was part of his father's charge in Whitehall, to let the Archbishop through when he came late from council, to cross the water to Lambeth.

These circumstances of his childhood he would sometimes speak of among his friends; not as glorying in them, but taking occasion thence to bless God for his deliverance from the snares of the court; in the midst of which it is so very hard to maintain a good conscience and the power of religion, that it has been said, though, blessed be God, it is not a rule without exception, *Exeat ex aulâ qui velit esse pius—Piety cannot breathe in a court.* The breaking up and scattering of the court, by the calamities of 1641, as it dashed the expectations of his court-preferments, so it prevented the danger of court-entanglements. And though it was not, like Moses's, a choice of his own, when *come to years,* to quit the court; yet, when he was come to years, he always expressed a great satisfaction in his removal from it; and blessed God, who chose his inheritance so much better for him.

Yet it may not be improper to observe here, what was obvious, (as well as amiable,) to all who conversed with him, viz. that he had the most sweet and obliging air of courtesy and civility that could be; which some attributed, in part, to his early education at court. His mien and carriage were always so very decent and respectful, that they could not but win the hearts of all he had to do with. Never was any man further from that rudeness and moroseness which some scholars, and too many that profess religion, either wilfully affect, or carelessly allow themselves in, sometimes to the reproach of their profession. It is one of the laws of our holy religion, exemplified in the conversation of this good man, to *honour all men.* Sanctified civility is a great ornament to christianity. It was a saying he often used, " Religion does not destroy good manners;" and, yet, he was very far from any thing of vanity in his apparel, or formality of compliment in address; but his conversation was all natural and easy, to himself and others, nothing appearing in him, which even a severe critic could justly call affected. This temper of his, tended very much to the adorning of the doctrine of God our Saviour; and the general transcript of such an excellent copy, would do much towards the healing of those wounds, which religion has received in the *house of her friends,* by the contrary. But to return to his story.——

The first Latin school he went to, was at St. Martin's church, under the teaching of Mr. Bonner. Afterwards, he was removed to Battersea, where Mr. Wells was his school-master. The grateful mention, which, in some of his papers, he makes of these guides and instructors of his childhood and youth, brings to mind the French proverb to this purport; " To father, teacher, and God all-sufficient, none can render an equivalent."

In 1643, when he was about twelve years old, he was admitted into Westminster school, in the fourth form, under Mr. Thomas Vincent, then usher, whom he would often speak of, as a most able, diligent, school-master; one who grieved so much at the dulness and non-proficiency of any of his scholars, that, falling into a consumption, I have heard Mr. Henry say, that he even " killed himself with false Latin."

Awhile after, he was taken into the upper-school, under Mr. Richard Busby, afterwards Dr. Busby: and in Oct. 1645, he was admitted king's scholar, and was first of the election, partly by his own merit, and partly by the interest of the earl of Pembroke.

Here he profited greatly in school-learning, and all his days retained those improvements with surprising exactness. When he was in years, he would readily, in discourse, quote passages out of the classic authors that were not common, and had them, *ad unguem—at his fingers' ends;* yet he rarely used any such things in his preaching, though sometimes, if very apposite, he inserted them in his notes. He was very ready and exact in the Greek accents, the quantities of words, and all the various kinds of Latin verse; and often pressed it upon young scholars, in the midst of their university-learning not to forget their school-authors.

Here (and before) his usual recreations at vacant times were, either reading the printed accounts of public occurrences, or attending the courts at Westminster-Hall, to hear the trials and arguments there; which I have heard him say, he has often done, to the loss of his dinner, and oftener of his play.

But *paulo majora canamus—our subject rises in importance.* Soon after those unhappy wars began, there was a daily morning-lecture set up at the Abbey-church, between six and eight o'clock, and preached by seven worthy members of the Assembly of Divines, in course, viz. Mr. Marshal, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Herle, Dr. Staunton, Mr. Nye, Mr. Whitaker, and Mr. Hill. It was the request of his pious mother to Mr. Busby, that her son might attend that lecture daily, which he allowed; not abating, however, any thing of his school-exercise, in which

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which he kept pace with the rest, but merely dispensing with his absence for that hour. The Lord was pleased to make good impressions on his soul, by the sermons he heard there. His mother also took him with her, every Thursday, to Mr. Case's lecture at St. Martin's. On the Lord's Day, he sat under the powerful ministry of Mr. Stephen Marshal; in the morning, at New-Chapel,—in the afternoon, at St. Margaret's Westminster, which was their parish-church. In the former place, Mr. Marshal preached, a course of sermons, from Ph. 2. 5, 6, &c. In the latter, from Joh. 8. 36. of our freedom by Christ. This minister and this ministry, he would, to his last, speak of with great respect and thankfulness to God, as that by which he was, through Grace, in the beginning of his days, *begotten again to a lively hope.* I have heard him repeat the saying of some wise men at that time, "That if all the Presbyterians had been like Mr. Stephen Marshal, and all the Independents like Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, and all the episcopal men like Abp. Usher, the breaches of the church would soon have been healed." He also attended constantly upon the monthly fasts at St. Margaret's, where the best and ablest ministers of England preached before the then House of Commons; and the service of the day was carried on with great strictness and solemnity, from eight in the morning till four in the evening. It was his constant practice, from eleven or twelve years old, to write, as he could, all the sermons he heard, which he kept very carefully, transcribing many in a fair hand, and, notwithstanding his many removes, they are yet preserved.

At these monthly fasts, (as he himself has recorded, he had often sweet meltings of soul, in prayer, and confession of sin, particularly once, he specially remarks, when Mr. W. Bridge, of Yarmouth, prayed,) many warm and lively truths came home to his heart, and he daily increased in that wisdom and knowledge which are unto salvation. Read his reflections upon this, which he wrote many years after; "If ever any child, such as I then was, between the tenth and fifteenth years of my age, enjoyed line upon line, precept upon precept, I did. And was it in vain? I trust not altogether in vain. My soul rejoices and is glad at the remembrance of it; the word distilled as the dew, and dropt as the rain; I loved it, and loved the messengers of it, their very feet were beautiful to me. And, Lord! what a mercy was it, that at a time when the poor country parts were laid waste, when the noise of drums and trumpets, and the clattering of arms, were heard there, and the ways to Sion mourned, that then my lot should be where there was quietness; where the voice of the turtle was heard, and there was great plenty of gospel-opportunities! *Bless the Lord, O my soul! As long as I live, I will bless the Lord; I will praise my God while I have my being.* Had it been only the restraint that it laid upon me, whereby I was kept from the common sins of other children and youths; such as cursing, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and the like; I were bound to be very thankful: but, that it prevailed, through grace, effectually to bring me to God, how much am I indebted, and what shall I render!"

Thus you see, how the dews of heaven softened his heart by degrees. From these early experiences of his own,

1. He would blame those who laid so much stress on people's knowing the exact time of their conversion, which he thought was, with many, impossible. Who can so soon be aware of the day-break, or of the springing up of the seed sown? The work of grace is better known in its effects than in its causes.

He would sometimes illustrate this by that saying of the blind man to the pharisees, who were so critical in examining the recovery of his sight: This and the other I know not concerning it, but, *this one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;* Joh. 9. 25.

2. He would bear his testimony to the comfort and benefit of early piety, and recommend it to all young people, as a good thing to bear the yoke of the Lord Jesus in youth. He would often witness against that wicked proverb, *A young saint, an old devil,* and would have it said rather, *A young saint, an old angel.*

He observed it, concerning Obadiah, (and he was a courtier,) that he *feared the Lord from his youth,* 1 Kin. 18. 12. and it is said of him, *v.* 3, that he *feared the Lord greatly.* Those that would come to fear the Lord greatly, must learn to fear him from their youth. No man did his duty so naturally as Timothy did, (Phil. 2. 20.) who from a child knew the holy scriptures. He would sometimes apply to this subject that common saying, "He that would thrive, must rise at five." In dealing with young people, how earnestly would he press this upon them—"I tell you, that you cannot begin too soon to be religious, but you may put it off too long." Manna must be gathered early, and he that is the first, must have the first. He often inculcated Eccl. 12. 1. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth;* or, as in the original, *the days of thy choice:* thy choice days, and thy choosing days.

I remember a passage of his in a lecture-sermon, in 1674, which much affected many; he was preaching on that text, Mat. 11. 30. *My yoke is easy;* and after many things insisted upon, to prove the yoke of Christ an easy yoke, he, at last appealed, to the experiences of all who had drawn in that yoke. "Call now, if there be any that will answer you; and to which of the saints will you turn? Turn to which you will, and they will all agree that they have found wisdom's ways pleasantness, and Christ's commandments not grievous. I will here witness for one, who, through Grace, has, in some poor measure, been drawing in this yoke, now above thirty years, and I have found it an easy yoke, and like my choice too well to change."

3. He would also recommend it to the care of parents, to bring their children betimes to public ordinances. He would say, that they are capable, sooner than we are aware, of receiving good by them. The Scripture takes notice, more than once, of the little ones in the solemn assemblies of the Faithful, Deu. 29. 11. Ezr. 10. 1. Acts 21. 5. If we lay our children by the pool-side, who knows but the Blessed Spirit may help them in, and heal them? He used to apply that scrip-

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ture to this, Cant. 1. 8. Those that would have communion with Christ, must not only go forth by the footsteps of the flock themselves, but feed their kids too, their children or other young ones that are under their charge, beside the shepherds' tents.

4. He would also recommend to young people the practice of writing sermons. He himself not only did it when he was young, but continued it constantly, till within a few years before he died, when the decay of his sight obliging him to the use of spectacles, made writing not so ready to him as it had been. He never wrote short-hand, but had an excellent art of taking the substance of a sermon in a very plain and legible hand, and with a great deal of ease. And the sermons he wrote he kept by him, in such method and order, that by the help of indexes, which he made to them, he could readily turn almost to any sermon that ever he heard, where he noted the preacher, place, and time: this he called "Hearing for the time to come." He recommended this practice to others, as a means to engage their attention in hearing, and to prevent drowsiness, and to help their memories after hearing, when they come either to meditate upon what they have heard themselves, or to communicate it to others; and many have had reason to bless God for his advice and instruction herein. He would advise people sometimes to look over the sermon-notes that they had written, as a ready way to revive the good impressions of the truths they had heard, and would blame those who made waste-paper of them; "For," says he, "the day is coming when you will either thank God for them, or heartily wish you had never written them."

But it is time we return to Westminster-School, where, having begun to learn Christ, we left him in the successful pursuit of other learning, under the eye and care of that great master, Dr. Busby, who, on the account of his talents, and diligence, took a particular kindness to him, called him his child, and would sometimes tell him he should be his heir; and there was no love lost betwixt them. Dr. Busby was noted as a very severe schoolmaster, especially in the beginning of his time. But Mr. Henry would say, sometimes, that as in so great a school, there was need of a strict discipline, so for, his own part, of the four years he was in the school, he never felt the weight of his hand but once; "And then," says he, in some of the remarks of his youth, which he wrote long after, "I deserved it." For, being monitor of the chamber, and, according to the duty of his place, being sent out to seek one that played truant; he found him, and, at his earnest request, promised to make an excuse for him, and to say, he could not find him; "Which," says he, in a penitential reflection upon it afterwards, "I *wickedly* did." Next morning, the truant coming under examination, and being asked whether he saw the monitor, said, "Yes, I did;" at which Dr. Busby was much surprised, and turned his eye upon the monitor, with these words, Καὶ συ, τεκνον!—*What thou, my son!* and, having given him correction, appointed him to make a penitential copy of Latin verses; which when he brought, he gave him sixpence, and received him into his favour again.

Among the mercies of God to him in his youth—and he would say it were well if parents would keep an account of those for their children, till they come to be capable of doing it for themselves, and then to set them upon the doing of it—he has recorded a remarkable deliverance he had at Westminster-school, which was this: it was customary there, among the studious boys, for one or two, or more, to sit up the former part of the night at study, and when they went to bed, about midnight, to call others; and they, others, at two or three o'clock, as they desired. His request was, to be called at twelve; being awakened, he desired his candle might be lighted, which stuck to the bed's-head; but he dropped asleep again, and the candle fell, and burnt part of the bed and bolster, before he awaked; through God's good providence, however, seasonable help came in, the fire was soon quenched, and he received no harm. This gave him occasion, long after, to say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed."

When he was at Westminster-School, he was employed by Dr. Busby—as some others of the most ingenious and industrious of his scholars were, in their reading of the Greek authors—to collect, by his direction, some materials for that excellent Greek Grammar, which the Doctor afterwards published.

But be the school never so agreeable, youth is desirous to commence man by a removal from it: this step he took in the sixteenth year of his age. It was the ancient custom of Westminster-School, that all the king's scholars who stood candidates for an election to the University, were to receive the Lord's Supper the Easter before, which he did with the rest, in St. Margaret's-church, at Easter, 1647; and he would often speak of the great pains which Dr. Busby took with his scholars, who were to approach to that solemn ordinance, for several weeks before, at stated times; with what skill and seriousness of application, and manifest concern for their souls, he opened to them the nature of the ordinance, and of the work they had to do in it; and instructed them what was to be done in preparation for it; and this he made a business of, appointing them their religious, instead of their literary exercises. What success this had, through the grace of God, upon young Mr. Henry, (for whom the Doctor had a particular regard,) read from his own hand. "There had been treaties, before, between my soul and Jesus Christ, with some weak overtures towards him; but then, then, I think it was that the match was made, the knot tied: then I set myself, in the strength of divine grace, about the great work of self-examination, in order to repentance; and then I repented; that is, solemnly and seriously, with some poor meltings of soul, I confessed my sins before God, original and actual, judging and condemning myself for them, and casting away from me all my transgressions, receiving Christ Jesus the Lord, *as the Lord my righteousness*, and devoting and dedicating my whole self absolutely and unreservedly to his fear and service. After which,

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which, coming to the ordinance, *there, there* I received Him indeed, and he became *mine,* I say, *mine!* Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

Dr. Busby's agency, under God, in this blessed work, he makes a very grateful mention of, in divers of his papers: "The Lord recompense it," says he, "a thousand fold, into his bosom."

I have heard him tell, how much he surprised the doctor, the first time he waited upon him after he was turned out by the act of uniformity: for, when the Doctor asked him, "Pry'thee, child, what made thee a nonconformist?" "Truly, Sir," said Mr. Henry, "you made me one; for you taught me those things that hindered me from conforming.'

"Encouraged by this experience, I have myself," says he, in one of his papers, "taken like pains with divers others, at their first admission to the Lord's table; and have, through grace, seen the comfortable fruits of it, both in mine own children and others. To God be glory."

Mr. Jeremy Dyke's book *of the sacrament,* I have heard him say, was of great use to him at that time, in his preparation for that ordinance.

Thus was this great concern happily settled, before he was launched out into the world, which, through grace, he had, all his days, more or less the comfort of, in an even serenity of mind, and a peaceful expectation of the *glory to be revealed.*

May 17, 1647, he was chosen from Westminster-School to Christ-Church in Oxford, *jure loci—by right of seniority,* with four others, of which he had the second place. At his election, he was very much countenanced and smiled upon by his god-father, the earl of Pembroke, who was one of the electors.

CHAP. II.

The Interval spent at Oxford.

THOUGH he was chosen to the university, in May, yet, being then young, under sixteen, and in love with his school-learning, he made no great haste thither. It was in Dec. following, 1647, that he removed to Oxford. Some merciful providences in his journey, (he being a young traveller,) affected him much, and he used to speak of them, with a sense of God's goodness to him in them, according to the impressions then made by them: and he has recorded them with this thankful note, "That there may be a great mercy in a small matter." He noticed, for example, the care that was taken of him by strangers, when he fainted, and was sick in his inn, the first night, and his casual meeting with Mr. Annesley, son to the viscount Valentia,—who was chosen from Westminster-School, at the same time that he was—when his other company, going another way, had left him alone, and utterly at a loss what to do. Thus the sensible remembrance of old mercies may answer the intention of new ones; which is, to engage our obedience to God, and to encourage our dependence on him.

Being come to Oxford, he was immediately entered commoner of Christ-Church, where Dr. Samuel Fell was then Dean; the tutor assigned to him, and the rest of that election, was, Mr. Underwood, a very learned and ingenious gentleman.

His god-father, the earl of Pembroke, had given him ten pounds to buy him a gown, to pay his fees, and to set out with. This, in his papers, he puts a remark upon, as a "seasonable mercy," in regard of some straits, which Providence, by the calamity of the times, had brought his father to. God had taught him, from his youth, that excellent principle, which he adhered to all his days, that "Every creature is that to us, which God makes it, and no more;" and, therefore, while many seek the Ruler's favour, and so expect to make their fortunes, as they call it—seeing *every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord,* it is our wisdom to seek his favour, who is the Ruler of rulers; and that is an effectual way to make sure our happiness.

To the proper studies of this place he now vigorously addressed himself; but still retaining a great partiality for the classic authors, and the more polite exercises he loved so well at Westminster-School.

He was admitted student at Christ Church, Mar. 24, 164$\frac{7}{8}$, by Dr. Henry Hammond, that great man, then sub-dean, who called him his god-brother; the earl of Pembroke being his god-father also, and prince Henry the other, who gave him his name.

The visitation of the University by the Parliament happened to be in the very next month after. Oxford had been, for a good while, in the hands of the Parliament, and no change made; but now the earl of Pembroke, and several others thereunto appointed, came hither to settle things upon a new bottom. The account Mr. Henry, in his papers, gives of this affair, is to this purport. The sole question which the visitors proposed to each person, high and low, in every college, that had any place of profit, was this, "Will you submit to the power of the Parliament in this present visitation?' To which all were to give in their answer in writing, and, accordingly, were either displaced or continued. Some cheerfully complied; others absolutely refused, among whom he would sometimes tell of one that was but of his standing, who gave in this bold answer, "I neither can, nor will, submit to the power of the Parliament in this present visitation; I say I cannot, I say I will not," *J. C.* Others answered doubtfully, pleading youth and ignorance in such matters. Mr. Henry's answer was, "I submit to the power of the Parliament in the present visitation, as far as I may with a safe conscience, and without perjury." His reason for the last *salvo* was, because he had taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy a little before, at his admission, which he was (according to the character of the good man, that *he fears an oath)* very jealous of doing any thing to contradict or infringe. He sometimes signified his dislike of that practice of administering oaths to such as were scarcely past children, who could hardly be supposed to take them with judgment—as oaths should be taken. However, this answer of his satisfied; and, by the favour of the earl of Pembroke, he was continued in his

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his student's place: but great alterations were made in that, as well as in other colleges, very much (no question) to the hinderance and discouragement of young scholars, who came thither, to get learning, not to judge of the rights of government. Dr. Samuel Fell, the Dean, was removed, and Dr. Edward Reynolds, afterwards bishop of Norwich, was put in his room. Dr. Hammond and all the canons, except Dr. Wall, were displaced; and Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Pocock, and others of the Parliament's friends, were preferred to their places. His thoughts of this, in the reflection long after, was, that milder methods might have done better, and would have been a firmer establishment to the new interest: but, considering that many of those who were put out, (being in expectation of a sudden change, which did not take place for many years after,) were exasperating in their behaviour towards the visitors; and that the parliament (who, at this time, were masters) had many of their own friends ready for university-preferments, (which, Oxford having been, from the beginning, a garrison for the king, they had been long kept out of,) and these they were concerned to oblige; it was not strange that they took such strict methods. And, yet, nothing being required but a bare submission, which might be interpreted but as crying quarter, he thought withal, that it could not be said the terms were hard; especially (says he) if compared with those of another nature imposed since.

Among other student-masters removed, his tutor, Mr. Underwood, was one; which he often bewailed, as a loss to himself; for he was a good scholar, and one that made it his business to look after his pupils, who were very likely, by the blessing of God, to have profited under his conduct: but my father, upon the removal of Mr. Underwood, and some others, were turned over to Mr. Finmore, who was, then, in the parliamentary interest, and was afterwards prebendary of Chester—a person (as he notes) able enough, but not willing to employ his abilities for the good of those that were committed to his charge, towards whom he had little more than the name of a tutor. This he lamented as his infelicity, at his first setting out. But it pleased God to give him an interest in the affections of a young man, an under-graduate then, but two or three years his senior, from Westminster—one Mr. Richard Bryan, who took him to be his chamber-fellow while he continued at Oxford, read to him, overlooked his studies, and directed him in them. Of this gentleman he makes very honourable mention, as one who was, through God's blessing, an instrument of much good to him. Mr. John Fell also, the Dean's son, (afterwards himself Dean of Christ Church, and Bp. of Oxford,) taking pity on him and some others that were neglected, voluntarily read to them for some time; a kindness which he retained a very grateful sense of, and for which he much honoured that learned and worthy person.

Here he duly performed the college-exercises; disputations every day in term-time; themes and verses once a week, and declamations when it came to his turn—in which performances he frequently came off with very great applause: and many of his MSS. which remain, shew how well he improved his time there.

And yet in some reflections, I find under his hand, written long after, (wherein he looks back upon his early days,) he charges it upon himself, that for a good while after he came to the university, (though he was known not to be inferior to any of his standing, in public exercises,) he was too much a stranger to that hard study, which afterwards he became acquainted with; and that he lost a deal of time, which might have been better improved. Thus he is pleased to accuse himself of that which (for aught I ever heard) no one else did, or could, accuse him of. But the truth is, in all the secret accounts he kept of himself, he appears to have had a very quick and deep sense of his own failings and infirmities, in the most minute instances, the loss of time, weakness and distractions in holy duties, not improving opportunities of doing good to others, and the like;—deeply bewailing these imperfections, and charging them upon himself, with as great expressions of shame, and sorrow, and self-abhorrence, and crying out as earnestly for pardon and forgiveness in the blood of Jesus, as if he had been the greatest of sinners: for though he was a man that walked very *closely*, yet, withal, he walked very *humbly*, with God; and lived a life of repentance, and self-denial. This reminds me of a sermon of his, which, one might discern, came from the heart, on that scripture, Rom. 7, 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* "A strange complaint" (says he) "to come from the mouth of one, who had learned in every state to be content. Had I been to have given my thoughts concerning Paul, I should have said, O blessed man that thou art, that hast been in the third heaven, a great apostle, a spiritual father to thousands, &c. Yet, all this while, I read, he was a wretched man in his own account and esteem. He never complains thus of the bonds and afflictions that did abide him; the prisons that were frequent; the stripes above measure: but the body of death, that is, the body of sin, that was it which he groaned under." How feelingly did he observe from thence, "That the remainders of indwelling corruption are a very grievous burthen to a gracious soul!"

But to return: it may not be amiss to set down the causes to which he ascribes his loss of time, when he came first to the university. One was, that he was young, too young, and understood not the day of his opportunities; which made him, afterwards, advise his friends, not to thrust their children forth too soon from school to the university, though they may seem ripe, in respect of learning, till they have discretion to manage themselves: while they are children, what can be expected but that they should mind childish things? Another was, that, coming from Westminster school, his attainments in school-learning were beyond what the generality of those who came from other schools, had received; so that he was tempted to think there was no need for him to study much, because it was so easy to him to keep pace with others; which, he remarks, was the thing

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thing Dr. Caldecott, chaplain to the earl of Pembroke, and his great friend, warned him of at his coming to Oxford. Another was, that there were two sorts of persons among his cotemporaries; some of the new stamp, who came in by the visitation, several of whom were serious, pious, young men, but of comparatively small ability, for learning; and those, for that reason, he desired not to have much fellowship with. But there were others who were of the old spirit and way, enemies to the parliament, and the reformation they made; and these were the better scholars,—but, generally, not the better men. With them, for awhile, he struck in, because of their learning, and conversed most with them; but he soon found it a snare to him, and that it took him off from the life of religion, and communion with God; *elanguescere mox cœpit* (says he, in a Latin narrative of his younger years) *pristinæ pietatis ardor —The ardor of my early piety began to abate.* "But, for ever praised be the riches of God's free grace," says he, in another account, "that He was pleased still to keep his hold of me, and not to let me alone when I was running from Him, but *set his hand again the second time,* (as the expression is, Isa. 11. 11.) to snatch me *as a brand out of the fire.*" His recovery from this snare he would call a kind of *second conversion;* so much was he affected with the *preventing* grace of God in it, and sensible of a double bond to be for ever thankful, as well as of an engagement to be watchful and humble. It was a saying of his, "He that stumbles, and does not fall, gets ground by his stumble."

At the latter end of 1648, he had leave given him to visit his father at Whitehall, with whom he staid some time: there he was Jan. 30, when the king was beheaded, and with a very sad heart saw that tragical blow given. Two things he used to speak of, that he took notice of himself that day, which I know not whether any of the historians mention. One was, that at the instant when the blow was given, there was such a dismal *universal groan* among the thousands of people that were within sight of it, (as it were with one consent,) as he never heard before, and desired he might never hear the like again, nor see such a cause for it: the other was, that immediately after the stroke was struck, there was, according to order, one troop marching from Charing Cross towards King Street, and another from King Street towards Charing Cross, purposely to disperse and scatter the people, and to divert the dismal thoughts which they could not but be filled with, by driving them to shift every one for his own safety. He did, upon all occasions, testify his abhorrence of this action, which he always said was a thing that could not be justified, and yet, he said, he saw not how it could be called a national sin: for, as the King urged, upon his trial,—it was certain that not one man of ten in the kingdom did consent to it;* nor could it be called the sin of the Long Parliament, for far the greatest part of them were, all that time, while the thing was in agitation, imprisoned and kept under a force; and scarcely twenty-seven, of the forty that were left to carry the name of a parliament, did give their vote for it; which the Commissioners for the trying of the king's judges, in 1660, (some of whom had been themselves members of the Long Parliament,) urged again and again, in answer to that plea which the prisoners stood so much upon—that what they did, was by authority of the Parliament: but it is manifest that it was done by a prevailing party in the Army, who, (as he used to express it,) having beaten their ploughshares into swords, could not so easily beat their swords into ploughshares again; as having fought, more for victory and dominion, than for peace and truth: but how far these men were acted and influenced by another sort of people behind the curtain, the world is not altogether ignorant. For some years after king Charles II. came in, my father observed the yearly day of humiliation for this sin, desiring that God would not lay the guilt of blood to the charge of the nation: but, afterwards, finding to what purposes it was generally observed and improved—even to the reproach and condemning, not only of the innocent, but of some of the excellent ones, of the land; and noting that there is no precedent in Scripture of keeping annual days of humiliation, for particular sins, especially after the immediate judgment is at an end, Zech. 8. 19. Heb. 10. 2, 3, he took no further notice of it: but in his Diary, he adds this tender remark, (according to the spirit he was of,) "Yet good men, no doubt, may observe it to the Lord," Rom. 14. 6. Thus he judged not, and why then should he be judged?

In 1650, he took his batchelor of arts degree; and he has recorded the goodness of God in raising him up friends, who helped him out in the expenses. Such kindnesses have a peculiar sweetness in them to a good man, who sees and receives them as the kindness of God, and the tokens of His love.

He would often mention it, with thankfulness to God, what great helps and advantages he had then in the university, not only for learning, but for religion and piety. Serious godliness was in reputation; and, beside the public opportunities they had, there were many of the scholars that used to meet together for prayer, and christian conference, to the great confirming of one another's hearts in the fear and love of God, and the preparing of them for the service of the church in their generation. I have heard him speak of the prudent method they took then about the university-sermons on the Lord's-day in the afternoon, which used to be preached by the fellows of colleges, in their course; but that being found not so much for edification, Dr. Owen and Dr. Goodwin performed that service alternately, and the young masters that were wont to preach it, had a lecture on Tuesday appointed them. The sermons he heard at Oxford, he commonly wrote; not in the time of hearing, but afterwards, when he came home, in his reflections upon them, which he found a good help to his memory.

* See the Bishop of Chichester's Sermon before the King, Jan. 30, 1697, p. 25, 29. Where he saith, he did not see how it could be called a national sin.

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In Dec. 1652, he proceeded, master of arts; and in Jan. following preached his first sermon at South-Hinksey, in Oxfordshire, on John 8. 34. *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.* On this occasion, he writes in his Diary, what was the breathing of his heart towards God, "The Lord make use of me as an instrument of his glory, and his church's good, in this high and holy calling."

His great parts and improvement, notwithstanding his extraordinary modesty and humility, had made him so well known in the university, that in the following act, in July, 1653, he was chosen, out of all the masters of that year, to be junior of the act; that is, to answer the philosophy-questions in *Vesperiis,* which he did with very great applause; especially for the very witty and ingenious orations which he made to the university upon that occasion. His questions were, 1. *An licitum sit carnibus vesci?—Is it lawful to eat animal-food? Aff.* 2. *An institutio academiarum sit utilis in republicâ?—Are academical institutions advantageous to a commonwealth? Aff.* 3. *An ingenium pendeat ab humoribus corporis?—Does the cast of the mind depend upon the humours of the body? Aff.* At the act in 1654, he was chosen *magister replicans,* and answered the philosophy questions in *Comitiis,* with a like applause. His questions then were, 1. *An melius sit sperare quam frui?—Is it better to hope than to enjoy. Neg.* 2. *An maxima animi delectatio sit à sensibus?—Does the mind derive its greatest pleasures from the senses? Neg.* 3. *An utile sit peregrinari?—Is it advantageous to travel? Aff.*

Dr. Owen, who was then vice-chancellor, spoke with great commendation, of these performances, to some afterwards in the university, who never knew him, otherwise than by report; and I have heard a worthy divine (who was somewhat his junior in the university, and there a perfect stranger to him) say, how much he admired these exercises of his, and loved him for them; and yet how much more he wondered, when he afterwards became acquainted with him in the country, that so polite an orator should become so profitable and powerful a preacher, and so readily lay aside the enticing words of man's wisdom, which were so easy to him.

There is a copy of Latin verses of his, in print, among the poems which the university of Oxford published upon the Peace, concluded with Holland, in 1654; which shew him to be no less a poet than an orator.

He has noted it of some pious young men, that before they removed from the university into the country, they kept a day of fasting and humiliation, for the sins they had been guilty of in that place and state. And in the visits he made, afterwards, to the university, he inserts into his book, as, no doubt, God did into his, "A tear dropt over my university-sins."

CHAP. III.

His Removal to Worthenbury in Flintshire; his Ordination, and Exercise of the Ministry there.

WORTHENBURY is a little town by Dee side, in that hundred of Flintshire, which is separated some miles from the rest of the county, and known by the name of *English Mailors;* because, though it is reckoned to be in Wales, as pertaining to Flintshire, yet, in language and customs, it is wholly English, and lies, mostly, between Cheshire and Shropshire. Worthenbury was, of old, a parochial chapel, belonging to the rectory of Bangor; but was separated from it in 1658, by the trustees for uniting and dividing of parishes, and was made a parish of itself. But that act being vacated by the Restoration, it then returned to—*statu quo—its former state,* and continued an appartenant to Bangor, till, in the second year of the reign of king William and queen Mary, it was again, by act of parliament, separated, and made independent upon Bangor. That was the only act that passed the royal assent with the act of recognition, at the beginning of the second parliament of this reign. The principal family in Worthenbury parish, is that of the Pulestons, of Emeral. The head of the family was then John Puleston, Serjeant at law, one of the Judges of the common-pleas.

This was the family to which Mr. Henry came from Christ-Church, immediately after he had completed his master's degree, in 1653: ordered into that remote, and, to him, unknown, corner of the country, by that over-ruling Providence which determines the times before appointed, and the *bounds of our habitation.*

The Judge's lady was a person of more than ordinary parts and wisdom; in piety, inferior to few, but, in learning, superior to most of her sex; of this I could give instances, from what I find among Mr. Henry's papers, particularly an elegy she made upon the death of the famous Mr. John Selden, who was her great friend.

This was the lady whose agency first brought Mr. Henry into this country. She wrote to her friend Mr. Francis Palmer, student of Christ-Church, to desire him to recommend to her a young man to be in her family, and to take the oversight of her sons, (some of whom were now ready for the university,) and to preach at Worthenbury on the Lord's-days; for which a very honourable encouragement was promised. Mr. Palmer proposed it to his friend Mr. Henry, who was willing for one half-year to undertake it, provided it might be required of him to preach but once, on the Lord's-day, and that some other supply might be got, for the other part of the day; he being now but twenty-two years of age, and newly entered upon that great work: provided also, that he should be engaged but for half-a-year, as he did not intend to break off so soon from an academical life, which he delighted in so much.

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much. But preferring usefulness before his own private satisfaction, he was willing to make trial for awhile in the country, as one that sought not his own things, but the things of Jesus Christ, to whose service, in the work of the ministry, he had entirely devoted himself, bending his studies wholly that way. During the latter part of his time at Oxford, as one grown weary of that which he used to say he found little to his purpose, he employed his time mostly in searching the Scriptures, and collecting useful scripture-observations, which he made very familiar to him, and with which he was thoroughly furnished for the good work of the ministry. He got a bible interleaved, in which he wrote short notes upon texts of scripture, as they occurred. He would often say, "I read other books, that I may be the better able to understand the Scripture."

It was a stock of scripture-knowledge that he set up with, and with that he traded, to good advantage. Though he was so great a master in the eloquence of of Cicero, yet he preferred far before it, that of Apollos, who was *an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures,* Acts 18, 24.

He bid very fair at that time for university-preferment, such was the reputation he had got at the late act, and such his interest in Dr. Owen; but the salvation of souls was that which his heart was upon, to which he postponed all his other interests.

In September, 1653, he went down to Emeral, whence a messenger was sent on purpose to Oxford, to conduct him thither. Long after, when it had pleased God to settle him in that country, and to build him up into a family, he would often reflect upon his coming into it first; what a stranger he then was, and how far it was from his thoughts, ever to have made his home in those parts; and, passing over the brook that parts Flintshire and Shropshire, would sometimes very affectingly use that word of Jacob's, *With my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.*

At Emeral, he prayed in the family, was tutor to the young gentlemen, and preached once a day at Worthenbury, other help being procured for the other part of the day, according to his request; for, being so young, he was afraid to take the whole work upon him. But it soon happened, that one Lord's-day, the supply that was expected, failed; and so he was necessitated, rather than there should be no service, to preach twice, in which he found the promise well fulfilled, *As thy days, so shall thy strength be;* and *To him that hath* (that is, that hath, and useth what he hath) *shall be given,* and *he shall have abundance.* In consequence of this, to the great satisfaction of his friends there, from that time he declined looking out for other help, than what came from above; and would sometimes speak of this as an instance, that "we do not know what we can do till we have tried."

Here he applied himself to a plain and practical way of preaching, as one truly concerned for the souls of those he spoke to. He would say sometimes, "We study how to speak, that you may understand us." And, "I never think I can speak plain enough, when I am speaking about souls and their salvation." I have heard him say that he thought it did him good, that for the first half year of his being at Worthenbury, he had few or no books with him, which engaged him (in studying sermons) to a closer search of the Scripture, and his own heart. What success his labours had in that parish, which, before he came to it, (I have been told,) was accounted one of the most loose and profane places in all the country, may be gathered from a letter of the lady Puleston's to him, at the end of the first half year after his coming to Emeral, when he was uncertain of his continuance there, and inclinable to return to settle at Christ-Church. Take the letter at large:

Dear Mr. Henry,

The indisposition that my sadness hath bred, and the stay of Mrs. V. here yesterday, hindered my answering your last expressions. As to ordering the conversation, and persevering to the practice of those good intents, taken up while one is in pursuit of a mercy, you and I will confer, as God gives opportunity; who also must give the will and the deed, by his Spirit and by the rule of his word. As to begging that one thing for you, God forbid (as Samuel said) that I should cease to pray, &c. This I am sure, that having wanted hitherto a good minister of the word among us, I have oft by prayer and some tears, above five years, besought God for such a one as yourself; which having obtained, I cannot yet despair, seeing he hath given us the good means, but he may also give us the good end. And this I find, that your audience is increased three for one in the parish, (though in winter, more than formerly in summer,) and five for one out of other places. And I have neither heard of their being in the alehouse on our Lord's-day, nor ball-playing that day, which, before you came, was frequent, except that day that young Ch. preached. I think I can name four or five in the parish, that, of formal christians, are becoming, or become, real. But you know all are not wrought on at first by the word. Some come in no misfortune like other men; and this is the cause they be so holden with pride, &c. Hypocrites also have converted conversion itself: yet God may have reserved those that have not bowed the knee to Baal, &c. and may call them at the latter part of the day, though not in this half year. It is a good sign, most are loth to part with you; and you have done more good in this half year, than I have discerned these eighteen years: but, however, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, you have delivered your own soul. I have prayed, and do pray, seeing God hath sent you, that you may be for his glory, and not for our condemnation.

It is easy to imagine, what an encouragement this was to him, thus, at his first setting out, to see of the travail of his soul, and what an inducement it was to him not to leave those among whom God had thus owned him. However, that spring, he returned to Oxford. The lady Puleston, soon after, came to him thither, with her five sons, of whom she placed the two eldest

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eldest under his charge, in the college. In the following vacation, he went to London, to visit his relations; and there, in October he received a letter from Judge Puleston, with a very solemn and affectionate request, subscribed by the parishioners of Worthenbury, earnestly desiring his settlement among them, as their minister; which he was persuaded to comply with, having fixed to himself that good rule, in the turns of his life, to "Follow Providence, and not to force it:" so in the winter following, he came down again, and settled with them. He continued in his Student's place, in Christ-Church, for two or three years, attending the service of it once a year; but disposing of most of the profit of it, for the use of poor scholars there.

The tythe of Worthenbury belonged to Emeral-family, paying some rent to the rector of Bangor. This tythe, Judge Puleston was willing to give (clear of that charge) to the minister of Worthenbury for ever; but such was the peculiar and extraordinary kindness he had for Mr. Henry, upon the experience of his merits, that he chose rather, by deed of indenture, bearing date, Oct. 6, 1655, between himself and Mr. Henry,—"In consideration of his being pleased to undertake the cure of souls, and to preach and teach, and perform other duties of divine service, in the parish church of Worthenbury," (so the deed runs) "to give, grant, and confirm for himself and his heirs, unto the said Philip Henry, the yearly rent of one hundred pounds, charged upon all his messuages, lands, and tenements in the several counties of Flint, Denbigh, and Chester, to be paid quarterly, until such time as the said Philip Henry shall be promoted or preferred to some other spiritual or ecclesiastical living or preferment," with power of distress, in case of non-payment. A hundred a year was more than Worthenbury tythes were worth at that time; and the manner of the gift freed the maintenance from much of the loss and encumbrance, which commonly attend the gathering of tythe.

He still continued, for some years, in the Emeral-family, where he laid out himself very much for the spiritual good of the family, even of the meanest of the servants, by catechizing, repeating the sermons, and personal instruction; and he had very much comfort in the countenance and conversation of the judge, and his lady. Yet he complains, sometimes, in his diary, "of the snares and temptations that he found in his way there;' especially, because some of the branches of the family, who did not *patrissare—take after their parents*, were uneasy at his being there," which made him willing to remove to a house of his own; which, when Judge Puleston perceived, in 1657, out of his abundant and continued kindness to him, he did, at his own expense, build him a very handsome house in Worthenbury, and settled it upon him by a lease, bearing date, Mar. 6, 1657, for 60 years,—"if he should so long continue minister at Worthenbury, and not accept of better preferment."

He has noted in his diary, that the very day that the workmen began the building of that house, Mr. Mainwaring, of Malpas, preached the lecture at Bangor, from Ps. 127. 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* "There never was truth," says he, "more seasonable to any, than this was to me: it was a word upon the wheels." He has recorded it as his great care, that his affections might be kept loose from it, and that it might not encroach upon God's interest in his heart. When it was finished, he thus writes: "I do, from my heart, bless God, that no hurt or harm befell any of the workmen in the building of it."

Thus was his maintenance settled at Worthenbury. In 1659, he was, by a writing of Judge Puleston's, collated, nominated, and presented, to the church of Worthenbury, and (the powers that then were, having so appointed) he had an approbation thereof from the commissioners for approbation of public preachers.

Some little opposition was made to his settlement at Worthenbury, by Mr. Fogg, then rector of Bangor, because he conceived it an intrenchment upon his right to Worthenbury, and thought it might prejudice his recovering of it by course of law. I only mention this, for the sake of the note he has upon it in his diary, which is this: "I do earnestly desire that the judge may give Mr. Fogg all reasonable satisfaction, that there may be no appearance of wrong to him, or any other in this thing." And when Mr. Fogg insisted upon it, that Mr. Henry should give it under his hand, that he desired the consent of the said Mr. Fogg to be minister of Worthenbury; he yielded to do it for peace' sake, and from that time there was an intimate and entire friendship between Mr. Fogg and him.

Being thus settled at Worthenbury, his next care was touching ordination to the work of the ministry, to which he would see his call very clear, before he solemnly devoted himself to it. And though afterwards, in the reflection, (especially when he was silenced,) it was some trouble to him, that he had so long deferred to be ordained, (and he would often, from the consideration of that, press those who intended the ministry, not to put it off,) yet as the times then were, there was something of a reason for it.

The nearest acting class of presbytery, was in the hundred of Bradford-North, in Shropshire, wherein Mr. Porter, of Whitchurch, was the leading man, of whom Mr. Baxter gives so high a character in his life, Part 3, p. 94. and who was one of those whom he recommended to the Lord Chancellor, as fit to be made a bishop, Part 2, p. 283. This class was constituted by ordinance of parliament in Apr. 1647; the members of it then were the aforesaid Mr. Porter, Mr. Boughy of Hodnet, Mr. Houghton of Prees, Mr. Parsons of Wem, and Mr. John Bisby; afterwards, Mr. Malden of Newport, Mr. Binney of Ightfield, and Mr. Steel of Hanmer, (though in Flintshire,) were taken in to them, and acted with them. This class, in twelve years time, publicly ordained sixty-three ministers. Mr. Henry was very desirous to have been ordained at Worthenbury, *plebe præsente—in the presence of his congregation*, which he thought most agreeable to the intention;

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tention; but the ministers were not willing to set such a precedent: however, that was one thing which occasioned the delay, so that he was not ordained till Sept. 16, 1657.

The manner of his ordination was according to the known Directory of the Assembly of Divines, and the common usage of the Presbyterians; and yet, he having left among his papers, a particular account of that solemnity, and some of the workings of his soul towards God in it; I hope it may be of some use both for instruction, and quickening, to ministers, and for the information of such as are perhaps wholly strangers to such a thing, to give some account of the whole transaction.

He made addresses to the Presbytery, in order to his ordination, July 6, at Prees, when he submitted to trial. Inquiry was made, in the first place, concerning his experience of the work of grace in his heart; in answer to which, he gave a *reason of the hope that was in him, with meekness and fear*—that the Spirit of Grace had been dealing with him when he was young, and, he hoped, had discovered to him his need of Christ, and had bowed his will, in some measure, to close with him upon his own terms, &c.—His skill in the original languages of the scripture was then tried; and he read, and construed, two verses in the Hebrew bible, and two in the Greek testament: he was then examined in logic and natural philosophy, next in divinity, what authors he had read, and what knowledge he had touching the mediation of Christ, &c.—His skill in the scripture was tried, by propounding to him a difficult text to explain; a case of conscience was also put to him to be resolved; and an inquiry made into his acquaintance with church-history. *Lastly*, A question was given him to provide a thesis upon, against next meeting, which was this, *An Providentia Divina extendat se ad omnia?—Does the Providence of God extend itself to all things? Aff.* On this question he exhibited his thesis, Aug. 3, and defended it. Several of the ministers opposed, and Mr. Porter moderated. He then produced two certificates, which he left with the Registrar of the class, one from Oxford, subscribed by Dr. Wilkinson, Dr. Langley, &c. the other from the neighbouring ministers, Mr. Steel, Mr. Fogg, &c. both testifying of his conversation, &c. "The Lord forgive me," says he, in diary upon this, "that it has not been more exemplary, as it ought, for piety and industry. Amen, Lord in Christ." The day for ordination was appointed to be Sep. 16, at Prees, of which notice was given at Worthenbury, by a paper, read in the church, and afterwards affixed to the church-door the Lord's day before, signifying also, "That if any one could produce any just exceptions against the doctrine or life of the said Mr. Henry, or any sufficient reason why he might not be ordained, they should certify the same to the Classis, or the Scribe, and it should be heard and considered."

On the day of ordination, there was a very great assembly gathered together. Mr. Porter began the public work of the day with prayer; then Mr. Parsons preached on 1 Tim. 1. 12. *I thank Christ Jesus, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.* (Putting men into the ministry is the work of Jesus Christ.) After sermon, Mr. Parsons, according to the usual method, required of him a confession of his faith, which he made, as follows:

"The ground and rule of my faith towards God, are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; I believe they were written by [a] holy men, immediately inspired by the Holy Ghost; having found the efficacy of them, in some measure, upon my own heart, I believe they are further able to make me [b] wise to salvation.

"Concerning God, [c] I believe that he is, and that he is the Rewarder of those that diligently seek him.

"The Trinity of Persons in the [d] Unity of the One Godhead, I receive and own as a *truth*, I admire and adore as a *mystery*; though [e] no man hath seen God at any time, yet the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, and what he hath declared concerning him, that, I believe. I believe that God is a Spirit, for the Son hath said, [f] *God is a Spirit*. I believe that [g] he hath life in himself, and that he hath given to the Son, to have life in himself. I believe that [h] all things were made by Him, and without Him, was not any thing made that was made. I believe that by his providence he preserves, guides, and governs all the creatures, according to the purpose of his own will, to his own glory; for the [i] Father worketh hitherto, and the Son also worketh.

"I believe that [k] he made man upright, after his [l] own image and likeness, which image consisted in [m] knowledge, [n] righteousness, and true holiness; but man by sin lost it.

"I believe that we were all in the loins of our first parents, and that they stood and fell as public persons; and, upon that account, justly, without any colour of wrong, we bear our share, both in the guilt of their disobedience, and also the corruption of nature following thereupon; so [o] that we came into the world, [p] children of wrath, and heirs of the curse, one as well as another; enemies to God, [q] hating him, and hated of him; [r] averse to what is good, and prone to all manner of evil. Though all are born in this condition, yet there are some that do not die in it.

"I believe that there is [s] a Mediator, and there is but one Mediator, between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. For those whom the Father hath from [t] everlasting pitched his love upon, and given to Christ, not because of works or faith foreseen, but merely of his free-grace; for those I believe [u] that Christ was sent forth into the world, made of a woman, under the law; [x] for their sakes he sanctified himself and [y] became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also highly exalted him, and, [z] having raised him from the dead, on the third day, set him at his own right hand,

[a] 2 Pet. 1. 21. [b] 2 Tim. 3. 15. [c] Heb. 11. 6. [d] 1 Joh. 5. 7. [e] Joh. 1. 18. [f] Joh. 4. 24. [g] Joh. 5. 26. [h] Joh. 1. 3. [i] Joh. 5. 17. [k] Eccl. 7. 29. [l] Gen. 1. 26. [m] Col. 3. 10. [n] Eph. 4. 24. [o] Ps. 51. 5. [p] Eph. 2. 3. [q] Zac. 11. 8. [r] Ro. 7. 18. [s] 1 Tim. 2. 5. [t] Eph. 2. 1. 4. 5. [u] Gal. 4. 4. [x] Joh. 7. 19. [y] Phi. 2. 8. 9. [z] Eph. 1. 20. 21.

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where [a] he ever lives, to make [b] intercession for those for whom he shed his blood. All these elect, redeemed, ones, I believe, are, in due time, sooner or later, in their lives, [c] effectually called, washed, sanctified, [d] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

"I believe that the righteousness of Christ alone, apprehended [e] by faith, is the matter of our justification before God; and that [f] no flesh can stand in his sight upon any other terms, for he is [g] the Lord our righteousness, and in him only [h] the Father is well-pleased.

"I believe—concerning the work of sanctification, managed [i] by the Spirit who dwelleth in us—that though, in respect of parts, it be complete, (for the whole man is renewed,) yet, in respect of degrees, it is not [k] fully perfected till we come to glory; and I believe that all who are justified, [l] shall be glorified; for we [m] are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

"I believe that the gathering in, and building up, of saints, is the special end why [n] pastors and teachers are appointed in the church; and that Jesus Christ, according to his promise, [o] will be with them, in that work, to the end of the world.

"The two sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, I receive and own as [p] signs and [q] seals of the covenant of grace; the former instituted by our Lord Jesus, as a sign and seal of our engrafting into him, due, of right, to all the [r] infants of believing parents, and but once to be administered; the other instituted [s] by our Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, [t] to shew forth his death, and to seal the benefits purchased thereby to his church and people, and to be often repeated.

"When the [u] body returns to the dust, I believe that the soul returns to God who gave it; and that it immediately receives from him the sentence, according to what hath been done in the flesh, either, *Come, inherit the kingdom*, or, [x] *Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.*

"I believe, beside this, [y] a day of general judgment in the end of the world, wherein we must [z] all appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ; and that our bodies, being raised by an almighty power from the dust, shall be [a] united to the same souls again, and shall partake with them in the same condition, either of happiness, or, misery, to all eternity. Those that have done good, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; and [b] those that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.

"This is the sum and substance of my faith, into which, I was baptized, and in which, by the grace of God, I will live and die."

Mr. Parsons then proposed certain questions to him, according to the instructions in the Directory, to which he returned answer, as followeth:

[a] Heb. 7. 29. [b] Joh. 17. 9. [c] Ro. 8. 30. [d] 1 Cor. 6. 11. [e] Ro. 5. 1. [f] Ps. 143. 2. [g] Jer. 23. 6. [h] Mat. 3. 17. [i] Ro. 15. 16. [k] Col. 3. 11. [l] 1 Cor. 13. 9. 10. [m] 1 Pet. 1. 5. [n] Eph. 4. 11. [o] Mat. 28. 20. [p] Ro. 4. 11. [q] Mat. 28. 19. [r] Acts 2. 39. [s] Mat. 26. 26. [t] 1 Cor. 11. 26. [u] Ecc. 12. 7. [x] Mat. 25. 34. 41. [y] Acts 17. 31. [z] 2 Cor. 5. 10. [a] 1 Cor. 15. 42. [b] Joh. 5. 29.

Q. 1. What are your ends in undertaking the work and calling of a minister?

A. As far as upon search and inquiry I can hitherto find, though there be that within me, that would seek great things for myself, (if indeed they were to be found in this calling,) yet with my mind I seek them not. But the improvement of the talent which I have received in the service of the Gospel, for the glory of God, and the salvation of soul, is, I hope, in my eyes; if there be any thing else, I own it not, I allow it not; while so many seek their own, it is my desire, and shall be my endeavour, to seek the things of Jesus Christ.

Q. 2. What are your purposes, as to diligence and industry in this calling?

A. I do purpose and resolve, by the help of God, to give myself wholly to these things; to prayer, reading, meditation, instant preaching, in season and out of season, wherein I shall very gladly spend and be spent, if by any means I may both save myself and them that hear me. And when at any time I fail therein, I desire God, by his Spirit, and my christian friends, neighbours, and brethren, by reasonable reproof and admonition, to put me in mind of this engagement now made, in the presence of this great congregation.

Q. 3. Do you mean to be zealous and faithful in the defence of truth and unity, against error and schism?

A. I believe what the Spirit hath foretold, that, in the last days, perilous times shall come, wherein men will not endure sound doctrine, but, after their own lusts, will heap unto themselves teachers. It is my resolution, by the grace of Christ, to watch in all things; to contend earnestly for the faith; to hold fast the form of sound and wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, in meekness, as I am able, instructing those, that oppose themselves: and, for peace and unity, if my heart deceive me not, I should rather choose to hazard the loss of any thing that is most dear to me, than be any way, knowingly, accessary to the disturbance of these in the churches of Christ.

Q. 4. What is your persuasion of the truth of the reformed religion?

A. My persuasion is, that the Bishop of Rome is that man of sin, and son of perdition, whom the Lord Jesus will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and whom he will destroy by the brightness of his coming: and as to the separation which our first reformers made, I do heartily rejoice in, and bless God for it; for had we still continued to partake with him in his sins, we should, in the end, have partaken with him also in his plagues.

Q. 5. What do you intend to do, when the Lord shall alter your condition, and bring a family under your charge?

A. When the Lord shall please, in his providence, to bring me into new relations, I hope he will give me grace to fill them up with duty; it is my purpose to wait upon him, to keep his way, and to endeavour, in the use of means, that all that are mine, may be the Lord's.

Q. 6. Will

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Q. 6. Will you, in humility and meekness, submit to admonition and discipline?

A. I believe it to be a duty incumbent upon all that profess the name of Christ, to watch over one another; and that when any is overtaken in a fault, those that are spiritual, are to *set him in joint* again with the spirit of meekness. It shall be my endeavour, in the strength of Jesus Christ, to walk without rebuke, and when at any time I step aside, (for who is there that lives and sins not?) I shall account the smitings of my brethren, kindness, and their wounds, faithful.

Q. 7. What if troubles, persecutions, and discouragements arise; will you hold out to the end notwithstanding?

A. Concerning this I am very jealous over my own heart, and there is cause; I find a great want of that zeal and courage for God, which I know is required in a minister of the gospel; nevertheless, I persuade myself, that no temptation shall befal me, but such as is common to man; and that God who is faithful, will not suffer me to be tempted above that which I am able, but that with the temptation, he will also make a way to escape, that I may be able to bear it. I promise faithfulness to the death; but I rest not at all in my promise to God, but in his to me: When thou goest through the fire, and through the water, I will be with thee.

When this was done, Mr. Parsons prayed; and in prayer, he and the rest of the Presbyters, (Mr. Porter, Mr. Haughton, Mr. Malden, and Mr. Steel,) laid their hands upon him, with words to this purpose: *Whom we do thus, in Thy name, set apart to the work and office of the Ministry.* After him, there were five more, after the like previous examinations and trials, professions and promises, at the same time, in like manner, set a part to the ministry.

Then Mr. Malden, of Newport, closed with an exhortation directed to the newly ordained ministers, in which (saith Mr. Henry in his diary) this word went near my heart. "As the nurse puts the meat first into her own mouth, and chews it, and then feeds the child with it; so should ministers do by the word, preach it over before-hand to their own hearts; it loses none of the virtue hereby, but rather probably gains. As that milk nourisheth most which comes warm, from the warm breast; so that sermon which comes warm from a warm heart." Lord quicken me to do thy will in this thing.

The Classis gave him, and the rest, the following certificate.

"Whereas Mr. Philip Henry, of Worthenbury, in the county of Flint, master of arts, hath addressed himself unto us, authorized by an ordinance of both Houses of Parliament, of the 29th of Aug. 1648, for the ordination of ministers, desiring to be ordained a Presbyter; for that he is chosen and appointed for the work of the ministry at Worthenbury, in the county of Flint, as by a certificate now remaining with us, touching that his election and appointment, appeareth. And he having likewise exhibited a sufficient testimonial of his diligence and proficiency in his studies, and unblameableness of his life and conversation; he hath been examined according to the rules for examination in the said ordinance expressed, and thereupon approved, there being no just exception made, nor put in against his ordination and admission. These may therefore testify to all whom it may concern, that upon the 16th of Sept. 1657, we have proceeded solemnly to set him apart for the office of a presbyter, and work of the ministry of the gospel, by laying on of our hands with fasting and prayer. By virtue whereof, we do declare him to be a lawful and sufficiently authorized minister of Jesus Christ: And having good evidence of his lawful and fair calling, not only to the work of the ministry, but to the exercise thereof at the chapel of Worthenbury, in the county of Flint; we do hereby send him thither, and actually admit him to the said charge, to perform all the offices and duties of a faithful pastor there; exhorting the people, in the name of Jesus Christ, willingly to receive and acknowledge him as the minister of Christ, and to maintain and encourage him in the execution of his office, that he may be able to give up such an account to Christ of their obedience to his ministry, as may be to his joy, and their everlasting comfort. In witness whereof, we the Presbyters of the fourth class, in the county of Salop, commonly called Bradford-North class, have hereunto set our hands, the 16th of Sep. in the year of our Lord God, 1657."

Tho. Porter, Moderator for the time.
Andrew Parsons, Minister of Wem.
Aylmar Haughton, Minister of Prees.
John Malden, Minister of Newport.
Richard Steel, Minister of Hanmer.

I have heard it said, by those who were present at this solemnity, that Mr. Henry did, in his countenance, carriage, and expression, discover such an extraordinary seriousness and gravity, and such deep impressions made upon his spirit, as greatly affected the auditory, and even struck an awe upon them.

Read his reflection upon it in his diary: "Methought I saw much of God in the carrying on of the work of this day. O! how good is the Lord! he is good, and doth good; the remembrance of it I shall never lose; to him be glory. I made many promises of diligence, faithfulness, &c. but I lay no stress at all on them, but on God's promise to me, that he will be with his ministers always to the end of the world. Amen, Lord, so be it. Make good thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou has caused me to put my trust." And, in another place, "I did this day receive as much honour and work, as ever I shall be able to know what to do with; Lord Jesus proportion supplies accordingly." Two scriptures he desired might be written in his heart, 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5, &c. and 2 Chr. 29. 11.

Two years after, upon occasion of his being present at an ordination at Whitchurch, he thus writes: "This day my ordination-covenants were in a special manner renewed, as to diligence in reading, prayer, meditation, faithfulness in preaching, admonition, catechizing, sacraments, zeal against error and profaneness; care to preserve

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preserve and promote the unity and purity of the church, notwithstanding opposition and persecution, though to death. Lord, thou hast filled my hands with work; fill my heart with wisdom and grace, that I may discharge my duty to thy glory, and my own salvation, and the salvation of those that hear me." Amen.

Let us now see how he applied himself to his work, at Worthenbury. The sphere was narrow, too narrow for such *a burning and shining light:* for although there were but forty-one communicants in that parish, when he first set up the ordinance of the Lord's-Supper; and they were never doubled; yet he had such low thoughts of himself, that he not only never sought for a larger sphere, but would never hearken to any overtures of that kind made to him: nevertheless he had such high thoughts of his work, and the worth of souls, that he laid out himself with as much diligence and vigour here, as if he had the oversight of the greatest and most considerable parish in the country.

The greatest part of the parish were poor tenants, and labouring husbandmen; but the souls of such, he used to say, are as precious as the souls of the rich, and to be looked after accordingly. His prayer for them was, "Lord, despise not the day of small things in this place, where there is some willingness, but much weakness." And thus he writes upon the judge's settling a handsome maintenance upon him; "Lord, thou knowest, I seek not theirs, but them: Give me the souls."

He was in labors more abundant to win souls: besides preaching, he expounded the scriptures in order, catechized and explained the catechism. At first he took into the number of his catechumens some that were adult, who, he found, wanted instruction; and when he had taken what pains he thought needful with them, he dismissed them from farther attendance, with commendation of their proficiency, and counsel to hold fast the form of sound words; to be watchful against the sins of their age, and to apply themselves to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and make ready for it; afterwards he catechized none above seventeen or eighteen years of age.

He set up a monthly lecture there of two sermons; one he himself preached, and the other his friend Mr. Lewis, of Wrexham, for some years. He also kept up a monthly conference in private from house to house, in which he met with the more intelligent and judicious of the parish; and they discoursed familiarly together of the things of God, to their mutual edification, according to the example of the apostles, who, though they had the liberty of public places, yet taught also from house to house, Acts 5. 42. 20. 20. That which induced him to set and keep up this exercise as long as he durst (which was till Aug. 1660) was, that by this means he came better to understand the state of his flock, and so knew the better how to preach to them, and pray for them, and they to pray one for another. If they were in doubt about any thing relating to their souls, that was an opportunity of getting satisfaction. It was likewise a means of increasing knowledge and love, and other graces; and thus it abounded to a good account.

He was very industrious in visiting the sick, instructing them, and praying with them; and in this he would say, he aimed at the good, not only of those that were sick, but also of their friends and relations that were about them.

He preached funeral sermons for all that were buried there, rich and poor, old or young, or little children; for he looked upon it as an opportunity of doing good. He called it, "setting in the plow of the word, when the providence had softened and prepared the ground." He never took any money for that or any other ministerial performance, besides his stated salary, for which he thought himself obliged to do his whole duty to them as a minister.

When he set up the ordinance of the Lord's Supper there, he did it with very great solemnity. After he had endeavoured to instruct them in his public preaching, touching the nature of that ordinance, he discoursed personally with all that gave up their names to the Lord in it, touching their knowledge, experience, and conversation; obliged them to observe the law of Christ, touching brotherly admonition in case of scandal; and gave notice to the congregation who they were that were admitted; adding this: "Concerning these, and myself, I have two things to say; 1. As to what is past, we have sinned: If we should say, we have not, we should deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; and yet this withal we can say, and have said it, some of us with tears, We are grieved that we have sinned. 2. For time to come we are resolved, by God's grace, to walk in new obedience: and yet seeing we are not angels, but men and women, compassed about with infirmities and temptations, it is possible we may fall; but if we do, it is our declared resolution, to submit to admonition and censure, according to the rule of the gospel." And all along he took care so to manage his admissions to that ordinance, as that the weak might not be discouraged, and yet the ordinance might not be profaned. He would tell those, whom he was necessitated to debar from the ordinance for ignorance, that he would undertake, if they were but truly willing, they might in a week's time, by the blessing of God upon their diligent use of means, reading, prayer, and conference, get such a competent measure of knowledge, as to be able to discern the Lord's body. And those that had been scandalous, if they would but come in and declare their repentance, and resolutions of new obedience, they should no longer be excluded.

To give a specimen of his lively administrations of that ordinance, let me transcribe the notes of his exhortation at the first sacrament that ever he administered, Nov. 27, 1659. I suppose they are but the hints of what he enlarged more upon, for he had always a great fluency upon such occasions.

"Dearly beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are met together this day about the most solemn weighty service under heaven; we are come to a feast, where the feast-maker, is God the Father, the provision, God the Son, whose flesh, is meat indeed, and whose blood, is drink indeed; the guests, a company of poor sinners, unworthy such an honour; the crumbs

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crumbs under the table were too good for us, and yet we are admitted to taste of the provision upon the table; and that which makes the feast is hearty welcome: God the Father bids you welcome; and ten thousand welcomes this day, to the flesh and blood of his Son; think you hear him saying to you, O believing souls, Cant. 5. 1. *Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* The end of this feast is to keep in remembrance the death of Christ, and our deliverance by it, and thereby to convey spiritual nourishment and refreshment to our souls. But withal, give me leave to ask you one question, What appetite have you to this feast? Are you come hungering and thirsting? Such have the promise, they shall be filled. He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich are sent empty away; a honey-comb to a full soul, is no honey-comb.—Canst thou say, as Christ said, *With desire I have desired to eat this?* In this ordinance, here's Christ and all his benefits exhibited to thee. Art thou weak? Here's *bread* to strengthen thee. Art thou sad? Here's *wine* to comfort thee. What is it thou standest in need of? a pardon? Here it is sealed in blood, take it by faith, as I offer it to you in the name of the Lord Jesus; *though thy sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as wool,* if thou be willing and obedient. It may be, here are some that have been drunkards, swearers, scoffers at godliness, sabbath-breakers, and what not? And God hath put it into your hearts to humble yourselves, to mourn for, and turn from all your abominations: O, come hither, here's forgiveness for thee. What else is it thou wantest? O, saith the poor soul, I would have more of the spirit of grace, more power against sin, especially my own iniquity: Why, here it is for thee, *from the fulness,* that is in Jesus Christ, *we receive, and grace for grace,* Joh. 1. 16. We may say, as David did, Ps. 108. 7, 8. *God hath spoken in his holiness,* and then *Gilead is mine, and Manasseh mine.* So God hath spoken in his word sealed in his sacrament, and then Christ is mine, pardon is mine, grace is mine, comfort mine, glory mine; here I have his bond to shew for it. This is to those among you, that have engaged their hearts to approach unto God this day.

"But if there be any come hither with a false, unbelieving, filthy, hard heart, I do warn you seriously, and with authority, in the name of Jesus Christ, presume not to come any nearer to this sacred ordinance: You that live in the practice of any sin, or the omission of any duty against your knowledge and conscience; you that have any malice or grudge to any of your neighbours, leave your gift, and go your ways; be reconciled to God, be reconciled to your brother, and then come.——Better shame thyself for coming so near, than damn thyself by coming nearer. I testify to those, who say they shall have peace, though they go on still in their trespasses, that there's poison in the bread; take it, and eat it at your own peril; there's poison in the cup too, you drink your own damnation; I wash my hands from the guilt of your blood, look you to it: On the other hand, you poor penitent souls, that are lost in yourselves, here's a Christ to save you; Come, *O come ye that are weary and heavy laden,* &c."

It may not be amiss to transcribe also some hints of preparation for the administering of the ordinance of Baptism, which I find under his hand at his first setting out in the ministry, as follows:

"It is a real manifestation of the goodness and love of God to believers, that he hath not only taken them into Covenant himself, but their Seed also; saying, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.* Though to be born of such, doth not necessarily entitle infants to the spiritual mercies of the covenant, for Grace doth not run in a blood; we see the contrary, many times, even godly parents have wicked children; Abraham had his Ishmael, and Isaac his Esau: yet, questionless, it doth entitle them to the external privileges of the Covenant. *The like figure unto Noah's ark, even baptism doth also now save us:* Noah, and all that were his, entered into the ark, though we have cause to doubt whether they all entered into heaven. While our Lord Jesus was here upon the earth, they *brought little children* to him, and he *laid his hands on them, and blessed them;* and said moreover, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not:* (There are many at this day that forbid little children to come to Christ:) He adds the reason, for *of such is the kingdom of heaven.* Whether it be meant of the Visible Church, often so called in the gospel, or of the state of glory in another world; either way it affords an argument for proof of infant baptism. When either parent is in covenant with God, their children also are in covenant with him; and being in covenant, they have an undoubted right and title to this ordinance of baptism, which is the seal of the covenant. So that, in the administration of this ordinance, this day, according to the institution of Jesus Christ, we look upon you, who are the father of this child, as a person in covenant with God. How far you have dealt unfaithfully in the covenant, is known to God and your own conscience; but this we know, the vows of God are upon you; and let every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. But, before we baptize your child, I am to acquaint you, in a few words, what we expect from you.

"*Q.* 1. Do you avouch God in Jesus Christ this day to be your God?—See to it, that this be done in truth, and with a perfect heart: You may tell us you do so, and you may deceive us, but God is not mocked. *Q.* 2. And is it your desire, that your children also may be received into covenant with the Lord, and that the Lord's broad seal of baptism may be set to it? *Q.* 3. And do you promise, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, that you will do your endeavour towards the training of it up in the way of godliness, that as it is by you, through mercy, that it lives the life of nature, so it may by you also, through the same mercy, live the life of grace; else I must tell you, if you be wanting herein, there will be a sad appearance one day, when you shall meet together before the judgment seat of Christ, and this solemn engagement of yours will be brought in to witness against you."

These were but the first instances of his skilfulness, in dispensing the misteries of the kingdom of God. He declined the private administration of the Lord's Supper to sick persons, as judging it not consonant to

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the rule and intention of the ordinance. He very rarely, if ever, baptized in private, but would have children brought to the solemn assembly upon the Lord's-Day, that the parents' engagement might have the more witnesses to it, and the child the more prayers put up for it, and that the congregation might be edified: and yet he would say there was some inconvenience in it too, unless people would agree to put off the feasting part of the solemnity to some other time, which he very much persuaded his friends to; and observed, that Abraham made a great feast the same day that *Isaac was weaned*, (Gen. 21. 8.) not the same day that he was circumcised.

His carriage towards the people of his Parish was very exemplary, condescending to the meanest, and conversing familiarly with them; bearing with the infirmities of the weak, and becoming all things to all men. He was exceeding tender of giving offence, or occasion of grief to any body, minding himself in his diary upon such occasions, that the wisdom that is from above is pure, and peaceable, and gentle, &c. Yet he plainly and faithfully reproved what he saw amiss in any, and would not suffer sin upon them; mourning also for that which he could not mend. There were some untractable people in the parish, who sometimes caused grief to him, and exercised his boldness and zeal in reproving. Once hearing of a merry-meeting at an alehouse on a Saturday night, he went himself and broke it up, and scattered them. At another time, he publicly witnessed against a frolic of some vain people, that on a Saturday night came to the church with a fidler before them, and dressed it up with flowers and garlands, making it, as he told them, more like a play-house; and was this their preparation for the Lord's day, and the duties of it? &c. He minded them of Ec. 11. 9. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, but know thou* ——

Many out of the neighbouring parishes attended upon his ministry, and some came from far; though sometimes he signified his dislike of their so doing, so far was he from glorying in it. But they who had spiritual senses exercised to discern things that differ, would attend upon that ministry which they found to be most edifying.

He was about eight years, from first to last, labouring in the word and doctrine at Worthenbury, and his labour was not altogether in vain. He saw in many of the travel of his soul, to the rejoicing of his heart, but with this particular dispensation, (which I have heard him sometimes speak of) that most or all of those in that parish, whom he was, through grace, instrumental of good to, died before he left the parish, or quickly after; so that, within a few years after his removal thence, there were very few of the visible fruits of his ministry there; and a new generation sprung up there, who knew not Joseph. Yet the opportunity he found there, was of doing the more good, by having those that were his charge near about him, made him all his days bear his testimony to parish order, where it may be had upon good terms, as much more eligible, and more likely to answer the end, than the congregational way of gathering churches from places far distant, which could not ordinarily meet to worship God together. From this experience here (though he would say we must do what we can, when we cannot do what we would) he often wished and prayed for the opening of a door, by which to return to that order again.

He had not been long at Worthenbury, but he began to be taken notice of by the neighbouring ministers, as likely to be a considerable man. Though his extraordinary modesty and humility (which even in his youth he was remarkable for) made him to sit down with silence in the lowest room, and to say as Elihu, *days shall speak*; yet his eminent gifts and graces could not long be hid, the ointment of the right hand will betray itslef, and a person of his merits could not but meet with those quickly, who said, *Friend, go up higher*; and so that scripture was fulfilled, Luke 14. 10. He was often called upon to preach the week-day lectures, which were set up plentifully, and diligently attended upon in those parts; and his labours were generally very acceptable and successful. The *vox populi* fastened upon him the epithet of *Heavenly Henry*, by which title he was commonly known all the country over; and his advice was sought for by many neighbouring ministers and christians; for he was one of those that found favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. He was noted at his first setting out (as I have been told by one who was then intimately acquainted with him, and with his character and conversation) for three things; 1. Great piety and devotion, and a mighty savour of godliness in all his converse. 2. Great industry in the pursuit of useful knowledge: he was particularly observed to be very inquisitive when he was among the aged and intelligent, hearing them and asking them questions; a good example to young men, especially young ministers. 3. Great self-denial, self-diffidence, and self-abasement: this eminent humility put a lustre upon all his other graces. This character of him reminds me of a passage I have sometimes heard him tell, as a check to the forwardness and confidence of young men, that once at a meeting of ministers, a question of moment was started, to be debated among them: upon the first proposal of it: a confident young man shoots his bolt presently, "Truly," saith he, "I hold it so." "You hold, Sir," saith a grave minister, "it becomes you to hold your peace."

Besides his frequent preaching of the lectures about him, he was a constant and diligent attendant upon those within his reach, as a hearer; and not only wrote the sermons he heard, but afterwards recorded in his diary what in each sermon reached his heart, affected him and did him good; adding some proper, pious ejaculations, which were the breathings of his heart, when he meditated upon, and prayed over the sermons.

What a wonderful degree of piety and humility doth it evidence, for one of so great acquaintance with the things of God to write, "This I learnt out of such a sermon, and this was the truth I made up to myself out of such a sermon! and indeed something out of every sermon." His diligent improvement of the word preached contributed (more than any one thing, as a means) to his great attainments in knowledge and grace.

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grace. He would say sometimes, that one great use of week-day lectures was, that it gave ministers an opportunity of hearing one another preach, by which they are likely to profit, when they hear not as masters, but as scholars; not as censors, but as learners.

His great friend and companion, and fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord, was the worthy Mr. R. Steel, (minister of Hanmer, one of the next parishes to Worthenbury) whose praise is in the churches of Christ, for his excellent and ufeful treatises, *The Husbandman's Calling; An Antidote against Distractions,* and several others. He was Mr. Henry's *alter idem,* the man of his counsel: with him he joined frequently at Hanmer and elsewhere in christian conference, and in days of humiliation and prayer, besides their meetings with other ministers at public lectures; after which it was usual for them to spend some time among themselves in set disputations in *Latin.* This was the work that in those days was carried on among ministers, who made it their business, as iron sharpens iron, to provoke one another to love and good works. What was done of this kind in Worcestershire, Mr. Baxter tells us in his life.

In the beginning of his days, he often laboured under bodily distempers; it was feared that he was in a consumption; and some blamed him for taking so much pains in his ministerial work, suggesting to him, *Master, spare thyself.* One of his friends told him, he lighted up all his pound of candles together; and that he could not hold out long at that rate; and wished him to be a better husband of his strength: but he often reflected upon it with comfort afterwards, that he was not influenced by such suggestions: *The more we do, the more we may do* (so he would sometimes say) *in the service of God.* When his work was sometimes more than ordinary, and bore hard upon him, he thus appealed to God; "Thou knowest, Lord, how well contented I am to spend and to be spent in thy service; and if the outward man decay, O, let the inward man be renewed." Upon the returns of his indisposition, he expresseth a great concern how to get spiritual good by it; to come out of the furnace, and leave some dross behind; for it is a great loss to lose an affliction. He mentions it as that which he hoped did him good; that he was ready to look upon every return of distemper, as a summons to the grave; thus he learned to die daily. "I find (saith he) my earthly tabernacle tottering; and when it is taken down, I shall have a building in heaven, that shall never fail. Blessed be God the Father, and my Lord Jesus Christ, and the good Spirit of Grace. Even so, Amen." This was both his strength and his song, under his bodily infirmities.

While he was at Worthenbury, he constantly laid by the tenth of his income for the poor, which he carefully and faithfully disposed of, in the liberal things which he devised, especially the teaching of poor children: and he would recommend it as a good rule to lay by for charity, (in some proportion, according as the circumstances are) and then it will be the easier to lay out in charity; we shall be the more apt to seek for opportunities of doing good, when we have money lying by us; of which we have said, "this is not our own, but the poors." To encourage himself and others to works of charity, he would say, "He is no fool who parts with that which he cannot keep, when he is sure to be recompensed with that which he cannot lose." And yet to prove alms to be righteousness, and to exclude all boasting of them, he often expressed himself in those words of David, *Of thine own, Lord, have we given thee.*

In 1658, the ministers of that neighbourhood began to enlarge their correspondence with the ministers of N. Wales; and several meetings they had at Ruthin and other places that year, for the settling of a correspondence, and the promoting of unity and love, and good understanding among themselves, by entering into an association, like those some years before of Worcestershire and Cumberland, to which, as their pattern, (those two having been published) they did refer themselves. They appointed particular associations; and (notwithstanding the differences of apprehension that were among them, some being in their judgments *Episcopal,* others *Congregational,* and others *Classical)* they agreed to lay aside the thoughts of matters in variance, and to give to each other the right hand of fellowship; that with one shoulder, and with one consent, they might study each in their places to promote the common interest of Christ's kingdom, and the common salvation of precious souls. He observed that this year, after the death of *Oliver Cromwell,* there was generally throughout the nation a great change in the temper of God's people, and a mighty tendency towards peace and unity, as if they were by consent weary of their long clashings, which in his diary he expresseth his great rejoicing in, and his hopes that the time was at hand, when *Judah should no longer vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim envy Judah, neither should they learn war any more.* And though these hopes were soon disappointed by a change of the scene, yet he would often speak of the experience of that and the following year in those parts, as a specimen of what may yet be expected, (and therefore in faith prayed for,) when the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high. But alas! who shall live when God doth this? From this experience he likewise gathered this observation, that it is not so much our difference of opinion that doth us the mischief, (for we may as soon expect all the clocks in the town to strike together, as to see all good people of a mind in every thing on this side heaven) but the mismanagement of that difference.

In the association of the ministers, it was referred to Mr. Henry to draw up that part of their agreement, which concerned the Worship of God; which task he performed to their satisfaction. His preface to what he drew up begins thus: "Though the main of our desires and endeavours be after unity in the greater things of God, yet we judge uniformity in the circumstances of worship, a thing not to be altogether neglected by us, not only in regard of that influence, which external visible order hath upon the beauty and comeliness of the churches of Christ; but also as it hath a direct tendency, to the strengthening of our hands in ministerial services, and withal to the removing of those prejudices

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prejudices, which many people have conceived, even, against religion, and worship itself. We bless God from our very souls for that whereunto we have already attained; and yet we hope some farther thing may be done, in reference to our closer walking by the same rule, and minding the same things. The word of God is the rule which we desire and resolve to walk by in the administration of ordinances; and for those things wherein the word is silent, we think we may and ought to have recourse to christian prudence, and the practice of the reformed churches, agreeing with the general rules of the word: and therefore we have had (as we think we ought) in our present agreement, a special eye to the directory, &c."

These agreements of theirs were the more likely to be for good, for that here, (as in Worcestershire,) when they were in agitation, the ministers set apart a day of fasting and prayer among themselves, to bewail ministerial neglects, and to seek to God for direction and success in their ministerial work. They met sometimes for this purpose at Mr. Henry's house, at Worthenbury.

One passage may not improperly be inserted here, that once, at a meeting of the ministers, being desired to subscribe a certificate, concerning one whom he had not sufficient acquaintance with; he refused, giving this reason:—"That he preferred the peace of his conscience, before the friendship of all the men in the world."

Sep. 29, 1658, the lady Puleston died. "She was," saith he, "the best friend I had on earth, but my friend in heaven, is still where he was, and he will never leave me, nor forsake me." He preached her funeral sermon from Isa. 3, last, "Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. He hath noted this expression of hers not long before she died: "My soul leans to Jesus Christ; lean to me, sweet Saviour?" About this time, he writes, "A dark cloud is over my concernments in this family; but my desire is, that whatever becomes of me and my interest, the interest of Christ may still be kept on foot in this place. Amen, so be it." But he adds soon after, that saying of Athanasius, which he was used often to quote, and take comfort from; "*Nubecula est, et cito pertransibit.*"—*It is a little cloud, and will soon blow over.*

About a year after, Sep. 5, 1659, Judge Puleston died, and all Mr. Henry's interest in the Emeral family was buried in his grave. He preached the Judge's funeral sermon, from Neh. 13. 14, "Wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof." The design of which sermon was not to applaud his deceased friend; I find not a word in the sermon to that purpose: but he took occasion, from the instance of so great a benefactor to the ministry, as the Judge was, to shew that deeds done for the house of God, and the offices thereof, are good deeds, and to press people, according as their ability and opportunity was, to do such deeds. One passage I find in that sermon, which ought to be recorded; that it had been for several years the practice of a worthy gentleman in the neighbouring county, in renewing his leases, instead of making it a condition, that his tenants should keep a hawk, or a dog for him, to oblige them, that they should keep a bible in their houses for themselves, and should bring up their children to learn to read and to be catechized. "This," saith he, "would be no charge to you, and it might oblige them to that, which otherwise they would neglect." "Some wished," saith he, in his diary, "that I had chosen some other subject for that sermon, but I approved myself to God, and if I please men, I am not the servant of Christ."

What personal affronts he received from some of the branches of that family at that time, need not be mentioned, but with what exemplary patience he bore them, ought not to be forgotten.

In Mar. 1658, he was very much solicited to leave Worthenbury, and to accept of the vicarage of Wrexham, which was a place that he had both a great interest in, and a great kindness for, but he could not see his call clear from Worthenbury, so he declined it. The same year he had an offer made him of a considerable living near London; but he was not of them that are given to change, nor did he consult with flesh and blood, nor seek great things to himself.

That year he had some disturbance from the quakers, who were set on by some others, who wished ill to his ministry; they challenged him to dispute with them; and that which he was to prove against them, was, "That the God he worshipped, was not an idol;" that John Baddely, (a blacksmith in Malpas, and the ringleader of the Quakers in that country) was not infallible, nor without sin; that baptism with water, and the Lord's supper, are gospel-ordinances; that the scriptures are the word of God, and that Jesus Christ will come to judge the world at the last day: but he never had any public disputes with them, nor so much disturbance from them in public worship, as some other ministers had elsewhere about that time. He had some apprehensions at that time, that God would make the Quakers, a scourge to this nation; but had comfort in this assurance, that God would in due time vindicate his own honour, and the honour of his ordinances, and those of them who will not repent to give him glory, will be cast into the fire.

One passage I cannot omit, because it discovers what kind of spirit the Quakers were of: a debauched gentleman being in his revels at Malpas, drinking and swearing; was, after a sort, reproved for it by Baddely the Quaker, who was in his company; "Why," saith the gentleman, "I'll ask thee one question, whether is it better for me to follow drinking and swearing, or to go and hear Henry?" He answered, "Of the two, rather follow thy drinking and swearing."

The Cheshire rising this year, (in opposition to the irregular powers that then were uppermost,) under Sir G. Booth (afterwards Lord Delamere) and that of N. Wales, under Sir T. Middleton, could not but affect Worthenbury, and the country thereabouts. Mr. Henry's prayer for them in his diary, the day of their first appearing, is, "Lord own them, if they truly own thee." He notes, that Lambert's forces, which came down

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down to suppress them, did, in that neighbourhood, espouse the Quakers' cause, and offer injury to some ministers; and therefore, saith he, "unless God intend the ruin of the nation by them, they cannot prosper:" nor did they long, though, in that expedition, they had success. In their return, some of Lambert's soldiers were at Worthenbury church, hearing Mr. Henry upon a Lord's Day; and one of them sat with his hat on, while they were singing psalms, for which he publicly admonished him: and there being many Anabaptists among them, he hath recorded it as a good providence, that those questions in the catechism, which are concerning baptism, came in course to be expounded that day. The first rising of the Cheshire forces was Aug. 1, 1659; and the 19th following, they were worsted and scattered by Lambert's forces, near Northwich, a strange spirit of fear being upon them, which quite took off their chariot-wheels. The country called it not the Cheshire rising, but the Cheshire race. Some blamed him that he did not give God thanks publicly for the defeat of Sir G. Booth; to whom he answered, with his usual mildness, that his "apprehensions concerning that affair were not the same with theirs. We are now," saith he, "much in the dark, never more." He preached the lecture at Chester soon after, just at the time when Mr. Cook, an eminent minister in Chester, and several others, were carried prisoners to London, for their agency in the late attempt; and the city was threatened to have their charter taken away, &c. The text in course that day (for they preached over the latter part of that epistle, if not the whole, at that lecture) happened to be Heb. 13. 14. *We have here no continuing city*, which he thought a word upon the wheels at that time. He notes in his diary, that when, after that, the Army ruled, disturbed the Parliament, and carried all before them with a high hand, there were great grounds to fear sad times approaching; and his prayer is, "Lord, fit thy people for the fiery trial!"

He was a hearty well-wisher to the return of the King, the Spring following, Apr. 1660, and was much affected with the mercy of it. "While others rejoice carnally," saith he, "Lord, help thy people to rejoice spiritually, in our public national mercies." It was upon that occasion that Mr. Baxter preached his sermon of *Right Rejoicing*, on Lu. 10. 20. But he and others soon saw cause to rejoice with trembling, and to sing both of mercy and judgment; for, about that time, he hath this melancholy remark: "Religion loses ground exceedingly, and prophaneness gets it:" Help, Lord! However, he was very industrious to quiet the minds of some who were uneasy at that great revolution; and that scripture yielded him much satisfaction, Joh. 3. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.* If Christ be not only the Head of the Church, but *Head over all things* to the Church, we may be assured, that all things shall be made to work together for good to it. The text also, which the Lord put into his heart to preach upon, on the day of public thanksgiving for the king's restoration, was very comfortable to him, Pro. 21. 1. *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord.* His sense of that great mercy of God to the nation, in the unbloody, peaceable and legal settlement of king Charles II. upon the throne, was the same with that of multitudes besides, both ministers and others, that were of the quiet in the land, who yet, not long after, suffered very hard things under him. Soon after the return of the King, he notes how industrious some were to remove him from Worthenbury, on which he writes this, as the breathing of his soul towards God; "Lord, if it please thee, fasten me here as a nail in a sure place; if otherwise, I will take nothing ill which thou doest with me:" And when pressed by his friends more earnestly than before, to accept of some other place, "Lord," saith he, "mine eye is up unto thee, I am wholly at thy disposal, make my way plain before my face, because of mine enemies; my resolution is, to deny myself, if thou callest me. Here (or any where, 'tis no great matter where) I am." Many years after the king's return, he dated a letter, May 29. Τῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτῇ τῇ γλυκυπικρᾷ.—*That sweet, that bitter day.*

There are two things further, which I think it may be of use to give some account of in the close of this chapter. 1. Of the course of his ministry at Worthenbury; and 2. Of the state of his soul, and the communion he had with God in those years.

As to the subjects he preached upon, he did not use to dwell long upon a text. "Better one sermon upon many texts," (viz. many scriptures opened and applied) "than many sermons upon one text!" To that purpose he would sometimes speak.

He used to preach in a fixed method, and linked his subjects in a sort of a chain: he adapted his method, and style, to the capacity of his hearers, fetching his similitudes for illustration, from those things which were familiar to them. He did not shoot the arrow of the word over their heads in high notions, or the flourishes of affected rhetoric, nor under their feet by blunt and homely expressions, as many do under pretence of plainness, but to their hearts, in close and lively applications. His delivery was very graceful and agreeable, far from being either noisy and precipitate, on the one hand, or dull and slow, on the other. His doctrine did drop as the dew, and distil as the soaking rain, and came with a charming pleasing power, such as many will bear witness to, that have wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

He wrote the notes of his sermons pretty large, for the most part, and always very legible: but even when he had put his last hand to them, he commonly left many imperfect hints, which gave room for enlargements in preaching, wherein he had a great felicity. And he would often advise ministers not to tie themselves too strictly to their notes, but having well-digested the matter before, to allow themselves a liberty of expression, such as a man's affections, if they be well raised, will be apt to furnish him with. But for this, no certain rule can be given; there are diversities of gifts, and each to profit withal.

He kept his sermon-notes in very neat and exact order; sermons in course, according to the order of the subject, and occasional sermons according to the scripture order of the texts; so that he could readily turn to

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to any of them: And yet, though afterwards he was removed to a place far enough distant from any of that auditory; yet, (though some have desired it) he seldom preached any of those hundreds of sermons which he had preached at Worthenbury; no, not when he preached ever so privately; but to the last, he studied new sermons, and wrote them as elaborately as ever; for he thought a sermon best preached, when it was newly meditated: Nay, if sometimes, he had occasion to preach upon the same text, yet he would make and write the sermon anew; and he never offered that to God which cost him nothing.

When he went to Oxford, and preached there before the University in Christ-Church, as he did several times, his labours were not only very acceptable, but successful too; particularly one sermon which he preached there, on Pro. 14. 9. *Fools make a mock at sin:* for which sermon, a young master of arts came to his chamber afterwards to return him thanks, and to acknowledge the good impressions, which divine grace, by that sermon, had made upon his soul, which he hoped he should never forget.

In his diary, he frequently records the frame of his spirit in studying and preaching: sometimes blessing God for signal help vouchsafed, and owning him the Lord God of all his enlargements: at other times, complaining of great deadness and straitness. "It is a wonder," saith he, "that I can speak of eternal things, with so little sense of the reality of them. Lord, strengthen that which remains, which is ready to die." And he once writes thus upon a studying day: "I forgot explicitly and expressly, when I began, to crave help from God, and the chariot-wheels drove accordingly. Lord, forgive my omissions, and keep me in the way of duty."

As to the state of his soul in these years, it should seem, by his diary, that he was exercised with some doubts and fears concerning it. "I think," saith he, "never did any poor creature pass through such a mixture of hope and fear, joy and sadness, assurance and doubting, down and up, as I have done these years past—(The notice of this may be of use to poor drooping christians, that they may know their case is not singular; and that if God, for a small moment, hide his face from them, he deals with them, no otherwise, than as he useth sometimes to deal with the dearest of his servants.) It would affect one, to hear one that lived a life of communion with God, complaining of great straitness in prayer. No life at all in the duty, many wanderings; if my prayers were written down, and my vain thoughts interlined, what incoherent nonsense would there be? I am ashamed, Lord, I am ashamed; O pity, and pardon. To hear him suspecting the workings of pride of heart, when he gave an account to a friend, who enquired of him, touching the success of his ministry, and that he should record this concerning himself, with this ejaculation annexed: the Lord pardon and subdue. It was a sign that he kept a very watchful eye upon the motions of his own heart.

To hear him charging it upon himself, that he was present at such a duty in the midst of many distractions, not tasting sweetness in it, &c. "When a fire is first kindled," saith he, "there is a deal of smoke and smother, that afterwards wears away; so in young converts, much peevishness, frowardness, darkness: So, it hath been with my soul, and so it is yet in a great measure: Lord, pity, and do not quench the smoking flax; though as yet it doth but smoke, let these sparks be blown up into a flame."

Great mercies, but poor returns; signal opportunities, but small improvements: such are his complaints frequently concerning himself. And though few, or none, excelled him in profitable discourse; yet, in that, he often bewails his barrenness and unprofitableness. Little good done or gotten such a day for want of a heart; it is my sin and shame. O that I had wings like a dove!

Yet when he wanted a faith of assurance, he lived by a faith of adherence. "Such a day," says he, "a full resignation was made of all my concernments, into the hands of my heavenly Father; let him deal with me as seemeth good in his eyes; I am learning and labouring to live by faith; Lord, help my unbelief." Another time he notes, that many perplexing fears being upon his spirit, they were all silenced with that sweet word which was seasonably brought to his remembrance; *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.*

He very frequently kept days of fasting and humiliation in secret, which he calls his days of atonement. Sometimes he observed these, monthly, and sometimes, only upon special occasions; but the memoranda in his diary (not only while he was at Worthenbury, but often after) shew what sweet communion he had with God in those solemn duties, which no eye was witness to, but his who sees in secret, and will reward openly. Remember (O my soul) such a day, as a day of more than ordinary engagements entered into, and strong resolutions taken up of closer walking, and more watchfulness; O my God, undertake for me! And upon another of those days of secret prayer and humiliation, he notes, "If sowing in tears be so sweet, what then will the harvest be, when I shall reap in joy? Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and will in due time heal all thy diseases.

CHAP. IV.

His Marriage, Family, Family Religion, and the Education of his Children.

HE removed from Emeral, to the house in Worthenbury, which the Judge had built for him, in Feb. 1658; and then had one of his sisters with him to keep his house. No sooner had he a tent, but God had an altar in it, and that a smoking altar. There he set up repetition on sabbath evenings, and welcomed his neighbours to it.

His Christian friends, often, and sometimes, his brethren in the ministry, kept days of fasting and prayer

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prayer at his house. He used to tell people, when they had built new houses, they must dedicate them, (referring to Deut. 20. 5. and Psal. 30. *ult.*) that is, they must invite God to their houses, and devote them to his service.

Providence having thus brought him into a house of his own, soon after provided him a Help-mate for him. After long agitation, and some discouragement and opposition from the father, Apr. 26, 1660, he married Katharine, the only daughter and heir of Mr. Daniel Matthews, of Broad-Oak, in the township of Iscoyd, in Flintshire, (but in the parish of Malpas, which is in Cheshire, and about two miles distant from Whitchurch, a considerable market-town in Shropshire.) Mr. Matthews was a gentleman of a very competent estate; such a one as king James the First used to say, was the happiest lot of all others, which set a man below the office of a justice of peace, and above that of a petty constable. This was his only child; very fair and honourable overtures had been made for her disposal; but it pleased God so to order events, and to over-rule the spirits of those concerned, that she was reserved to be a blessing to this good man, in things pertaining both to life and godliness.

His purpose of marriage was published in the church three Lord's-days before; a laudable practice, which he greatly approved, and persuaded others to.

The day before his marriage, he kept as a day of secret prayer and fasting.

He used to say, those who would have comfort in that change of condition, must see to it, that they bring none of the guilt of the sins of their single state with them into the married state. And the presence of Christ, at a wedding, will turn the water into wine; and he will come, if he be invited by prayer.

He took all occasions, while he lived, to express his thankfulness to God, for the great comfort he had in this relation. "A day of mercy," (so he writes on his marriage-day,) "never to be forgotten." "God had given him one," (as he writes afterwards,) "every way his helper, in whom he had much comfort, and for whom he thanked God with all his heart." He writes in his Diary, Apr. 26, 1680, "This day we have been married twenty years, in which time we have received of the Lord more than twenty thousand mercies: to God be glory." Sometimes he writes, we have been so long married, and never reconciled; that is, there never was any occasion for it. His usual prayer for his friends in the married state, was according to his own practice in that state: that they might be mutually serviceable to each other's faith and holiness, and jointly serviceable to God's honour and glory.

Her father, though he put some hardships upon him in the terms, and had been somewhat averse to the match; yet, by Mr. Henry's great prudence, and God's good providence, was influenced to give a free consent to it; and he himself, with his own hand, gave her in marriage. From this, as from other experiences, Mr. Henry had learned to say with assurance, it is not in vain to wait upon God and to keep his way. Mr. Matthews settled part of his estate before marriage upon them and theirs: he lived about seven years after; and when he died, the remainder of it came to them. This competent estate, which the Divine Providence brought into his hand, was not only a comfortable support to him, when he was turned out of his living, and when many faithful ministers of Christ were reduced to great poverty and straits; but it enabled him likewise, as he had opportunity, to preach the gospel freely, which he did to his dying day; and not only so, but to give for the relief of others that were in want, in which he sowed plentifully, to a very large proportion of his income; and often blessed God that he had wherewithal, remembering the words of the Lord, how he said, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

Such was his house, and such the vine, which God graciously planted by the side of his house. By her God gave him six children, all born within less than eight years; the two eldest, sons, John and Matthew; the other four, daughters, Sarah, Katharine, Eleanor, and Anne. His eldest son, John, died of the measles in the sixth year of his age, and the rest were in mercy continued to him.

The Lord having built him up into a family, he was careful and faithful in making good his solemn vow at his Ordination, that *he and his house would serve the Lord.* He would often say, "That we are really, which we are relatively." It is not so much what we are at church, as what we are in our families. Religion, in the power of it, will be family-religion. In this his practice was very exemplary; he was one that walked before his house in a perfect way, with a perfect heart, and therein behaved himself wisely. His constant care and prudent endeavour was, not only to put away iniquity far from his tabernacle, but that where he dwelt, the word of Christ might dwell richly. If he might have no other church, yet he had a church in his house.

He made conscience of closet-worship, and did abound in it, not making his family-worship to excuse for that. He hath this affecting note in his Diary, upon the removing of his closet but from one room in the house to another; this day, says he, my new closet was consecrated, if I may so say, with this prayer: "That all the prayers that ever should be made in it, according to the will of God, morning, evening, and at noon-day, ordinary or extraordinary, might be accepted of God, and obtain a gracious answer. Amen and Amen." It was the caution and advice which he frequently gave to his children and friends: be sure you look to your secret duty, keep that up, whatever you do: the soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. He observed that apostasy generally begins at the closet-door. Secret prayer is first neglected, and carelessly performed, then frequently omitted, and after a while, wholly cast off; and then farewel God, and Christ, and all Religion.

He also advised, that secret duty be performed secretly, which was the admonition he gave sometimes to those who caused their voice to be heard on high in that duty.

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Besides this, he and his wife constantly prayed together, morning and evening; and never, if they were together at home or abroad, was it intermitted; and from his own experience of the benefit of this practice, he would take all opportunities to recommend it to those in that relation, as conducing very much to the comfort of it, and to their furtherance in that, which he would often say, is the great duty of yoke-fellows; and that is, to do all they can to help one another to heaven. He would say, that this duty of husbands and wives praying together, is intimated in that of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 3. 7. where they are exhorted to *live as heirs together of the grace of life, that their prayers* (especially their prayers together) *be not hindered;* that nothing may be done to hinder them from praying together, nor to hinder them in it, nor to spoil the success of those prayers. This sanctifies the relation, and fetcheth in a blessing upon it; makes the comforts of it, the more sweet, and the cares and crosses of it, the more easy, and is an excellent means of preserving and increasing love in the relation. Many to whom he hath recommended the practice of this duty, have blessed God for him, and for his advice concerning it. When he was abroad, and lay with any of his friends, he would mind them of his rule, "That they who lay together, must pray together." In the performance of this part, of his daily worship, he was usually short, but often much affected.

Besides these, he made conscience, and made a business of Family worship in all the parts of it; and in it he was uniform, steady, and constant, from the time that he was first called to the charge of a family, to his dying-day; and according to his own practice, he took all occasions to press it upon others. His doctrine once from Jos. 24. 15. was, "That family-worship is family-duty." He would say sometimes, if the worship of God be not in the house, write, *Lord have mercy on us,* upon the door, for there is a plague, a curse in it. It is the judgment of Abp. Tillotson, in that excellent book which he published a little before his death, upon this subject, "That constant family-worship is so necessary to keep alive a sense of God and religion in the minds of men, that he sees not how any family that neglects it, can in reason be esteemed a family of Christians, or indeed to have any religion at all." How earnestly would Mr. Henry reason with people sometimes about this matter, and tell them, what a blessing it would bring upon them, and their houses, and all that they had. He that makes his house a little church, shall find that God will make it a little sanctuary. It may be of use to give a particular account of his practice in this matter, because it was very exemplary. As to the time of it, his rule was commonly, the earlier the better, both morning and evening; in the morning before worldly business crowded in, *early will I seek thee:* He that is the first, should have the first; nor is it fit that the worship of God should stand by and wait while the world's turn is served. And early in the evening, before the children and servants began to be sleepy; and therefore, if it might be, he would have prayer at night, before supper, that the body might be the more fit, to serve the soul in that service of God. And, indeed, he did industriously contrive all the circumstances of his family-worship, so as to make it most solemn, and most likely to answer the end. He always made it the business of every day, and not (as too many make it) a by-business. This being his fixed principle, all other affairs must be sure to give way to this. And he would tell those who objected against family worship, that they could not get time for it; that if they would but put on Christian resolution at first, they would not find the difficulty so great as they imagined; but after a while, their other affairs would fall in easily and naturally with this, especially where there is that *wisdom which is profitable to direct.* Nay, they would find it to be a great preserver of order and decency in a family, and it would be like a hem to all their other business, to keep it from ravelling. He was ever careful to have all his family present at family-worship; though sometimes, living in the country, he had a great houshold; yet he would have not only his children and sojourners (if he had any) and domestic servants, but his workmen and day-labourers, and all that were employed for him, if they were within call to be present, to join with him in this service; and as it was an act of his charity, many times to set them to work for him, so to that he added this act of piety, to set them to work for God. And usually, when he paid his workmen their wages, he gave them some good counsel about their souls: yet, if any that should come to family-worship were at a distance, and must be staid for long, he would rather want them, than put the duty much out of time; and would sometimes say at a night, "Better one away than all sleepy."

The performances of his family-worship were the same, morning and evening. He observed, that under the law, the morning and the evening lamb, had the same meat-offering and drink-offering, Ex. 29, 38—41. He always began with a short, but very solemn prayer, imploring the Divine Presence and Grace, assistance and acceptance; particularly begging a blessing upon the word to be read, in reference to which, he often put up this petition: "That the same Spirit that indited the scripture, would enable us to understand the scripture, and to make up something to ourselves out of it, that may do us good." And esteeming the word of God as his necessary food, he would sometimes pray in a morning, that "our souls might have a good meal out of it." He commonly concluded even this short prayer, as he did also his blessings before and after meat, with a doxology, as Paul upon all occasions, *To him be glory,* &c. which is properly adoration, and is an essential part of prayer.

He next sung a psalm, and commonly he sung David's Psalms in order, throughout; sometimes using the old translation, but generally Mr. Barton's; and his usual way was to sing a whole psalm throughout, though perhaps a long one, and to sing quick; (yet with a good variety of proper and pleasant tunes) and that he might do so, usually the psalm was sung without

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out reading the line betwixt (every one in the family having a book;) which he preferred much before the common way of singing, where it might conveniently be done, as more agreeable to the practice of the primitive church, and the reformed churches abroad; and by this means, he thought the duty more likely to be performed in the spirit, and with the understanding; the sense being not so broken, nor the affections interrupted, as in reading the line betwixt. He would say, that a scripture-ground for singing psalms in families, might be taken from Ps. 118. 15. *The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous;* and that it is a way to hold forth godliness, (like Rahab's scarlet thread, Josh. 2. 17.) to such as pass by our windows.

He next read a portion of scripture, taking the Bible in order. He would sometimes blame those who only *pray* in their families, and do not *read the scripture*. In prayer, we speak to God, by the word he speaks to us: "And is there any reason (he would say) that we should speak all?" In the tabernacle, the priests were every day to burn incense, and to light the lamps; the former, figuring the duty of prayer, the latter, the duty of reading the word. Sometimes he would say, Those do well, that pray morning and evening in their families; those do better, that pray, and read the scriptures; but those do best of all, that pray, and read, and sing psalms; and christians should *covet earnestly the best gifts.*

He advised the reading of the scripture in order; for though one star in the firmament of the scripture, differ from another star in glory, yet wherever God hath a mouth to speak, we should have an ear to hear; and the diligent searcher may find much excellent matter in those parts of scripture, which we are sometimes tempted to think might have been spared. How affectionately would he sometimes bless God for every book, and chapter, and verse, and line, in the bible!

What he read in his family, he always expounded; and exhorted all Ministers to do so, as an excellent means of increasing their acquaintance with the scripture. His expositions were not so much critical, as plain, practical, and useful, and such as tended to edification, and to answer the end for which the scriptures were written, which is to make us wise to salvation. And herein he had a peculiar excellence, performing that daily exercise with so much judgment, and, at the same time, with such facility and clearness, as if every exposition had been premeditated; and very instructive they were, as well as affecting, to the auditors. His observations were often very striking and surprising, and such as one shall not ordinarily meet with. Commonly, in his expositions, he reduced the matter of the chapter, or psalm read, to some heads; not by a logical analysis, which often minces it too small, and confounds the sense with the terms; but by such a distribution as the matter did most easily and unforcedly fall into. He often mentioned that saying of Tertullian's, "I adore the fulness of the scriptures;" and sometimes that, *Scriptura semper habet aliquid relegentibus—Those who read the scripture again and again, will always find in it something new.* When sometimes he had hit upon some useful observation that was new to him, he would say afterwards to those about him, "How often have I read this chapter, and never before now took notice of such a thing in it!" He put his children, while they were with him, to write these expositions; and when they were gone from him, the strangers that sojourned with him, did the same. What collections his children had, though but broken and very imperfect hints; yet, when afterwards they were disposed of in the world, were of good use to them and their families. He often wished that some expositions of this nature, that is, plain and practical, and helping to raise the affections, and guide the conversation, by the word, were published by some suitable person for the benefit of families: but such were his great modesty and self-diffidence, (though few more able for it,) that he would never be persuaded to attempt any thing of that kind himself. As an evidence how much his heart was upon it, to have the word of God read and understood in families, take this passage out of his last will and testament: "I give and bequeath to each of my four daughters, Mr. Poole's *English Annotations upon the Bible*, in two volumes, of the last and best edition that shall be to be had at the time of my decease, together with Mr. Barton's last and best translation of the *Singing Psalms*, one to each of them; requiring and requesting them to make daily use of the same, for the instruction, edification, and comfort of themselves and their families.—But it is time to proceed to the method of his Family-worship. The chapter or psalm being read and expounded, he required from his children, some account of what they could remember of it; and sometimes, would discourse with them plainly and familiarly about it, that he might lead them into an acquaintance with it, and (if it might be) impress something of it upon their hearts.

He then prayed, and always kneeling, which he looked upon as the fittest and most proper gesture for prayer; and he took care that his family should address themselves to the duty, with the outward expressions of reverence and composedness. He usually fetched his matter and expressions in prayer, from the chapter that was read, and the psalm that was sung, which were often very affecting, and helped much to stir up and excite praying graces. He sometimes observed in those psalms, where reference is had to the scripture-stories, (as Ps. 83.-and many others,) that those who are well-acquainted with the scriptures, need not to make use of the help of prescribed forms, which are very necessary for those that cannot do the duty without them, but are unbecoming those that can; as a *go-cart* is needful to a child, or crutches to one that is lame; but neither of them agreeable to one that needs them not. In family-prayer, he was usually most full in giving thanks for family-mercies, confessing family-sins, and begging family-blessings. He would often be very particular in prayer for his family. If any were absent, they were sure to have an express petition put up for them. He used to ob-

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serve, concerning Job, (ch. 1. 5.) that he offered burnt-offerings for his children, *according to the number of them all*, an offering for each child; and so would he sometimes, in praying for his children, put up a petition for each child. He always observed the annual return of the birth-day of each of his children, to bless God for his mercy to him and his wife in that child; the giving of it, the continuance of it, the comfort they had in it, &c. with some special request to God for that child. Every servant and sojourner, at their coming into his family, and their going out, (beside the daily remembrances of them,) had a particular petition put up for them, according as their circumstances were. The strangers that were at any time within his gates, he was wont particularly to recommend to God in prayer, with much affection, and christian concern, for them and their connections. He was daily mindful of those that desired his prayers for them, and would say sometimes, " It is a great comfort that God knows whom we mean in prayer, though we do not name them." Particular providences concerning the country, as to health or sickness, good or bad weather, or the like, he commonly took notice of in prayer, as there was occasion; and would often beg of God to fit us for the next providence, whatever it might be. Nor did he ever forget to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. He always concluded family-prayer, both morning and evening, with a solemn benediction, after the doxology: The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with us, &c. Thus did he daily bless his houshold.

Immediately after the prayer was ended, his children together, with bended knee, asked a blessing of him and their mother; that is, desired of them to pray to God to bless them; which blessing was given with great solemnity and affection; and if any of them were absent, they were remembered, " The Lord bless you and your brother, or you and your sister that is absent."

This was his daily worship, which he never altered, (unless as is after mentioned,) nor ever omitted any part of, though he went from home ever so early, or returned ever so late, or had ever so much business for his servants to do. He would say, that sometimes he saw cause to shorten his devotions, but he would never omit any of them; for if an excuse be once admitted for an omission, it will be often returning. He was not willing (unless the necessity were urgent) that any should go from his house in a morning before family-worship; but, upon such an occasion, would remind his friends, that " Prayer and provender never hinder a journey."

He managed his daily family-worship, so as to make it a pleasure, and not a task, to his children and servants; for he was seldom long, and never tedious in the service: the variety of the duties made it the more pleasant; so that none who joined with him, had ever any reason to say, *Behold, what a weariness is it!* Such an excellent faculty he had of rendering Religion the most sweet and amiable employment in the world; and so careful was he (like Jacob) " to drive as the children could go," not putting *new wine into old bottles*. If some good people that mean well, would do likewise, it might prevent many of those prejudices which young persons are apt to conceive against religion, when the services of it are made a toil and a terror to them.

On Thursday evenings, (instead of reading,) he catechized his children and servants in the *Assembly's* Catechism, with the *Proofs*, or sometimes in a little catechism, *Concerning the matter of Prayer*, published in 1674, and said to be written by Dr. Collins, which they learned for their help in the gift of prayer, and he explained it to them. Or else they read, and he examined them in, some other useful book, as Mr. Pool's *Dialogues against the Papists*, the *Assembly's Confession of Faith*, with the scriptures, or the like.

On Saturday evenings, his children and servants gave him an account of what they could remember of the chapters that had been expounded all the week before, in order, each a several part, helping one another's memories for the recollecting of it. This he called, *gathering up the fragments which remained, that nothing might be lost*. He would say to them sometimes, as Christ to his disciples, *Have ye understood all these things?* If not, he took that occasion to explain them more fully. This exercise (which he constantly kept up all along) was both delightful and profitable, and, being managed by him with so much prudence, and sweetness, helped to instil into those about him, betimes, the knowledge and love of the Holy Scriptures.

When he had sojourners in his family, who were able to bear a part in such a service, he had commonly in the winter-time, set weekly conferences, on questions proposed, for their mutual edification and comfort in the fear of God; the substance of what was said, he himself took and kept an account of in writing.

But the Lord's-day he called and counted the " Queen of Days," the " Pearl of the Week," and observed it accordingly. The fourth commandment intimates a special regard to be had to the Sabbath in families: *Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter*, &c. it is *the Sabbath of the* LORD *in all your dwellings*. In this therefore he was very exact, and abounded in the work of the Lord in his family on that day. Whatever were the circumstances of his public opportunities, (which varied, as we shall find afterwards,) his family-religion on that day was the same. Extraordinary sacrifices must never supersede the *continual burnt-offering and his meat-offering*, Num. 28. 15. His common salutation of his family or friends, on the Lord's-day in the morning, was that of the primitive Christians: *The Lord is risen, he is risen indeed;* making it his chief business on that day, to celebrate the memory of Christ's Resurrection; and he would say sometimes, " Every Lord's-day is a true Christian's Easter-day." He took care to have his family ready early on that day, and was larger in exposition and prayer on Sabbath-mornings, than on other days. He would often remember

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remember that under the Law the daily sacrifice was doubled on Sabbath-days, two lambs in the morning, and two in the evening. He had always a particular subject for his expositions on Sabbath-mornings; the harmony of the Evangelists several times over, the Scripture-Prayers, Old Testament Prophecies of Christ, *Christ the true treasure* (so he entitled that subject) *sought and found in the field of the Old Testament.* He constantly sung a psalm after dinner, and another after supper, on the Lord's-day. In the evening of the day, his children and servants were catechized and examined in the sense and meaning of the answers in the Catechism; that they might not say it (as he used to tell them) like a parrot, by rote. Then the day's sermons were repeated, commonly by one of his children, when they were grown up, and while they were with him, and the family gave an account of what they could remember of the word of the day, which he endeavoured to fasten upon them, *as a nail in a sure place.* In his Prayers on the evening of the Sabbath, he was often more than ordinarily enlarged; as one that found not only God's service perfect freedom, but his work its own wages, and a *great reward,* not only *after* keeping, but (as he used to observe from Ps. 19. 11.) *in keeping God's Commandments:* a present reward of obedience *in* obedience. In that prayer he was usually very particular, in praying for his family, and all that belonged to it. It was a prayer he often put up, that we might have Grace to carry it " as a Minister, and a Minister's Wife, and a Minister's Children, and a Minister's Servants, should carry it, that the Ministry might in nothing be blamed." He would sometimes be a particular intercessor for the towns and parishes adjacent. How have I heard him, when he has been in the *Mount with God,* in a Sabbath evening-prayer, wrestle with the Lord for Chester, and Shrewsbury, and Nantwich, and Wrexham, and Whitchurch, &c. those " nests of Souls," wherein there are so many *that cannot discern between their right hand and their left* in spiritual things, *&c.* He closed his Sabbath-work in his family with singing Ps. 134. and then solemnly blessing his family.

Thus was he *Prophet and Priest* in his own house; and he was *King* there too, *ruling in the fear of God,* and not suffering sin upon any under his roof.

He had, many years ago, a man-servant that was once overtaken in drink abroad; for which, the next morning at family-worship, he solemnly reproved him, admonished him, and prayed for him with a *spirit of meekness,* and soon after, parted with him. But there were many of his servants, who, by the blessing of God upon his endeavours, got those good impressions upon their souls, which they retained ever after; so that they blessed God with all their hearts that ever they came under his roof. Few went from his service, till they were married, and went to families of their own; and some, after they had been married, and had buried their yoke-fellows, returned to his service again, saying, *Master it is good to be here.*

He brought up his children in the *fear of God,* with a great deal of care and tenderness, and did by his practice, as well as upon all occasions in discourses, condemn the indiscretion of those parents who are partial in their affections to their children, making a difference between them, which he observed, often proves of bad consequence in families, and lays a foundation of envy, contempt, and discord, which turns to their shame and ruin. His carriage towards his children was with great mildness and gentleness, as one who desired rather to be loved than feared by them. He was as careful not to *provoke them to wrath,* nor to *discourage them,* as he was to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* He ruled indeed, and kept up his authority, but it was with wisdom and love, and not with a high hand. He allowed his children a great degree of freedom with him; this gave him the opportunity of reasoning with them, which he liked much better than frightening them, into that which is good. He did much towards the instruction of his children in the way of familiar discourse, according to that excellent directory for religious education, (Deut. 6. 7.) *Thou shalt whet these things* (so the word is, which he said denoted frequent repetition of the same things) *upon thy children,* and *shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house,* &c. which made them love home, and delight in his company, and greatly endeared religion to them.

He did not burthen his childrens' memories by imposing upon them the getting of chapters and psalms without book; but endeavoured to make the *whole* word of God familiar to them, (especially the scripture-stories,) and to bring them to understand it and love it, knowing that then they would easily remember it. He used to observe from Ps. 119. 93. *I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me;* that we are then likely to remember the word of God when it doeth us good.

He taught all his children to write himself, and set them betimes to write sermons, and other things that might be of use to them. He taught his eldest daughter, the Hebrew tongue when she was about six or seven years old, by an English Hebrew Grammar, which he made on purpose for her; and she went so far in it, as to be able readily to read, and construe, a Hebrew psalm.

He drew up a short form of the baptismal covenant, for the use of his children; it was this:

I take God the Father to be my chiefest good, and highest end. I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour. I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide, and Comforter. I take the Word of God to be my rule in all my actions. I take the People of God to be my People in all conditions. I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord my whole self, all I am, all I have, and all I can do. And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever.

This he taught his Children, and they each of them solemnly repeated it every Lord's-day in the evening, after they were catechized, he putting his *Amen* to it, and sometimes adding, *So say, and so do, and you are made for ever.*

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He also took pains with them, to lead them into the understanding of it, and to persuade them to a free and cheerful consent to it. And when they grew up, he made them all write it over severally with their own hands, and very solemnly set their names to it, which he told them he would keep by him, and it should be produced as a testimony against them, in case they should afterwards depart from God, and turn from following after him.

He was careful to bring his children betimes, (when they were about sixteen years of age,) to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to take the Covenant of God upon themselves, and to make their Dedication to God, their own Act and Deed; and a great deal of pains he took with them, to prepare them for that great ordinance, and so to transmit them into the state of adult Church-membership. He would often blame parents, who would think themselves undone, if they had not their Children baptized, and yet took no care, when they grew up and made a profession of the Christian Religion, to persuade them to the Lord's Supper. "It is true, he would say) buds and blossoms are not fruit," but they give hopes of fruit, and parents may, and should, take hold of the good beginnings of Grace which they see in their Children, by those to bind them so much the closer to, and lead them so much the faster in, the *way* that is *called Holy*. By this solemn engagement the door which stood half open before, and invited the thief, is shut and bolted against temptation. And to those who pleaded that they were not fit, he would say, that the farther they went into the World, the less fit they would be. *Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.* —*He who is not fit to-day, will be less fit to-morrow.* Not that Children should be compelled to it, nor those that are wilfully ignorant, untoward, and perverse, admitted to it, but those Children that are hopeful and well-inclined to the things of God, and appear to be concerned in other duties of Religion, when they begin to put away childish things, should be incited, and encouraged, and persuaded to this, that the matter, may be brought to an issue. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord; fast bind, fast find.* Abundant thanksgivings have been rendered to God by many of his friends for his advice and assistance herein.

In dealing with his Children about their spiritual state, he took hold of them very much by the handle of their *Infant Baptism*, and frequently inculcated that upon them, that they were born in God's House, and were betimes dedicated and given up to him, and therefore were obliged to be his servants, Ps. 116. 16. *I am thy Servant*, because *the Son of thy Handmaid.* This he was wont to illustrate to them by the comparison of taking a lease of a fair estate for a Child in the cradle, and putting his life into it; the Child then knows nothing of the matter, nor is he capable of consenting; however, then he is maintained out of it, and has an interest in it; and when he grows up, and becomes able to choose and refuse for himself, if he go to his landlord, and claim the benefit of the lease, and promise to pay the rent, and do the services, well and good, he has the benefit of it, if otherwise, it is at his peril. "Now, Children, (would he say) our great landlord was willing that your lives should be put into the lease of heaven and happiness, and it was done accordingly, by your baptism, which is *the seal of Righteousness that is by Faith;* and by that it was assured to you, that if you would pay the rent, and do the service, that is, live a life of faith, and repentance, and sincere obedience, you shall never be turned out of the tenement; but if now you dislike the terms, and refuse to pay this rent, *(this chief Rent,* so he would call it, for it is not *Rack)* you forfeit the lease. However, you cannot but say, that you had a kindness done you, to have your lives put into it." Thus did he frequently deal with his Children, and even travail in birth again to see Christ formed in them; and from this topic he generally argued, and he would often say, "If Infant Baptism were more improved, it would be less disputed."

He not only taught his Children betimes to pray, (which he did especially by his own pattern, his method and expressions in prayer being very easy and plain,) but when they were young, he put them upon it, to pray together, and appointed them on Saturdays in the afternoon to spend some time together, (none but themselves and such of their age as might occasionally be with them,) in reading good books, especially those for Children, and in singing and praying; and he would sometimes tell them for their encouragement, that the God with whom we have to do, understands broken language; and that if we do as well as we can, in the sincerity of our hearts, we shall not only be accepted, but taught to do better. *To him that hath, shall be given.*

He sometimes set his Children, in their own reading of the Scriptures, to gather out such passages as they took most notice of, and thought most considerable, and write them down. Though this performance was very small, yet the endeavour was of good use. He also directed them to insert in a paper-book, which each of them had for the purpose, remarkable sayings and stories, which they met with in reading such other good books as he put into their hands.

He took a pleasure in relating to them the remarkable providences of God, both in his own time, and in the days of old, which, he said, Parents were taught to do by that appointment, *(Ex.* 12. 26, 27.) *Your Children shall ask you in time to come, What mean you by this Service? And you shall* tell them so and so.

What his pious care was concerning his Children, and with what a godly jealousy he was jealous over them, take in one instance; when they had been for a week or a fortnight kindly entertained at B. (as they were often,) he thus writes in his Diary upon their return home: "My care and fear is, lest converse with such so far above them, though of the best, should have influence upon them to lift them up, when I had rather they should be kept low." For as he did not himself, so he was very solicitous to teach his Children, not to mind *high things*; not to desire them, not to expect them, in this world.

We shall conclude this Chapter with another passage out

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out of his Diary, Apr. 12, 1681. "This day fourteen years, the Lord took my first-born son from me, the beginning of my strength, with a stroke. In the remembrance whereof, my heart melted this evening. I begged pardon for the Jonah that raised the storm: I blessed the Lord that hath spared the rest: I begged mercy, mercy for every one of them; and absolutely and unreservedly devoted and dedicated them, myself, my whole self, estate, interest, life, to the will and service of that God from whom I received all. Father, Hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come," &c.

CHAP. V.

His Ejectment from Worthenbury, his Non-conformity, and his Residence at Broad-Oak, until the Year 1672.

HAVING thus laid together the specimens of his *Family-Religion*, we must now return to the history of events that relate to him, and are obliged to look back to the first year after his marriage, which was the year that Charles II. came in; a year of great changes and struggles in the land, which Mr. Baxter, in his life, gives a full and clear and impartial idea of; by which it may easily be guessed, how it went with Mr. Henry in his low and narrow sphere, whose sentiments in those things were very much the same with Mr. Baxter's.

Many of his best friends in Worthenbury parish were lately removed by death; Emeral family was contrary to what it had been; and the same spirit which that year revived all the nation over, was working violently in that country, a spirit of great enmity to such men as Mr. Henry was. Worthenbury, upon the King's coming in, returned into its former relation to Bangor, and was looked upon as a chapelry dependent upon that. Mr. R. Fogg had for many years held the sequestered Rectory of Bangor, which now Dr. H. Bridgman (Son to John, Bishop of Chester, and Brother to the Lord Keeper Bridgman) returned to the possession of. Mr. Henry, in consequence, soon became apprehensive that his interest at Worthenbury was shaken; but thus he writes. "The Will of the Lord be done. Lord, if my Work be done here, provide some other for this people, that may be more skilful, and more successful, and cut out work for me elsewhere; however, I will take nothing ill, which God doeth with me."

He laboured what he could to make Dr. Bridgman his friend, who gave him good words, and was very civil to him, and assured him that he would never remove him till the Law did. But he must look upon himself as the Doctor's *Curate*, and depending upon his Will, which kept him in continual expectations of a removal; however, he continued in his liberty there above a year, though in very fickle and precarious circumstances.

The grand Question now on foot, was, whether to *Conform* or no. He used all means possible to satisfy himself concerning it, by reading and discourse, (particularly at Oxford, with Dr. Fell, afterwards Bp. of Oxford,) but in vain; his dissatisfaction remained: "however, (saith he) I dare not judge those that do conform; for who am I, that I should judge my brother." He said, that being at Chester, in discourse with the Dean and Chancellor and others, about this time, the great argument they used with him to persuade him to conform was, that else he would lose his preferment, and (said they) "You are a young man; and are you wiser than the King and Bishops?" But this is his reflection upon it afterwards, "God grant that I may never be left to consult with flesh and blood in such matters."

In Sep. 1660, Mr. Fogg, Mr. Steel, and Mr. Henry, were presented at Flint-Assizes for not reading the Common-Prayer, though as yet it was not enjoined; but there were some busy people, that would out-run the law. They entered their appearance, and it fell; for soon after, the King's *Declaration touching Ecclesiastical Affairs*, came out, which promised liberty, and gave hopes of settlement; but at the Spring-Assizes afterwards, Mr. Steel and Mr. Henry were presented again. On this he writes, "*Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up.* The Lord shew me what he would have me to do, for I am afraid of nothing but sin."

It appears, by the hints of his Diary, that he had melancholy apprehensions at this time about public affairs, seeing and hearing of so many faithful ministers disturbed, silenced, and ensnared; the ways of Sion mourning, and the quiet in the land treated as the troublers of it; his Soul wept in secret for it. And yet he joined in the annual commemoration of the King's Restoration, and preached on Mar. 12. 17. *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*; considering (said he) that it was his right; also the sad posture of the Civil Government through Usurpers, and the manner of his coming in, without bloodshed. This he would, all his days, speak of as a national mercy, but as that which he rejoiced in, with a great deal of trembling, for *the Ark of God*; and he would sometimes say, "During those years between forty and sixty, though, on Civil Accounts, there were great disorders, and the foundations were out of course, yet in the matters of God's Worship, things went well; there was freedom and reformation, and a face of godliness was upon the nation, though there were those that made but a mask of it. Ordinances were administered in power, and purity; and though there was much amiss, yet Religion, at least, in the profession of it, did prevail. This (said he) we know very well, let men say what they will of those times."

In Nov. 1660, he took the *Oath of Allegiance* at Orton, before Sir T. Hanmer, and two other Justices, of which he has left a memorandum in his Diary, with this added, "God so help me, as I purpose in my heart to do accordingly." Nor could any more conscientiously observe that *Oath of God* than he did, nor more sincerely promote the ends of it.

That year, (according to an agreement with some of his brethren in the ministry, who hoped thereby to oblige some people,) he preached upon Christmas Day.

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The Sabbath before, it happened that the 23d Ch. of Lev. (which treats entirely of the Jewish Feasts, called there the *Feasts of the Lord*) came in course to be expounded, which gave him occasion to distinguish of feasts into *divine* and *ecclesiastical:* the divine feasts that the Jews had, were those there appointed; their ecclesiastical feasts were those of *Purim* and of *Dedication.* In the Application of it, he said, "That he knew of no divine feast that we have under the Gospel, but the Lord's Day, intended for the commemoration of the whole mercy of our redemption: that the most that could be said for Christmas, was, that it is an ecclesiastical feast; and that it is questionable with some, whether Church or State, though they might make a good day, Est. 9. 19. could make a Holy Day: Nevertheless, forasmuch as we find our Lord Jesus (Joh. 10. 22.) so far complying with the church-feast of Dedication, as to take occasion from the people's coming together, to preach to them, he purposed to preach upon Christmas-Day, knowing it to be his duty in season and out of season. He preached on 1 Joh. 3. 8. *For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.* And he reminded his people, that it is double dishonour to Jesus Christ, to practise the works of the Devil, when we keep a feast in memory of his manifestation.

His annuity from Emeral was now with-held, because he did not read the Common-Prayer, though as yet there was no law for reading it. Hereby he was disabled to do what he had been wont, for the help and relief of others; and this he has recorded as that which troubled him most under that disappointment; but he blessed God, that he had a "heart to do good, even when his hand was empty."

When the Emeral family was unkind to him, he reckoned it a great mercy, which he gave God thanks for, (who makes every creature to be that to us which it is) that Mr. *Broughton* and his family (which was of considerable figure in the Parish) continued their kindness and respect to him, and their countenance of his ministry, which he makes a grateful mention of more than once in his Diary.

Many attempts were made in 1661, to disturb and ensnare him, and it was still expected, that he would have been hindered; "Methinks, (said he,) Sabbaths were never so sweet as they are, now that we are kept at such uncertainties; now, a day in thy court is better than a thousand: such a day as this, (said he of a Sacrament-Day that year,) is better than ten thousand: O that we might yet see many such days.

He was advised by Mr. Ratcliff of Chester, and others of his friends, to enter an action against Mr. P. for his annuity, and did so; but "Concerning the success of it, (said he) I am not over-solicitous; for though it be my due, yet it was not that which I preached for; and God knows, I would much rather preach for nothing, than not at all; and besides, I know assuredly, if I should be cast, God will make it up to me some other way." After some proceedings, he not only moved, but solicited, Mr. P. to refer it, "Having learned (said he) that it is no disparagement, but an honour, for the party wronged to be first in seeking reconciliation. The Lord (if it be his will) incline his heart to peace." "I have now (said he) two great concerns upon the wheel, one in reference to my maintenance, for time past, the other as to my continuance for the future; the Lord be my friend in both; but of the two, rather in the latter." "But (said he) many of greater gifts and graces than I, are laid aside already; and when my turn may come, I know not, the will of God be done. He can do his work without us."

The issue of this affair was, that there having been some disputes between Mr. P. and Dr. Bridgman, about the tythe of Worthenbury, wherein Mr. P. had clearly the better claim to make, yet by the mediation of Sir. T. Hanmer they came to this agreement, (Sep. 11, 1661,) that Dr. Bridgman and his successors, Parsons of *Bangor,* should have and receive all the tythe corn and hay of Worthenbury, without the disturbance of the said Mr. P. or his heirs, (except the tythe-hay of Emeral demesne) upon condition that Dr. Bridgman should, before Nov. 1. following, avoid and discharge the present minister or curate, Philip Henry, from the chapel of Worthenbury, and not hereafter at any time readmit the said minister, Philip Henry, to officiate the said cure. This is the substance of the articles agreed upon between them, pursuant to which Dr. Bridgman soon after dismissed Mr. Henry, and by a writing under his hand, which was published in the church of Worthenbury by one of Mr. Puleston's servants, Oct. the 27th following, notice was given to the parish of that dismission. That day he preached his farewel sermon, on Phil. 1. 27, *Only let your conversation be as becomes the Gospel of Christ.* In which (as he says in his Diary,) his desire and design were rather to *profit* than to *affect;* "It matters not what becomes of me," (*whether I come unto you, or else be absent,*) "but let your *conversation be as becomes the Gospel.*" His parting prayer for them was, "The Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation." Thus he ceased to preach to his people there, but he ceased not to love them, and pray for them; and could not but think there remained some dormant relation betwixt him and them.

As to the arrears of his annuity from Mr. P. when he was displaced; after some time, Mr. P. was willing to give him 100*l.* which was a good deal less than what was due, upon condition that he would surrender his deed of annuity, and his lease of the house, which he, for peace-sake, was willing to do; and so he lost all the benefit of Judge Puleston's great kindness to him. This was not completed till Sep. 1662, until which time he continued in the house at Worthenbury, but never preached so much as once in the church, though there were vacancies several times.

Mr. *R. Hilton* was immediately put into the curacy of Worthenbury by Dr. Bridgman. Mr. Henry went to hear him while he was at Worthenbury, and joined in all the parts of the public worship, particularly attending upon the sacrament of baptism; "not daring (said he) to turn my back upon God's ordinance, while the

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the essentials of it are retained, though corrupted circumstantially in the administration of it, which God amend." Once being allowed the liberty of his gesture, he joined in the Lord's Supper. He kept up his correspondence with Mr. Hilton, and (as he says in his Diary) endeavoured to possess him with right thoughts of his work, and advised him the best he could, in the soul-affairs of that people; "which" (says he) "he seemed to take well; I am sure I meant it so; and the Lord make him faithful."

Immediately after he was removed and silenced at Worthenbury, he was solicited to preach at Bangor; Dr. Bridgman was willing to permit it occasionally, and intimated to his curate there, that he should never hinder it; but Mr. Henry declined it. Though his silence was his great grief, yet such was his tenderness, that he was not willing so far to discourage Mr. Hilton at Worthenbury, nor to draw so many of the people from him, as would certainly have followed him to Bangor: "But" (says he) "I cannot get my heart into such a spiritual frame on sabbath-days, now, as formerly; which is both my sin and my affliction. Lord, quicken me with quickening grace."

When the king came in first, and shewed so good a temper, as many thought, some of his friends were very earnest with him to revive his acquaintance and interest at court, which, it was thought, he might easily do. It was reported in the country, that the Duke of York had inquired after him; but he heeded not the report, nor would he be persuaded to make any addresses that way: "For" (said he) "my friends do not know so well as I the strength of temptation, and my own inability to deal with it." *Qui bene latuit, bene vixit.—Concealment may properly attach to a well-spent life.* Lord, lead me not into temptation.

He was greatly affected with the temptations and afflictions of many faithful Ministers of Christ at this time, by the pressing of conformity; and kept many private days of fasting and prayer in his own house at Worthenbury, seeking to turn away the wrath of God from the land. He greatly pitied some, who, by the urgency of friends, and the fear of want, were overpersuaded to put a force upon themselves in their conformity. "The Lord keep me" (said he) "in the critical time."

He preached occasionally, in neighbouring places, till *Bartholomew-day*, 1662, "the day" (said he) "which our sins have made one of the saddest days to England, since the death of Edward VI. but even this for good, though we know not how nor which way." He was invited to preach at Bangor on the *black Bartholomew-day*, and prepared a sermon on Joh. 7. 37. *In the last day, that great day of the feast, &c.* but was prevented from preaching it; and was loath to strive against so strong a stream.

As to his *Nonconformity*, which some of his worst enemies have said was his *only fault*, it may not be amiss here to give some account of it.

1. His *reasons* for his Nonconformity were very considerable. It was no rash act, but deliberate and well-weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary. He could by no means submit to be re-ordained; so well satisfied was he in his call to the Ministry, and his solemn ordination to it, by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, which God had graciously owned him in, that he durst not do that which looked like a renunciation of it, as null and sinful, and would be, at least, a tacit invalidating and condemning of all his administrations. Nor could he truly say, that he thought himself "moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon him the office of a Deacon." He was the more confirmed in this objection, because the then Bp. of Chester, Dr. Hall, (in whose Diocese he was,) beside all that was required by law, exacted from those, that came to him to be re-ordained, a subscription to this Form: *Ego A. B. prætensas meas Ordinationis literas, à quibusdam Presbyteris olim obtentas, jam penitus renuncio, et demitto pro vanis; humiliter supplicans quatenus Rev. in Christo Pater et Dominus Dominus Georgius permissione divina Cestr. Episo. me ad sacrum Diaconatus ordinem juxta morem et ritus Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ dignaretur admittere.—I A. B. do now utterly renounce, and drop, as good for nothing, my pretended letters of ordination formerly obtained from certain Presbyters; humbly supplicating the Rev. Father in Christ, George, by divine permission, Lord Bishop of Chester, graciously to admit me to Deacon's holy orders, according to the usage and rites of the Church of England.* This re-ordination was the first and great bar to his Conformity, and which he mostly insisted on. He would sometimes say that for a Presbyter to be ordained a Deacon, is, at best, *suscipere gradum Simeonis—no better than Simony.*

Beside this, he was not at all satisfied to give his unfeigned *assent and consent to all, and every thing contained in the Book of Common-Prayer*, &c. for he thought that thereby he should receive the Book itself, and every part thereof, *Rubrics* and all, both as *true* and *good*; whereas there were several things which he could not think to be so. The exceptions which the Ministers made against the Liturgy, at the *Savoy-Conference*, he thought very considerable; and he could by no means submit to, much less approve of, the impositions of the Ceremonies. He often said, that when Christ came to free us from the yoke of one ceremonial law, he did not leave it in the power of any man, or company of men in the world, to lay another upon our necks. Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, he was much dissatisfied about; and it was for many years his great grief, and which, in his Diary, he often most pathetically laments, that by it he was debarred from partaking of that ordinance in the solemn Assembly. For, to submit to that imposition, he thought, whatever it was to others, (whom he was far from judging,) would be sin to him. He never took the *Covenant*, nor ever expressed any fondness for it; and yet he could not think, and therefore durst not declare that (however unlawfully imposed) it was in itself an unlawful oath, and that no person that took it, was under the obligation of it; for sometimes, *Quod fieri non debuit, factum valet.—What ought not to have been done, is yet valid, when done.* In short, it cannot be wondered at that he was a *Nonconformist*, when the terms of Conformity were

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so industriously contrived to keep out of the church such men as *He*, which is manifested by the full account which Mr. Baxter has left to posterity of that affair; and it is a passage worth noticing here, which Dr. Bates, in his funeral sermon on Mr. Baxter, relates; that when the Lord-Chamberlain Manchester told the King, (while the *Act of Uniformity* was under debate) that he was afraid that the terms were so hard, that many of the Ministers would not comply with them; Bp. Sheldon being present, replied, *I am afraid they will.* And it is well known, how many of the most sober, pious, and laborious Ministers, in all parts of the nation, Conformists as well as Nonconformists, did dislike those impositions.

He thought it a mercy (since it must be so) that the case of Nonconformity was made so clear as it was, abundantly to satisfy him in his silence and sufferings. I have heard that Mr. *A. Burges*, who hesitated before, when he read the *Act*, blessed God that the matter was put out of doubt. And yet to make sure work, the printing and publishing of the *New Book of Common Prayer* were so deferred, that few of the Ministers, except those in London, could possibly get a sight of it, much less duly consider of it, before the time prefixed, which Mr. Steel took notice of in his farewel-sermon at Hanmer, Aug. 17, 1662. That he was silenced and turned out, for not declaring his *unfeigned assent and consent to a book which he never saw, nor could see.*

One thing which he comforted himself with in his Nonconformity, was, that as to matters of *doubtful* disputation touching Church-Government, Ceremonies, and the like, he was *unsworn*, either on one side or the other, and so was free from those snares and bands, in which so many find themselves both tied up from what they would do, and entangled, that they knew not what to do. He was one of those that *feared an oath*, Ecc. 10. 2. and would often say, "Oaths are edged tools, and not to be played with." One passage I find in his papers, which confirmed him in this satisfaction; it is a letter from no less a clergyman that Dr. *F.* of Whitchurch, to one of his parishioners, who desired him to give way, that his Child might be baptized by another, without the *cross* and *godfathers*, if he would not do so himself; both which he refused: it was in 1672. "For my part (said the Doctor,) I freely profess my thoughts, that the strict urging of indifferent ceremonies has done more harm than good; and possibly, (had all men been left to their liberty therein,) there might have been much more *Unity*, and not much less *Uniformity*. But what power have I to dispense with myself, being now under the obligation of a law, and an oath? And he concludes, I am much grieved at the unhappy condition of myself, and other Ministers, who must either lose their parishioners' love, if they do not comply with them, or else break their solemn obligations to please them."

This, he would say, was the mischief of impositions, which ever were, and ever will, be bones of contention. When he was at Worthenbury, though in the Lord's-Supper he used the gesture of *sitting* himself, yet he administered it without scruple to some who chose rather to *kneel*; and he thought that a Minister's hands should not, in such things, be tied up; but that he ought, in his place, (though he suffered for it,) to witness against the making of those things the indispensable terms of communion, which Jesus Christ has not made to be so. *Where the Spirit of the Lord*, and the Spirit of the Gospel, *is, there is liberty.*

Such as these, were the reasons of his Nonconformity, which, as long as he lived, he was more and more confirmed in.

2. His moderation in his Nonconformity was very exemplary and eminent, and had a great influence upon many, to keep them from running into an uncharitable and schismatical separation; which, upon all occasions, he bore his testimony against, and was very industrious to stem the tide of. In Church-Government, that which he desired and wished for, was Abp. Usher's *Reduction of Episcopacy*. He thought it lawful to join in the Common-Prayer in public assemblies, and practised accordingly, and endeavoured to satisfy others concerning it. The spirit he was of, was such as made him much afraid of extremes, and solicitous for nothing more than to maintain and keep christian love and charity among professors. We shall meet with several instances of this, in the progress of his story, and therefore wave it here. I have been told of an aged Minister of his acquaintance, who, being asked upon his death-bed, "What his thoughts were of his Nonconformity," replied, "he was well satisfied in it, and should not have conformed so far as he did, (*viz.* to join in that Liturgy,) if it had not been for Mr. Henry." Thus was his moderation known unto all men.

But to proceed in his story: At Mich. 1662, he quite left Worthenbury, and came with his family to *Broad-Oak*, just nine years from his first coming into the country. Being cast, by divine Providence, into this new place and state of life, his concern and prayer were, that he might have grace and wisdom to manage it to the glory of God, which (says he) is my chief end. Within three weeks after his coming hither, his second son was born, which we mention for the sake of the remark he has upon it; "We have no reason" (says he) "to call him Benoni: I wish we had none to call him Ichabod." And on the day of his family thanksgiving for that mercy, he writes, "We have reason to rejoice with trembling, for it goes ill with the church and people of God, and reason to fear worse, because of our own sins, and our enemies' wrath."

At the latter end of this year, he has, in his Diary, this Note. "It is observed of many who have conformed of late, and fallen from what they formerly professed, that since their so doing, from unblameable, orderly, pious men, they are become exceeding dissolute and profane;" here he specifies some names, adding, "What need have we every day to pray, *Lord lead us not into temptation.*"

For several years after he came to live at Broad-Oak, he went constantly, on Lord's Days, to the public worship, with his family, at Whitewell-Chapel, (which is hard by,) if there were any supply there; as sometimes

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times there was from Malpas; and, if none, then to Tylstock; (where Mr. *Z. Thomas* continued for about half a year, and the place was a little sanctuary;) and when that spring failed, usually to Whitchurch: he did not preach for a great while, unless, occasionally, when he visited his friends, or to his own family on Lord's-Days, when the weather hindered them from going abroad. He comforted himself, that sometimes in going to public worship, he had an opportunity of instructing and exhorting those that were in company with him, by the way, according as he saw they had need; and in this, his *lips fed many*, and his *tongue was as choice silver:* he acted according to that rule, which he often laid down to himself and others; "That when we cannot do what we would, we must do what we can, and the Lord will accept us in it." He made the best of the sermons he heard in public, "It is a mercy (says he) that we have bread, though it be not as it has been, of the finest of the wheat." Those are froward children, who throw away the meat they have, if it be wholesome, because they have not what they would have. When he met with preaching that was weak, his note is, "*That is a poor sermon indeed, out of which no good lesson may be learned.*" He had often occasion to remember that verse of Mr. Herbert's;

> The worst speaks something good; if all want sense,
> God takes the text, and preacheth patience.

He once observed that he could not avoid thinking of Eli's Sons, who *made the sacrifices of the Lord to be abhorred:* yet he went to bear his testimony to the public ordinances; *For still* (said he) *the Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob; and so do I.* Such then were his sentiments of things, expecting that God would yet open a door of return to former public liberty, which he much desired and prayed for, and, in hopes of that, was backward to fall into the stated exercise of his Ministry otherwise; (as were all the sober Nonconformists generally in those parts;) but it was his grief and burden, that he had not an opportunity of doing more for God. He had scarce one talent of opportunity, but that one, he was very diligent and faithful in the improvement of. When he visited his friends, how did he lay out himself to do them good? Being asked once, (where he made a visit,) to expound and pray, which his friends returned him thanks for; he thus writes upon it: "They cannot thank me so much for my pains, but I thank them more, and my Lord God especially, for the opportunity." Read his conflict with himself at this time; "I own myself a Minister of Christ, yet do nothing as a Minister; what will excuse me? Is it enough for me to say, Behold, I stand in the market-place, and no man hath hired me?" And he comforts himself with this appeal, "Lord, thou knowest what will I have to thy work, public or private, if I had a call and opportunity; and shall this willing mind be accepted?" Surely this is a melancholy consideration, and lays a great deal of blame somewhere, that such a man as Mr. Henry, so well qualified with gifts and graces for ministerial work, and in the prime of his time for usefulness; so sound and orthodox, so humble and modest, so quiet and peaceable, so pious and blameless, should be so industriously thrust out of the vineyard, as an useless and unprofitable servant, and laid aside as *a despised broken vessel, and a vessel in which there was no pleasure.* This is a *lamentation*, and shall be *for a lamentation;* especially since it was not his case alone, but the lot of so many *hundreds* of the same character.

In these circumstances of silence and restraint, he took comfort himself, and administered comfort to others from that Scripture, (Isa. 16. 4.) *Let my outcasts dwell with thee,* Moab. God's people may be an outcast people, cast out of men's love, their synagogues, their country; but God will own his people when men cast them out; they are *Outcasts,* but they are *his,* and, somewhere or other, he will provide a dwelling for them. There were many worthy able Ministers thereabouts turned out, both from work and subsistence, that had not such comfortable support for the life that now is, as Mr. Henry had, for whom he was most affectionately concerned, and to whom he shewed kindness. There were computed, within a few miles round him, so many ministers turned out to the wide world, stript of all their maintenance, and exposed to continual hardships, as, with their wives and children, (having most of them numerous families,) made up above a hundred, that lived upon providence; though often reduced to wants and straits, they yet were not forsaken, but were enabled to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of their salvation notwithstanding. To them the promise was fulfilled, (Ps. 37. 3.) *So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* The world was told long since, by the *Conformist's Plea,* that the worthy Mr. Laurence, (Mr. Henry's intimate friend,) when he was turned out of Baschurch, and (if he would have consulted with flesh and blood) having (as was said of one of the Martyrs) eleven good arguments against suffering, *viz.* a Wife and Ten Children, was asked how he meant to maintain them all, and cheerfully replied, They must all live on the 6th of *Matthew, Take no thought for your life, &c.* and he often sung with his family, Ps. 37. 16. Mr. Henry has noted concerning him in his Diary, some time after he was turned out, that he bore witness to the love and care of our Heavenly Father, providing for him and his present condition, beyond expectation.

One observation Mr. Henry made not long before he died, when he had been young, and now was old, That though many of the ejected Ministers were brought very low, had many children, were greatly harassed by persecution, and their friends, generally, poor and unable to support them; yet, in all his acquaintance he never knew, nor could remember to have heard of any Nonconformist Minister in prison for *debt.*

In Oct. 1663, Mr. Steel, Mr. Henry, and some other of their friends, were taken up and brought prisoners to Hanmer, under pretence of some plot said to be on foot against the government; and there they were kept under confinement some days, on which he writes; "It is sweet being in any condition with a clear conscience. *The sting of death is Sin,* and so of Imprisonment also. It is the first time that I was ever a prisoner, but

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perhaps may not be the last. We felt no hardship, but we know not what we may." They were, after some days, examined by the Deputy-Lieutenants, charged with they knew not what, and so dismissed, finding verbal security to be forth-coming upon 24 hours' notice, whenever they should be called for. Mr. Henry returned to his tabernacle with thanksgivings to God, and a hearty prayer for his enemies, that God would forgive them. The very next day after they were released, a great man in the country, at whose instigation they were brought into that trouble, died (as was said) of a drunken surfeit, *So that a man shall say, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

In the beginning of 1665, when the *Act for a Royal Aid to his Majesty*, of Two Millions and a half, came out, the Commissioners for Flintshire were pleased to nominate Mr. Henry Sub-collector of the said Tax for the Township of Iscoyd, and Mr. Steel for the Township of Hanmer. They intended thereby, to put an affront and disparagement upon their Ministry, and to shew that they looked upon them but as lay-men. His note upon it is, "It is not a sin which they put us upon, but it is a cross, and a cross in our way, and therefore to be taken up and borne with patience. When I had better work to do, I was wanting in my duty about it, and now this is put upon me; the Lord is righteous." He procured the gathering of it by others, only took account of it, and saw it duly done; and deserved (as he said he hoped he should) that Inscription mentioned in Suetonius, καλῶς τελωνήσαντι—*To the memory of an honest Publican.*

In Sep. the same year, he was again, by warrant from the Deputy-Lieutenant, fetched Prisoner to Hanmer; as were also Mr. Steel and others. He was examined about private meetings: some such (but private indeed) he owned he had been present at of late in Shropshire, but the occasion was extraordinary; the plague was at that time raging in London; and he, and several friends, having near relations there, thought it time to seek the Lord for them; *this* was imputed to him as his *crime*. He was likewise charged with administering the Lord's Supper, which he denied, having never administered it, since he was disabled by the *Act of Uniformity*. After some days confinement, seeing they could prove nothing upon him, he was discharged, upon recognizance of 20*l.* with two sureties to be forth-coming upon notice, and to live peaceably. But (said he) our restraint was not strict, for we had liberty of prayer and conference together, to our mutual edification. Thus, *out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong, sweetness;* and we found *honey in the carcase of the lion.* It was but a little before this, that Mr. Steel, setting out for London, was, by a warrant from the Justices, under colour of the report of a plot, stopt and searched; finding nothing to accuse him of, they seized his Almanack, in which he kept his Diary for that year; and it not being written very legibly, they made what malicious readings and comments they pleased upon it, to his great wrong and reproach; though to all sober and sensible people, it discovered him to be a man that kept a strict watch over his own heart, and was a great husband of his time, and many said they got good by it, and should love him the better for it, Ps. 37. 5, 6. This event made Mr. Henry somewhat more cautious and sparing in the records of his Diary, when he saw how *evil men dig up mischief.*

At *Lady-Day*, 1666, the *Five Mile Act* commenced, by which all Nonconformist-Ministers were forbidden, upon pain of six months imprisonment, to come or be within five miles of any corporation, or of any place where they had been Ministers, unless they would take an Oath, of which Mr. Baxter says that it was credibly reported, that the Earl of Southampton, then Lord High-Treasurer of England, said, *No honest man could take it.* Mr. Baxter, *in his Life*, has set down at large his reasons against taking this Oxford Oath, as it was called, P. II. p. 396, &c. P. III. p. 4, &c. Mr. Henry set his down in short; It was an Oath, not "*at any time to endeavour any Alteration of the Government in the Church or State.*" He had already taken an *Oath of Allegiance to the King*, and he looked upon this to amount to an *Oath of Allegiance* to the *Bishops*, which he was not free to take. Thus he writes, *Mar.* 22, 1665.

"This day it was made more clear to me than ever, by the Hand of God upon me, and I note it down, that I may remember it. 1. That the Government of the Church of Christ ought to be managed by the Ministers of Christ. It appears (Heb. 13. 7.) that *they are to rule us, that speak to us the Word of God.* 2. That under Prelacy, Ministers have not the management of Church-Government, not in the least, being only the publishers of the Prelates' decrees, as in excommunication and absolution; which decrees sometimes are given forth by Lay-Chancellors. 3. That therefore Prelacy is an usurpation in the Church of God, upon the crown and dignity of Jesus Christ, and upon the gospel-rights of his servants the Ministers. And therefore, 4. I ought not to subscribe to it, nor to swear not to endeavour, in all *lawful* ways, the alteration of it, *viz.* by praying and persuading where there is opportunity. But, 5. That I may safely venture to suffer in the refusal of such an oath, committing my soul, life, estate, liberty, all to him who judgeth righteously."

And on Mar. 25, the day when that Act took place, he thus writes: "A sad day among poor Ministers up and down this nation, who by this Act of restraint are forced to remove from among their friends, acquaintance, and relations, and to sojourn among strangers, as it were, in *Mesech*, and in the *tents of Kedar*. But there is a God who tells their wanderings, and will put their tears, and the tears of their wives and children, *into his bottle:* are they not in his Book? The Lord be a little sanctuary to them, and a place of refuge from the storm and from the tempest, and pity those places from which they are ejected, and come and dwell where they may not."

He wished their removes might not be figurative of evil to these nations, as Ezekiel's were, Ez. 12. 1, 2, 3. This severe dispensation forced Mr. Steel and his family from Hanmer, and so he lost the comfort of his neighbourhood; but withal it drove Mr. Lawrence from

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from Buschurch to Whitchurch-Parish, where he continued till he was driven thence too.

Mr. Henry's house at Broad-Oak was but four reputed miles from the utmost limits of Worthenbury-Parish; but he got it measured, and, accounting 1760 yards to a mile, (according to the Statute 35 Eliz. Cap. 6.) it was found to be just five miles and threescore yards, which one would think might have been his security. But there were those near him, who were ready to stretch such laws to the utmost rigour, under pretence of construing them in favour of the King; and therefore would have it to be understood of *reputed miles.* This obliged him, for some time, to leave his family, and to sojourn among his friends, to whom he endeavoured, wherever he came, to impart some spiritual gift. At last, he ventured home, presuming, among other things, that the *Warrant* by which he was made *Collector of the Royal Aid,* while that continued, would secure him, according to a Proviso in the last clause of the Act; which when the gentlemen perceived, they discharged him from that office, before he had served out the time.

He was much affected with it, that the burning of London happened so soon after the Nonconformists were banished out of it. He thought it was in mercy to them, that they were removed before that desolating judgement came; but that it spoke aloud to our governors, *Let my people go, that they may serve me; and if ye will not, behold, thus and thus will I do unto you.* This was the Lord's voice crying in the city.

In the beginning of 1667, he removed with his family to *Whitchurch,* and dwelt there above a year, except that, for one quarter of a year, about harvest, he returned again to Broad-Oak. His remove to Whitchurch was partly to quiet his adversaries, who were ready to quarrel with him upon the *Five mile Act,* and partly for the benefit of the school there, for his children.

There, in April following, he buried his eldest son, not quite six years old; a child of extraordinary forwardness in learning, and of a very towardly disposition; his character of this child is, *Præterque ætatem nil puerile fuit.—There was nothing puerile about him, but his age.*

This child, before he was seized with the sickness whereof he died, was much affected with some verses which he met with in Mr. White's *Power of Godliness,* said to be found in the pocket of a hopeful young man, who died before he was 24 years old. Of his own accord he learned, and would be often rehearsing them; they were these:

"Not twice twelve years (he might say,
Not half twelve years) full told, a wearied breath
I have exchanged for a happy death.
Short was my life; the longer is my rest;
God takes them soonest whom he loveth best.
He that is born to-day, and dies to-morrow,
Loses some hours of joy, but months of sorrow.
Other diseases, often, come to grieve us,
Death strikes but once, and that stroke doth relieve us."

This was a great affliction to the tender parents. Mr. Henry writes upon it in the reflection, *Quicquid amas, cupias non placuisse nimis.—Whatever you love, pray that you may not love it too much.*

Many years after, he said, he thought he did apply to himself at that time, but too sensibly, that Scripture, (Lam. 3. 1.) *I am the man that hath seen affliction.* And he would say to his friends upon such occasions, "Losers think they may have leave to speak; but they take care *what* they say, lest, speaking amiss, to God's dishonour, they make work for repentance, and shed tears that must be wept over again." He observed concerning this child, that he had always been very patient under rebukes; "The remembrance of which (said he) teaches me now how to carry it under the rebukes of my Heavenly Father." His prayer, under this providence, was, "Shew me, Lord, *shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;* have I over-boasted, over-loved, over-prized? A Lord's day intervening between the death and burial of the child, "I attended (said he) on public ordinances, though sad in spirit, as Job, who, after all the evil tidings that were brought him, whereof the death of children was the last and heaviest, yet fell down and worshipped." And he would often say upon such occasions, "*Weeping must not hinder sowing.*" Upon the interment of the child, he writes, "My dear child, now mine no longer, was laid in the cold earth, not lost, but soon to be raised again a glorious body, and I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." A few days after, his dear friend Mr. Laurence (then living in Whitchurch parish) buried a daughter, that was grown up, and very hopeful, and gave good evidence of a work of grace wrought upon her soul. "How willingly (said he) may parents be to part with such, when the Lord calls! They are not *amissi—lost,* but *præmissi—sent before.*" And he has this further remark, "The Lord has made his poor servants, that have been often companions in his work, now companions in tribulation, the very same tribulation; me for my sin, him for his trial."

While he lived at Whitchurch, he attended constantly upon the public ministry, and there (as ever) he was careful to come at the beginning of the service, which he attended upon with reverence and devotion; standing all the time even while the Chapters were read. In the evening of the Lord's day, he spent some time in instructing his family, to which a few of his friends and neighbours in the town would sometimes come in; and it was a little gleam of opportunity, but very short, for (as he notes) "he was offended at it, who should rather have rejoiced, if by any means the work might be carried on in his people's souls."

He observes in his Diary this year, how zealous people had generally been for the observation of *Lent* a while ago, and how cold they are towards it now. The same he notes of Processions in *Ascension Week;* for (said he) what has no good foundation, will not hold up long; but in that which is duty, and of God, it is good to be zealously affected always."

In this year (I think) he administered the Lord's Supper, (very privately to be sure) for the first time, after he was silenced by the *Act of Uniformity;* and he did not do it, without mature deliberation. A fear of *separation*

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kept him from it so long. What induced him to it at last, I find thus under his own hand: "I am a Minister of Christ, and, as such, I am obliged, *virtute officii—by virtue of my office*, by all means to endeavour the good of souls. Now here is a company of serious christians, whose lot is cast to live in a Parish, where there is one set over them, who preaches the truth, and they come to hear him, and join with him in other parts of worship; only, as to the Lord's Supper, they scruple the lawfulness of the gesture of kneeling; and he tells them that his hands are tied, and he cannot administer it unto them any other way: wherefore they come to me, and tell me, that they earnestly long for that ordinance, and that there is a competent number of them, and opportunity to partake; and how dare I deny this request of their's, without betraying my ministerial trust, and incurring the guilt of a grievous omission?"

In Feb. 1667, Mr. Laurence and he were invited by some of their friends to Betley in Staffordshire, and (there being some little public connivance at that time) with the consent of all concerned, they adventured to preach in the church, one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon of the Lord's Day, very peaceably and profitably. This action of their's was, presently after, reported in the *House of Commons*, by a Member of Parliament, with these additions, that they tore the *Common-Prayer Book*, trampled the surplice under their feet, pulled the Minister of the Place out of the Pulpit, &c. reports which there was not the least colour for. But that, with some other such like false stories, produced an address of the House of Commons to the King, to issue out a Proclamation for the putting of the laws in execution against Papists and Nonconformists, which was issued out accordingly; though the King, at the opening of that Session a little before, had declared his desire, that "some course might be taken to compose the minds of his Protestant subjects, in matters of religion;" which had raised the expectations of some, that there would be speedy enlargement; but Mr. Henry had noted upon it, "We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from GOD."

And here it may be very pertinent to observe, how industrious Mr. Henry was at this time, when he and his friends suffered such hard things from the government, to preserve and promote a good affection to the government notwithstanding. It was commonly charged at that time upon the Nonconformists in general, especially from the pulpits, that they were all a factious and turbulent people, as was said of old, (Ez. 4. 15.) *hurtful to Kings and Provinces;* that their meetings were for the sowing of sedition and discontents, and the like; and there is some reason to think, that one thing intended by the hardships put upon them, was to drive them to this; there is a way of "making a wise man mad." But how peaceably they carried themselves, is manifest to God, and in the consciences of many. For an instance of it, it will not be amiss to give some account of a sermon which Mr. Henry preached in some very private meetings, such as were called *seditious conventicles*, in 1669, when it was a day of treading down, and of perplexity; it was on that text, (Ps. 35. 20.) *Against them that are quiet in the land.* Whence (not to curry favour with rulers; for whatever the sermon was, the very preaching of it, had it been known, must have been severely punished, but purely *out of conscience towards God*) he taught his friends this doctrine; "That it is the character of the people of God, that they are a quiet people in the land." This quietness he described to be an orderly, peaceable subjection to Governors and Government, in the Lord. We must maintain a reverent esteem of them, and of their authority, in opposition to *despising dominion*, 2 Pet. 2. 10. We must be meek under severe commands, and burthensome impositions, not murmuring and complaining, as the Israelites against Moses and Aaron; but we must take them up as our cross in our way, and bear them as we do *foul weather*. We must not *speak evil of dignities*, (Jud. 8.) nor *revile the Gods*, Ex. 22. 28. Paul checked himself for this, Acts 23. 5. οὐκ ἤδειν—*I did not consider it;* if I had, I would not have said so." We must not traduce their government, as Absalom did David's, 2 Sam. 15. 3. Great care is to be taken, how we speak of the faults of any, especially of rulers, Ecc. 10. 20.—The people of God do make the *Word of God* their rule, and by that they are taught, 1. That magistracy is God's ordinance, and magistrates God's ministers; that by him *Kings reign*, and that the powers that be, are *ordained of him*. 2. That they as well as others, are to have their dues—Honour, and fear, and tribute. 3. That their lawful commands are to be obeyed, and that readily and cheerfully, Tit. 3. 1. 4. That the penalties inflicted for not obeying unlawful commands, are patiently to be undergone. This is the rule; and as many as walk according to this rule, *Peace shall be upon them*, and there can be no danger of their unpeaceableness. They are taught to pray for Kings and all in authority, (1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.) and God forbid we should do otherwise; yea, though they persecute, Jer. 29. 7. Peaceable prayers bespeak a peaceable people, Ps. 109. 4. If some, professing religion, have been unquiet, their unquietness has given the lie to their profession, Jud. 8. 11, 12. Quietness is our badge; (Col. 3. 12.) it will be our strength, (Isa. 30. 7, 15.) our rejoicing in the day of evil; (Jer. 18. 18.) it is pleasing to God, (1 Tim. 2. 2, 3.) it may work upon others, 1 Pet. 2. 12, 13. The means he prescribed for the keeping of us quiet, were, to get our hearts filled with the knowledge and belief of these two things: 1. That the Kingdom of Christ *is not of this world*, Joh. 18. 36. Many have thought otherwise, and it made them unquiet. 2. That the *wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;* (Ja. 1. 20.) he needs not our sin, to bring to pass his own counsel. We must mortify unquietness in the causes of it, Jas. 4. 1. We must always remember the oath of God; (Ecc. 8. 2.) the *oath of* allegiance is an oath of quietness: and we must beware of the company and converse of those that are unquiet, Pro. 22. 24, 25. Though deceitful matters be devised, yet we must be quiet still; nay, be so much the more quiet.

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I have been thus large in gathering these hints out of that Sermon, (which he took all occasions in other sermons, to inculcate, as all his brethren likewise did) that, if possible, it may be a conviction to the present generation; or, however, may be a witness in time to come, that the Nonconformist-Ministers were *not* enemies to Cæsar, nor troublers of the land; nor their meetings any way tending to the disturbance of the public peace, but purely designed to help to repair the decays of christian piety.

All that knew Mr. Henry, knew very well that his practice all his days, was consonant to these his settled principles.

In May 1668, he returned again with his family from Whitchurch to Broad-Oak, which, through the good hand of his God upon him, continued his settled home, without any remove from it, till he was removed to his long home above 28 years after. The edge of the *Five-Mile-Act* began now a little to abate, at least in that country; and he was desirous to be more useful to the neighbours, among whom God had given him an estate, than he could be at a distance from them, by relieving the poor, employing the labourers, especially instructing the ignorant, and helping as many as he could to heaven. He made that Scripture his standing rule, and wrote it in the beginning of his book of accounts, (Pro. 3. 9, 10.) *Honour the Lord with thy substance, &c.* And having set apart a day of secret prayer and humiliation, to beg of God a wise and an understanding heart, and to drop a tear (as he expresses it) over the sins of his predecessors, formerly in that estate, he laid out himself very much in doing good. He was very serviceable upon all accounts in the neighbourhood; and though it took up a great deal of his time, and hindered him from his beloved studies, yet it might be said of him, as the Bp. of Salisbury says of Abp. Tillotson, in his sermon at his funeral, that he "chose rather to live to the good of others than to himself; and thought, that to do an act of charity, or even of tenderness and kindness, was of more value both in itself, and in the sight of God, than to pursue the pompous parts of learning, how much soever his own genius might lead him to it."

He was very useful in the common concernments of the township and country, in which he was a very prudent counsellor; it was indeed a narrow sphere of activity, but (such as it was) to him, as to Job, (ch. 29. 21, 22.) *Men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at his counsel; after his words they spake not again;* and many of the neighbours, who respected him not as a minister, yet loved and honoured him as an intelligent, prudent, and humble neighbour. In the concernments of private families, he was very far from busying himself, and further from seeking himself; but he was very much employed, advising many about their affairs, and the disposal of themselves and their children, arbitrating and composing differences among relations and neighbours, in which he had an excellent faculty, and often good success, inheriting the blessing entailed upon the peace-makers. References have sometimes been made to him by rule of Court, at the Assizes, with consent of parties. He was very affable and easy of access, and admirably patient in hearing every one's complaint, which he would answer with so much prudence and mildness, and give such apt advice, that many a time to consult with him, was to *ask counsel at Abel*, and so to end the matter. He observed in almost all quarrels that happened, that there was "a fault on both sides;" and that, generally, *they* were most in the fault, that were most forward and clamourous in their complaints. One making her moan to him, of a bad husband, who, in this, and the other instance, was unkind; "And, Sir," said she, after a long complaint, which he patiently heard, "what would you have me to do now?" "Why truly, (said he,) I would have you to go home, and be a better wife to him; and then you will find that he will be a better husband to you." Labouring to persuade one to forgive an injury that was done him, he urged this, Are you not a Christian? And he followed that argument so close, that, at last, he prevailed.

He was very industrious, and often successful in persuading people to recede from their right, for peace-sake; and he would, for that purpose, tell them Luther's story of the two goats that met upon a narrow bridge over a deep water; they could not go back, they durst not fight; after a short parley, one of them lay down, and let the other go over him, and thus no harm was done. He would likewise relate sometimes a remarkable story, worthy to be here inserted, concerning a good friend of his, Mr. T. Y. of Whitchurch, who, in his youth, was greatly wronged by an unjust uncle of his, being an orphan; his portion, which was 200*l.* was put into the hands of that uncle, who, when he grew up, shuffled with him, and would give him but 40*l.* instead of his 200*l.* and he had no way of recovering his right, but by law; but before he would engage in that, he was willing to advise with his Minister, who was the famous Dr. Twiss of Newbury; the counsel he gave him, all things considered, was, for peace sake, and for the preventing of sin, and snares, and trouble, to take the 40*l.* rather than contend; and "Thomas, (said the Doctor,) if thou doest so, assure thyself that God will make it up to thee and thine, some other way; and they that defraud thee, will be the losers by it at last." He did so; and it pleased God so to bless that little which he began the world with, that, when he died in a good old age, he left his son possessed of some hundreds a year; and he that wronged him, fell into decay.

Many very pious worthy families in the country would say of Mr. Henry, that they had no friend like-minded, who did naturally care for their state, and so affectionately sympathize with them, and in whom their hearts could safely trust. He was very charitable to the poor, and was full of alms-deeds, *which he did*, (as is said of Tabitha, Acts, 9. 36.) not which he said he would do, or which he put others on to do, but which he did himself, dispersing abroad and giving to the poor, seeking and rejoicing in opportunities of that kind. And whenever he gave an alms for the body, he usually gave with it a spiritual alms, some good word

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word of counsel, reproof, instruction, or comfort, as there was occasion; in accommodating these to the persons he spake to, he had very great dexterity.

He was very forward to lend money freely, to any of his poor neighbours that had occasion, and would sometimes say, that in many cases there was more charity in *lending* than in *giving*, because it obliged the borrower both to honesty and industry. When one of his neighbours, to whom he had lent three pounds failed, so that he was never likely to see a farthing of it, he writes thus upon it; "Notwithstanding this, yet still I judge it my duty to lend, μηδὲν ἀπελπίζων—*nothing despairing*;" so Dr. Hammond reads it, Luke 6. 35. Though what is lent in charity, be not repaid, yet it is not *lost*. When those that had borrowed money of him, paid him again, he usually gave them back some part, to encourage honesty. He judged the taking of moderate interest for money, lawful, where the borrower was in the way of gaining by it. But he would advise his friends that had money, rather to dispose of it otherways, if they could.

It must not be forgotten, how punctual and exact he was in all his accounts with tenants, workmen, &c. being always careful to keep such things in *black and white*, (as he used to say,) which is the surest way to prevent mistakes, and a man's wronging either himself, or, his neighbour. Such was his prudence, and such his patience and peaceableness, that, all the time he was at Broad-Oak, he never sued any, nor ever was sued; but was instrumental to prevent many a vexatious lawsuit among his neighbours. He used to say, "There are four rules to be duly observed in going to law; 1. We must not go to law for trifles, as he did, who said that he would rather spend an hundred pounds in law, than lose a pennyworth of his right, Mat. 5. 39, 40, 41. 2. We must not be rash and hasty in it, but try all other means possible to compose differences; wherein he that yields most, as Abraham did to Lot, is the better man, and there is nothing lost by it in the end, 1 Cor. 6. 1, 2. 3. We must see that it be without malice or desire of revenge. If the undoing of our brother be the end of our going to law, as it is with many, it is certainly evil, and it speeds accordingly. 4. It must be with a disposition to peace, whenever it may be had, and an ear open to all overtures of that kind. The two *mottos* proper for the *great guns*, are applicable to this, *Ratio ultima Regum—The last appeal of Kings*, and *Sic quærimus pacem—Thus we aim at peace*.

Four rules he sometimes gave to be observed in our converse with men: Have communion with few; Be familiar with one; Deal justly with all; Speak evil of none.

He was noted as an extraordinarily neat husbandman about his house and ground, which, he would often say, he could not endure to see like the *field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding*. And it was strange, how easily one that had been bred up utterly a stranger to such things, yet, when God so ordered his lot, acquainted himself with, and accommodated himself to, the affairs of the country, making it the diversion of his vacant hours, to oversee his gardens and fields; when he better understood that known *Epode* of Horace, *Beatus ille qui procul negotiis—Happy the man placed far from city-cares*, than he did when, in his youth, he made an ingenious translation of it. His care of this kind was an act of charity to poor labourers whom he employed; and it was a good example to his neighbours, as well as for the comfort of his family. His converse likewise with these things was excellently improved for spiritual purposes, by occasional meditations, hints of which often occur in his Diary, as those that conversed with him, had many in discourse; it were easy, but almost endless, to give instances of this. He used to say, that *therefore* many of the scripture-parables and similitudes are taken from the common actions of this life, that when our hands are employed about them, our hearts may the more easily pass through them, to divine and heavenly things. I have heard him often blame those, whose irregular zeal in the profession of religion makes them to neglect their worldly business, and let the house drop through, the affairs of which, the good man will order with discretion; and he would tell sometimes of a religious woman, whose fault it had been, but who was convinced of it by means of an intelligent godly neighbour, who, coming into the house, and finding the good woman, far in the day, in her closet, and the house sadly neglected, children not tended, servants not minded; *What*, says he, *is there no fear of God in this house?* This startled and affected the good woman, who overheard him. He would often say that every thing is beautiful in its season; and that it is the wisdom of the prudent, so to order the duties of their general callings as christians, and those of their particular callings in the world, that they may not clash or interfere: I have heard it observed from Ecc. 7. 16. That there may be over-doing in well-doing.

I cannot omit one little passage in his Diary, because it may be instructive. When he was once desired to be bound for one that had, upon a particular occasion, been bound for him, he writes, Solomon says, *He that hateth suretyship, is sure*; but he says also, *He that hath friends, must shew himself friendly*. But he always cautioned those that became sureties, not to be bound for any more than they knew themselves *able* to pay, nor for more than they would be *willing* to pay, if the principal failed.

His house at Broad-Oak was by the road-side, which, though it had its inconveniencies, yet (he would say) pleased him well, because it gave his friends an opportunity of calling on him the oftener, and gave him an opportunity of being kind to strangers, and such as were any way distressed upon the road, to whom he was, upon all occasions, cheerfully ready, fully answering the Apostle's character of a bishop, that he must be *of good behaviour* (κόσμιον—*decent, affable, and obliging*) *and given to hospitality*, (1 Tim. 3. 2.) like Abraham, sitting at his tent door, in quest of opportunities to do good. If he met with any poor near his house, and gave them alms in money, yet he would bid them go to his door besides, for relief there. He was very tender

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tender and compassionate towards poor strangers and travellers, though his charity and candour were often imposed upon by cheats and pretenders, whom he was not apt to be suspicious of; he would say, in the most favourable sense, *Thou knowest not the heart of a stranger.* If any asked his charity, whose representation of their case he did not like, or who, he thought, did amiss to take that course, he would first give them an alms, and then mildly reprove them, and labour to convince them that they were out of the way of duty, and that they could not expect that God should bless them in it; he would not chide them, but reason with them. He would say that if he should tell them of their faults, and not give them an alms, the reproof would look only like an excuse for refusing his charity, and would be rejected accordingly.

In a word, his greatest care about the things of this world, was, how to do good with what he had, and to *devise liberal things;* desiring to make no accession to his estate, but only that blessing which attends beneficence. He did firmly believe (and it should seem few do) that what is *given to the poor, is lent to the Lord,* who will pay it again, in kind or kindness; and that religion and piety are undoubtedly the best friends to outward prosperity, and he found it so; for it pleased God abundantly to bless his habitation, and to *make a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he had round about.* Though he did not delight himself in the abundance of wealth, yet, which is far better, he delighted himself in the *abundance of peace,* Ps. 37. 11. *All that* he had, and did, observably prospered, so that the country oftentimes took notice of it, and called his family, *a family which the Lord had blessed.* His comforts of this kind were (as he used to pray they might be) "Oil to the wheels of his obedience;" and in the use of these things he served the Lord his God with *joyfulness and gladness of heart,* yet still mindful of, and *grieved for, the affliction of Joseph.* He would say sometimes, when he was in the midst of the comforts of this life, as that good man; "All this, and Heaven too! Surely then we serve a *good* Master." Thus did the Lord bless him, and make him a blessing; and *this abundant grace, through the thanksgiving of many, redounded to the glory of God.*

Having given this general account of his circumstances at Broad-Oak, we shall now go on with his story, especially as to the exercise of his Ministry there, and thereabouts; for that was his τὸ ἔργον—*his main work,* the thing in which he was, and to which he wholly gave himself, taking other things ὡς πάρεργα—*as a mere appendix.* After this settlement at Broad-Oak, whenever there was preaching at Whitwell chapel, (as usually there was, two Lord's Days in the Month,) he constantly attended there with his family, was generally with the first, and reverently joined in the public service: he diligently wrote the sermons; always staid, if the ordinance of Baptism was administered, but not if there was a Wedding, for he thought *that* a solemnity not proper for the Lord's Day. He often invited to dine with him the Minister that preached; after dinner, he sung a Psalm, repeated the morning-sermon, and prayed; and then attended, in like manner, in the afternoon. In the evening, he preached to his own family; and perhaps two or three of his neighbours would drop in to hear him. On those Lord's days, on which there was no preaching at the chapel, he spent the whole day at home, and many an excellent sermon he preached, when there were present only four beside his own family, (and perhaps not so many,) according to the limitation of the *Conventicle Act.* In these narrow private circumstances, he preached over the former part of the *Assembly's Catechism,* from divers texts; he also preached over Ps. 116. beside many particular occasional subjects.

What a grief of heart it was to him, to be thus *put under a bushel,* and confined to such a narrow sphere of usefulness, read in his own words, which I shall transcribe out of an Elegy he made (to give vent to his thoughts) upon the death of his worthy friend Mr. G. Mainwaring, some time Minister of Malpas, (who was silenced by the *Act of Uniformity,* and died *Mar.* 14, 1669) wherein he thus bewails (feelingly enough) the like restraints and confinements of his friend.

His later years he sadly spent,
Wrapt up in silence and restraint.
A burden such as none do know,
But they that do it undergo.
To have a fire shut up and pent
Within the bowels, and no vent;
To have gorg'd breasts, and by a law,
Those that fain would, forbid to draw.
But his dumb sabbaths here, did prove
Loud crying sabbaths in heav'n above.
His tears, when he might sow no more,
Wat'ring what he had sown before.

Soon after his settlement at Broad-Oak, he took a young scholar into the house with him; partly, to teach his son, and partly, to be a companion to himself to converse with him, and to receive help and instruction from him; and for many years, he was seldom without such, who, before their going to the university, or in the intervals of their attendance there, would be in his family, sitting under his shadow. One of the first he had with him, in 1668, (and after) was, Mr. W. Turner, born in the neighbourhood, afterward of Edmund-Hall in Oxford, now Vicar of Walberton in Sussex, to whom the world is beholden for that elaborate "*History of all Religions,*" which he published in 1695, and from whom is earnestly expected the performance of that noble, and useful project for the "*Record of Providences.*" Betwixt Mr. Henry and him there was a most entire and affectionate friendship; and, notwithstanding that distance of place, a constant and endearing correspondence was kept up as long as Mr. Henry lived.

It was observed, that several young men who had sojourned with him, and were very hopeful, and likely to be serviceable to their generations, died soon after their removal from him; (I could mention six or seven;) as if God had sent them to him to be prepared for another world, before they were called for out of this; yet never any died while they were with him.

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He had so great a kindness for the University, and valued so much the advantages of improvement there, that, for many years after the change, he advised all his friends, who designed their children for scholars, to send them thither, though he always counted upon their Conformity. But long experience altered his mind herein, and he chose rather to keep his own son at home with him, and to give him what help he could there, in his education, than venture him into the snares and temptations of the University.

It was also soon after this settlement at Broad Oak, that he contracted an intimate friendship with that learned, pious, and judicious gentleman, Mr. Hunt of Boreatton, (the son of Col. Hunt of Salop,) and with his excellent Lady, Frances, daughter of the Rt. Hon. the Lord Paget. The acquaintance then formed between Mr. Henry and that worthy family, continued to his dying day, about 30 years. One lord's-day in a quarter, he commonly spent with them, beside other interviews. It was a constant rejoicing to him, to see religion, and the power of godliness, uppermost, in such a family as that, (when *not many mighty, not many noble, are called,)* and the branches of it *branches of righteousness, the planting of the Lord.* Divers of the honourable relations of that family, contracted a very great respect for him, particularly the present Lord Paget, now his Majesty's Ambassador at the Ottoman Court, and Sir Henry Ashurst, whom we shall have occasion afterward to make mention of.

In the time of trouble and distress, by the *Conventicle Act,* in 1670, he kept private, and stirred little abroad, as loath to offend those that were in power, and judging it prudence to gather in his sails, when the storm was violent. He then observed, as that which he was troubled at, "That there was a great deal of precious time lost among Professors, when they came together, in discoursing of their adventures to meet, and their escapes, which he feared, tended more to set up self than to give glory to God: that they lost time also in telling how they got together, and who preached, but scarcely inquiring what spiritual benefit was reaped from it; and that we are apt to make the circumstances of our religious services, the matter of our discourse, more than the substance of them."

We shall close this Chapter with two remarks out of his diary, in 1671, which will shew what manner of spirit he was of, and what were his sentiments of things at that time. One is this, "All acknowledge that there is, at this day, a number of sober, peaceable men, both ministers and others, among Dissenters; but who either says or does any thing to oblige them? Who desires, or endeavours to open the door to let in such? Nay, do they not rather provoke them to run into the same extravagancies with others, by making no difference, but laying a load on them, as if they were as bad as the worst." It is true that, about this time, the Lord-Keeper Bridgman, Bp. Wilkins, and the Lord-Chief-Justice Hale, were making some overtures towards an accommodation with them? but it is as true, that those overtures did but the more exasperate their adversaries, (who were ready to account such moderate men, the worst enemies the Church of England had,) and that they issued in greater acts of severity.

Another is this, "If all that has been said and written, to prove that *Prelacy* is *antichristian,* and that it is unlawful to join in the Common-Prayer, had been effectual to persuade Bishops to study and do the duty of church-rulers, in preaching and feeding the flock, according to the Word, and to persuade people to be serious inward, and spiritual in the use of forms, it had been much better with the Church of God in England, than it now is." Consonant to the spirit of this remark, was that, which he took all occasions to mention as his settled principle. "In those things wherein all the people of God are agreed, I will spend my zeal; and wherein they differ, I will endeavour to walk according to the light that God has given me, and charitably believe, that others do so too."

CHAP. VI.

The Events from 1672 *to* 1681.

NOTWITHSTANDING the severe Act against Conventicles, in 1670, yet the Non-Conformists in *London* ventured to set up Meetings in 1671, and were connived at; but in the *Country* there was little liberty taken till the King's Declaration of *Mar.* 15, 1671, gave countenance and encouragement to it. What were the secret springs which produced that Declaration, time discovered; however, it was to the poor dissenters, as life from the dead, and gave them some *reviving in their bondage;* God graciously ordering it so, that the spirit he had made, might not *fail before him.* But so precarious a liberty was it, that it should never be said, that those people were hard to be pleased, who were so well pleased with that, and thanked God, who put such a thing into the King's heart. The tenor of that Declaration was this; "In consideration of the inefficacy of rigour, tried for divers years, and to invite strangers into the kingdom, (ratifying the Establishment in the Church of England,) it suspends penal laws against all Non-Conformists and Recusants, and promises to license separate places for Meetings, limiting Papists only, to private houses."

On this, Mr. Henry writes, "It is a thing diversely felt, as men's interest lead them; the Conformists *displeased,* the Presbyterians *glad,* the Independents *very glad,* the Papists *triumphant.* The danger is, (says he,) lest the allowing of separate places help to overthrow our parish-order, which God hath owned, and to beget divisions and animosities among us, which no honest heart but would rather should be healed. We are put hereby (says he) into a *trilemma,* either to turn Independents in practice, or to strike in with the Conformists, or to sit down in former silence and sufferings, (and *silence* he accounted one of the greatest sufferings,) till the Lord shall open a more effectual door." That which he then heartily wished for, was, That those who were in place, would admit the *sober* Non-conformists to preach *occasionally* in their pulpits; by which means, he thought, prejudices would in time wear

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wear off on both sides, and they might mutually strengthen each others' hands against the common enemy, the *Papists*, who, he foresaw, would fish best in troubled waters." This he would choose much rather, than to keep a separate meeting. But it could not be had; no, not so much as leave to preach in Whitwell-Chapel when it was vacant, as it often was, though it were three long miles from the Parish-Church. He found that some people, the more they are *courted*, the more *coy* they are; however, the overtures he made to this purpose, and the slow steps he took towards the setting up a distinct congregation, yielded him satisfaction afterwards in the reflection, when he could say, *We* would have been united, and *they* would not.

It was several weeks after the Declaration came out, that he received a License to preach, as Paul did, in his own house, and elsewhere, *no man forbidding him*. This was procured for him by some of his friends in London, without his knowledge, and came to him altogether unexpected. The Use he made of it, was, that at his own house, what he did before to his own family, and in private, the doors being shut for fear, he now did more publicly; he threw his doors open, and welcomed his neighbours to him, to partake of his spiritual things. He preached indeed only one sermon, in the evening of the Lord's-day, when there was preaching at Whitwell-Chapel, where he still continued his attendance, with his family and friends as usual; but when there was not, he spent the whole day, at the usual times, in the services of the day, exposition of the scriptures, and preaching, with prayer and praise. This he did *gratis*, receiving nothing for his labours, either at home or abroad, but the satisfaction of doing good to souls, (which was his meat and drink,) with the trouble and charge of giving entertainment to many of his friends, which he did with much cheerfulness: he would say that he sometimes thought that the bread did even multiply in the breaking; and he found that God did abundantly bless his provision, with that blessing, which, as he used to say, will, "make a little to go a great way." He was wont to observe, for the encouragement of such as had Meetings in their houses, (which sometimes drew upon them inconveniences,) "The Ark is a guest, that always pays well for its entertainment." And he noted, that when Christ had borrowed Peter's boat to preach a sermon out of it, he presently repaid him for the loan, with a *great draught of fishes*, Luke 5. 3, 4.

Many thoughts of heart he had, concerning this use which he made of the liberty, not knowing what would be the end hereof; but, after serious consideration, and many prayers, he saw his way very plain before him, and addressed himself with all diligence, to the improvement of this *gale* of opportunity. Some had dismal apprehensions of the issue of it, and that there would be an *after-reckoning*. "But" (said he) "let us mind our duty, and let God alone to order events, which are his work, not ours."

It was a word *upon the wheels*, which he preached, at that time, for his own encouragement, and the encouragement of his friends, from that scripture, (Ecc. 11: 4.) *He that observes the wind, shall not sow, and he that regards the clouds, shall not reap.* Those that are minded either to *do* good, or to *get* good, must not be frightened with seeming difficulties and discouragements. Our work is to sow and reap, to *do* good, and *get* good; and let us mind that, and let who will mind the winds and clouds. *A lion in the way, a lion in the streets;* a very unlikely place (he would say) for lions to be in; and yet that serves the sluggard for an excuse.

While this liberty lasted, he was *in labours more abundant*; many Lectures he preached abroad, in Shropshire, Cheshire, and Denbighshire, laying out himself exceedingly for the good of souls, spending and being spent in the work of the Lord. Of that *neighbourhood*, and of that *time*, it was said, that *this and that man were born* again, *then* and *there;* and many there were, who asked the way to *Sion* with their faces thitherward, and were (not proselyted to a party, but) savingly *brought home* to Jesus Christ. I mean, that such as had been vain, and worldly, and careless, and unmindful of God and another world, became sober, and serious, and concerned about their souls and a future state. This was the conversion of souls aimed at, and laboured after; and through grace, not altogether in vain. Whatever lectures were set up in the country round, it was still desired that Mr. Henry would begin them; (which was thought no small encouragement to those who were to carry them on;) and very happy he was, both in the choice, and management, of his subjects at such opportunities, seeking to find out acceptable words. Take one specimen of his address, when he began a lecture with a sermon on Heb. 12. 15. "I assure you," (said he,) "and God is my witness, I am not come to preach either sedition against the peace of the state, or schism against the peace of the church, by persuading you to this or that opinion or party; but, as a minister of Christ, that hath received mercy from the Lord, to desire to be faithful, my errand is, to exhort you to all possible seriousness in the great business of your eternal salvation, according to my text, which, if the Lord will make as profitable to you, as it is material and of weight in itself, neither you nor I shall have cause to repent our coming hither, and our being here to-day; *looking diligently lest any of you fail of the Grace of God.* If it were the last sermon I were to preach, I did not know how to take my aim better, to do you good."

In doing this work, he often said, that he looked upon himself but as an *assistant* to the Parish-Ministers, in promoting the common interests of Christ's kingdom, and the common salvation of precious souls, by the explication and application of those great truths wherein we are all agreed. He would compare the case to that in Hezekiah's time, when the Levites helped the priests to kill the sacrifice, which was something of an irregularity, but the exigence of affairs called for it; the priests being too few, and some of them not so careful as they should have been, to *sanctify themselves;* see 2 Chr. 29. 34. and, wherever he preached, he usually prayed for the Parish-Minis-

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ter, and for a blessing upon his ministry. He has often said, how well pleased he was, when, after he had preached a lecture at Oswestry, he went to visit the minister of the place, Mr. Edwards, a worthy good man, and told him, that he had been sowing a handful of seed among his people, and had this answer, "That is well; the Lord prosper your seed and mine too, there is need enough of us both." Another worthy *conformist*, that came privately to hear him, but was reprimanded for it by his superiors, told him afterwards with tears, that "his heart was with him."

His heart was wonderfully enlarged in his work at this time; the fields were white unto the harvest, and he was busy, and God did remarkably own him, setting many seals to his ministry, which much confirmed him in what he did. He has this observable passage in his Diary, about this time, which he recorded for his after-benefit, (and the example of it may be instructive) "Remember that if trouble should come, hereafter, for what we do now in the use of present liberty, I neither shrink from it, nor sink under it; for I do therein approve myself to God, and to my own conscience, in truth and uprightness; and the Lord whom I serve, can, and will, certainly both bear me out, and bring me off, with comfort in the end. I say, remember, and forget it not, this 24th day of March, 1672."

It was at the beginning of this liberty, that the *Society* at Broad Oak did commence, made up (beside their neighbourhood) of some out of Whitchurch, and Whitchurch parish, that had been Mr. Porter's people; some out of Hanmer parish, that had been Mr. Steel's; and some out of the parishes of Wem, Prees, and Ellesmere: persons, generally, of very moderate and sober principles; quiet and peaceable lives, and hearty well-wishers to the King and Government; not rigid or schismatical in their separation, but willing to attend (though sometimes with difficulty and hazard) upon those administrations which they found most lively and edifying, and most helpful to them in the great business of working out their salvation. To this Society he would never call himself a *Pastor*, nor was he willing that they should call him so, but a *helper*, and a Minister of Christ for their good. He would say, "That he looked upon his family as his only charge, and that his preaching to others was but accidental, whom, if they came, he could no more turn away than he could a poor hungry man that should come to his door for an alms. And, being a minister of Jesus Christ, he thought himself bound to preach the Gospel, as he had opportunity."

Usually, he administered the ordinance of the Lord's-Supper once a month. Some of his opportunities of that kind he sets a particular remark upon, as *sweet sealing days*, on which he found it good to draw near to God.

When, about the Year's end, there was a general expectation of the cancelling of the indulgence, he has this note upon a *precious sabbath and sacrament-day*, as he calls it; "Perhaps this may be the last; *Father, thy will be done;* it is good for us to be at such uncertainties; for now we receive our liberty from our Father, fresh every day, which is best and sweetest of all."

On Mar. 8, 1676, being Saturday night, the town of Wem in Shropshire (about six miles from him) was burnt down; the church, market-house, about 126 dwelling-houses, and one man, in little more than an hour's time, the wind being exceeding violent; at which time, Mr. Henry was very helpful to his friends there, both for their support under, and their improvement of, this sad providence. It was but about half a year before, that a threatening fire had broken out in that town, but did little hurt. Some serious people there, presently after, celebrated a thanksgiving for their deliverance, in which Mr. Henry imparted to them a spiritual gift, (Oct. 3, 1676.) from Zec. 3. 2. *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* In the close of that sermon, pressing them, from the consideration of that remarkable deliverance, to personal reformation, and amendment of life; that those who had been proud, covetous, passionate, liars, swearers, drunkards, sabbath-breakers, would be so no more; and urging Ezr. 9. 13, 14. he added, "If this providence have not this effect upon you, you may in reason expect another fire; for when God judgeth, he will overcome;" he reminded them too of Lev. 26. where it is so often threatened against those who walk contrary to God, that he would *punish them yet seven times more.* The remembrance of this could not but be affecting, when, in so short a time after, the whole town was laid in ruins. The first time he went there after that calamity, a neighbouring justice having notice of it, sent to forbid him to preach, to his own grief, as well as to the grief of many others, who came expecting. "But," (says he in his Diary) "there was a visible sermon before us, the *ruins preaching*, That sin is an evil thing, and God a terrible God." However, a few days after, he got an opportunity of preaching to them a word in season, which some will not forget, from Hos. 6. 1. *Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn*——At the return of the year, when the town was rebuilding, he gave them another very suitable sermon, from Pro. 3. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just.* "Though it be rising again (says he in his Diary) out of its ashes, yet the burning of it should not be forgotten, especially not the sin that kindled it. He often prayed for them, that *the fire might be a refining fire.*"

In 1677, 1678, and 1679, in the course of his ministry at Broad-Oak, he preached over the ten commandments, and largely opened from other texts of scripture, the duties required, and sins forbidden in each commandment. For, though none delighted more than he, in preaching Christ and Gospel-Grace, yet he knew that Christ came, not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil; and that, though, through grace, we are not under the law, as a *covenant*, yet we are under it as a *rule*, under the *law to Christ.* He was very large and particular in pressing *second table duties*, as essential to christianity. "We have known those (said he) that have called preaching on such subjects, *good moral preaching;* but let them call it as they

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they will, I am sure it is necessary, and as much now as ever." How earnestly would he press upon the people the necessity of righteousness and honesty in their whole conversation. "A good Christian (he used to say) will be a good husband, and a good father, and a good master, and a good subject, and a good neighbour; and so, in other relations." How often would he urge, That honesty is the will and command of the Great God, the character of all the citizens of Sion, the beauty and ornament of our christian profession, and the surest way to thrive and prosper in the world. "Honesty is the best policy." He would say, that these are things in which the children of this world are competent judges. They that know not what belongs to faith, and repentance, and prayer, yet know what belongs to the making of an honest bargain. They are also parties concerned, and are often themselves careful in these things; and therefore those who profess religion, should walk very circumspectly, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, nor religion wounded, through their sides. Thus he preached, and his constant practice was a comment upon it. One thing I remember he was more than ordinarily enlarged in the pressing of, which was upon the ninth commandment, to *speak evil of no man*, from Tit. 3. 2. If we can say no good of persons, we must say nothing of them. He gave it as a rule, "Never speak of any one's faults to others, till we have first spoken of them to the offender himself." He was himself an eminent example of this rule. Some that have conversed much with him, have said that they never heard him speak evil of any body; nor could he bear to hear any spoken evil of, but often drove away a backbiting tongue with an angry countenance. He was known to be as faithful a *patron* of offenders before *others*, as he was a faithful *reprover* of them to *themselves*.

Whenever he preached of *moral duties*, he would always have something of CHRIST in his sermon; either His *life*, as the great pattern of the duty; or His *love*, as the great motive to it; or His *merit*, as making atonement for the neglect of it.

In 1680, he preached over the doctrines of *faith* and *repentance*, from several texts of scripture. He used to say, that he had been told concerning the famous Mr. Dod, that some called him, in scorn, *Faith and Repentance*, because he insisted so much upon those two in all his preaching. "But," (said he) "if this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile; for *faith and repentance are all in all in christianity*."

Concerning *repentance*, he has sometimes said, "If I were to die *in* the pulpit, I would desire to die, *preaching* repentance; as if I die *out* of the pulpit, I would desire to die *practising* repentance." And he had often this saying concerning repentance; "He that repents every day, for the sins of every day, when he comes to die, will have the sins but of one day to repent of. Even reckonings make long friends."

That year also, and in 1681, he preached over the duties of *hearing the word* and *prayer*; of the former from the Parable of the four sorts of ground: of the latter, from Luke 11. 1, &c. when he preached over the Lord's Prayer, in above thirty excellent and elaborate discourses. He looked upon the Lord's Prayer to be not only a Directory or pattern for prayer, but (according to the advice of the *Assembly of Divines*) proper to be used as a *form*; and accordingly he often used it both in public and in his family. And as he thought it was an error on the one hand, to lay so much stress upon it as some do, who think no solemn prayer accepted, nor any solemn ordinance or administration of worship complete, without it, and therefore repeat it five or six times, and perhaps oftener, at one meeting; so he thought it an error on the other hand, not to use it at all, since it is a prayer, a compendious comprehensive prayer, and may be of use to us, at least, as other scripture-prayers; but he thought it a much greater error to be angry at those that do use it, to judge and censure them, and, for no other reason, to conceive prejudices against them and their ministry. "A great strait" (said he) "poor ministers are in, when some will not hear them, if they do not use the Lord's Prayer, and others will not hear them, if they do. What is to be done in this case? We must walk according to the light we have, and approve ourselves to God, either in using, or not using, it, and wait for the day when God will mend the matter; which I hope he will do in his own due time."

He was in the close of his exposition of the Lord's Prayer, when a dark cloud was brought upon his assemblies, and he was necessitated to contract his sails.

CHAP. VII.

The Opposition he met with at Broad Oak, *from* 1680 *to* 1687.

IN the months of April and May, 1681, the country was greatly afflicted, and threatened by an extreme drought, there was no rain for several weeks; the grass failed, corn that was sown, languished, and much that was intended to be sown, could not; the like had not been known for many years: it was generally apprehended that a dearth would ensue, especially in that country, which is, for the most part, dry. It was now *time to seek the Lord*, and (according to his own appointment) to *ask of him rain in the season thereof*. Several serious thinking people being together at the funeral of that worthy minister of Jesus Christ, Mr. Malden, it was there remarked, how requisite it was that there should be some time set apart, on purpose for fasting and prayer, in a solemn assembly; upon this occasion, T. Millington, of Weston, in Hodnet parish in Shropshire, desired it might be at his house; and Tuesday, June 14, was the day pitched upon. The connivance of authority was presumed upon, because no disturbance of meetings was heard of at London, or any where else. Mr. Henry was desired to come and give his assistance at that day's work. He asked upon what terms they stood with their neighbouring justices. He was answered, "Well enough." The drought continuing in extremity, some that had not used to come to such meetings,

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meetings, yet came thither upon the apprehensions they had of the threatening judgment which the country was under. Mr. E. Bury, of Bolas, (well-known by several useful books he has published) prayed; Mr. Henry prayed and preached on Ps. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* whence his doctrine was, "Iniquity regarded in the heart, will certainly spoil the success of prayer." When he was in the midst of his sermon, closely applying this truth, Sir T. V. of Hodnet, and Mr. M. of Ightfield, two Justices of the Peace for Shropshire, with several others of their retinue, came suddenly upon them, disturbed them, set guards upon the house-door, and came in themselves, severely reproached all they knew, reflected upon the late honourable House of Commons, and the vote they passed concerning the present unseasonableness of putting the laws in execution against Protestant-Dissenters; as if, in so voting, they had acted beyond their sphere, as they did, who took away the life of Charles I. They diverted themselves with very abusive and unbecoming talk; swearing and cursing, and reviling bitterly. Being told that the occasion of the meeting was to "seek to turn away the anger of God from us" in the present drought; it was answered, "Such meetings as these were the cause of God's anger." While they were thus entertaining themselves, their clerks took the names of those that were present, in all about 150, and so dismissed them for the present. Mr. Henry has noted in the account he kept of this event, that the Justices came to this *good* work from the alehouse upon Prees-Heath, about two miles off, to which, and the bowling-green adjoining, they, with other Justices, Gentlemen and Clergymen of the neighbourhood, had long before obliged themselves to come every Tuesday, during the summer-time, under the penalty of twelve-pence a time if they were absent, and there to spend the day in drinking and bowling; which is thought to be as direct a violation of the law of the land, *viz.* the *Stat. of* 33 *Hen.* 8. *Cap.* 9. *for debarring unlawful games,* which was never yet repealed, as the meeting was of the *Stat. of* 22 *Car.* 2. and as much more to the dishonour of God, and the scandal of the christian profession, as cursing and swearing, and drunkenness, are worse than praying, and singing psalms, and hearing the word of God. It is supposed that the Justices knew of the meeting before, and might have prevented it by the least intimation, but that they were willing to take the opportunity of making sport to themselves, and trouble to their neighbours. After the feat done, they returned back to the alehouse, and made themselves and their companions merry with calling over the names they had taken, making their reflections as they saw cause, and recounting the particulars of the exploit. There was one of the company whose wife happened to be present at the meeting, and whose name was taken among the rest; with which upbraiding him, he answered, "that she had been better employed than he was, and that if Mr. Henry might be admitted to preach in a church, he would go a great many miles to hear him." For which words, he was forthwith expelled their company, never more to shew his face again at that bowling-green: to which he replied, that if they had so ordered long ago, it had been a great deal the better for him and his family. Two days after, they met again at Hodnet, where, upon the oath of two witnesses, who (as was supposed) were sent on purpose to inform, they signed and sealed two records of conviction. By one record, they convicted the master of the house, and fined him 20*l.* and 5*l.* more as Constable of the town that year, and with him all the persons present, whose names they had taken, and fined them 5*s.* a piece, and issued out warrants accordingly. By another record, they convicted the two ministers, Mr. Bury and Mr. Henry. The Act makes it only punishable to *preach* or *teach* in any such conventicle; and yet they fined Mr. Bury 20*l.* though he only *prayed,* and did not speak one word in the way either of preaching or teaching, not so much as "*Let us pray.*" However, they said, *praying* was *teaching,* and, right or wrong, he must be fined; though his great piety, peaceableness, and usefulness, beside his deep poverty, one would think, might have pleaded for him, against so palpable a piece of injustice. They took 7*l.* off from him, and laid it upon others, as they saw cause; and for the remaining 13*l.* he being utterly unable to pay it, they took from him, by distress, the bed which he lay upon, with blanket and rug; also another feather bed, nineteen pair of sheets, most of them new, of which he could not prevail to have so much as one pair returned for him to lie in; also books to the value of 5*l.* beside brass and pewter. And though he was at this time perfectly innocent of that heinous crime of *preaching* and *teaching,* with which he was charged, (for so the record runs again and again, concerning Mr. Henry and Mr. Bury, *Quod ad tunc et ibidem precaverunt, prædicaverunt, et docuerunt—Inasmuch as then and there they prayed, preached, and taught,*) yet he had no way to right himself, but by appealing to the Justices themselves in Quarter-sessions, who would be sure to affirm their own decree, (as the Justices in Montgomeryshire had done, not long before, in a like case) especially when it was to recover to themselves *treble* costs. So the good man sat down with his loss, and *took joyfully the spoiling of his goods, knowing in himself that he had in Heaven a better and a more enduring substance.*

But Mr. Henry being the greatest criminal, and having done the most mischief, must needs be animadverted upon accordingly, and therefore he was fined 40*l.* the pretence of which, was this: in 1679, Oct. 15, Mr. Kynaston of Oatly, a Justice of Peace in Shropshire, meeting him and some others coming, as he supposed, from a conventicle, he was pleased to record their conviction, upon the notorious evidence and circumstances of the fact. The record was filed at Salop the next Sessions after; but no notice was ever sent of it, either to Mr. Henry, or the Justices of Flintshire, nor was any prosecution commenced upon it, against any of the parties charged; (the reason of which Mr. Henry, in a narrative he wrote of this affair, supposes to be not only the then favourable posture of public affairs towards dissenters, but also the particular prudence and lenity of Mr. Kynaston;) so that, having never smarted for this, he could not be supposed to be deterred from the like

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like offence; nor, if he were wronged in that first conviction, had he ever any opportunity of making his appeal. However, the Justices being resolved that he should have *summum jus—the utmost that the law could do*, thought that first record sufficient to give denomination to a second offence, and so he came to be fined double. This conviction (according to the direction of the act) they certified to the next adjoining Justices of Flintshire, who had all along carried themselves with great temper and moderation towards Mr. Henry, and had never given him any disturbance, though, if they had been so minded, they had not wanted opportunities; but they were now necessitated to execute the sentences of the Shropshire Justices. It was much pressed upon him to pay the fine, which might prevent his own loss, and the Justices' trouble. But he was not willing to do it, partly, because he would give no encouragement to such prosecutions, nor voluntarily reward the informers for that which he thought they should rather be punished for; and partly, because he thought himself wronged in the doubling of the fine. Whereupon, his goods were distrained upon and carried away; in doing of which, many circumstances occurred, which might be worth the noting, but that the repetition of them would be perhaps grating, and give offence to some. Let it therefore suffice (waving the circumstances) to mention only that their Warrant not giving them authority to break open doors, nor their watchfulness not getting them an opportunity to enter the house, they carried away about thirty-three cart load of goods without doors, corn cut upon the ground, hay, coals, &c. This made a great noise in the country, and raised the indignation of many against the decrees which prescribed this grievousness; while Mr. Henry bore it, with his usual evenness and serenity of mind, not at all moved or disturbed by it. He did not boast of his sufferings, or make any great matter of them; but would often say, "Alas, this is nothing to what others suffer, or to what we ourselves may suffer before we die." And yet he rejoiced and blessed God that it was not for debt, or for evil-doing, that his goods were carried away. "And" (said he) "while it is for well-doing that we suffer, they cannot harm us." Thus he writes in his Diary upon it, "How oft have we said that changes are at the door! But blessed be God, there is no sting in this." He frequently expressed the assurance he had, that whatever damages he sustained, "God is able to make it up again." "And" (as he used to say) "though we may be losers *for* Christ, yet we shall not be losers *by* him in the end." He had often said, that his preaching was likely to do the most good, when it was sealed with suffering. "And if this be the time," (said he) "welcome the will of God: even this also shall turn to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ:" *Bene agere, et male pati, vere Christianum est—To act well, and to be ill-treated, is eminently characteristic of the Christian.*

Soon after this, the Assizes for Flintshire were held at Mold, where Sir G. Jeffries, afterwards Lord Chancellor, then Chief-Justice of Chester, sat Judge. He did not in private conversation seem to applaud what was done in this matter, so as was expected; whether out of a private pique against some that had been active in it, or for what other reason, is not known; but it was said that he pleasantly asked some of the gentlemen by what new law they pressed carts, as they passed upon their occasions along the road, to carry away goods distrained for a conventicle? It was also said, that he spoke with some respect of Mr. Henry; saying, he knew him and his character well, and that he was a great friend of his mother's, (Mrs. Jeffries of Acton near Wrexham, a very pious, good woman,) and that sometimes, at his mother's request, Mr. Henry had examined him in his learning, when he was a school-boy, and had commended his proficiency. It was much wondered at by many, that of all the times Sir G. Jeffries went that Circuit, (though it is well enough known what was his temper, and what the temper of that time,) he never sought any occasion against Mr. Henry, nor took the occasions that were offered, nor countenanced any trouble intended him, though he was the only Nonconformist in Flintshire. One circumstance I remember, not improper to be mentioned; there had been an agreement among some ministers, (I think it began in the West of England, where Mr. Allen was) to spend some time, either in secret, or in their families, or both, between six and eight o'clock every Monday morning, in prayer for the Church of God, and for the land and nation, more fully and particularly than at other times, and to make that their special errand at the Throne of Grace, and to engage as many of their praying friends as ever they could, to the observance of it. This had been communicated to Mr. Henry, by some of his friends in London, and he punctually observed it in his own practice, I believe, for many years. He also mentioned it to some of his acquaintance, who did in like manner observe it. It happened, that one in Denbighshire, to whom he had communicated it, was so well pleased with it, that he wrote a letter of it to a friend of his at a distance, which letter fell into hands that perverted it, and made information upon it against the writer and receiver of the letter, who were bound over to the Assizes; Sir G. Jeffries had great suspicions that it was a branch of the Presbyterian Plot, and reproached the parties accused severely. It appeared, either by the letter, or by the confession of the parties, that they received the project from Mr. Henry, which (it was greatly feared) would bring him into trouble; but Sir George, to the surprise of many, let it fall, and never inquired farther into it. It seems, there are some men, whose *ways so please the Lord, that he makes even their enemies to be at peace with them;* and there is nothing lost by trusting in God.

Mr. Henry, at the next Assizes after he was distrained upon, was presented by one of the High-Constables, 1. For keeping a Conventicle at his house; and, 2. For saying, That the law for suppressing Conventicles ought not to be obeyed, and that there was never a tittle of the word of God in it. As to this latter presentment, it was altogether false. He had indeed in discourse with the High-Constable, when he insisted so much upon the law which required him to be so rigorous in the prosecution, objected, That "all human laws were not to be obeyed, merely because they were laws." But as

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to any such reflections upon the law he suffered by, he was far from it, and had prudence enough to keep silence at that time; for it was an evil time, when so many were made *offenders for a word*. But these presentments met with so little countenance from Judge Jeffries, that Mr. Henry only entered his Appearance in the Prothonotary's office, and they were no more heard of; wherein he acknowledged the hand of God, who turneth the hearts of the children of men, *as the rivulets of water*.

As to what was taken from him by the distress, they who took it, having paid those they employed, did what they pleased with it. What the remainder was is not certainly known; but it was said, that, the following summer, about 27*l*. were paid to Sir *T. V.* of which (and the rest that was levied in other places, which amounted to a considerable sum) it was credibly reported (and I have not heard it contradicted) that neither the King, nor the Poor, had their share, (which by the act is two-thirds) nor the Informers, all theirs; but people said, The gentleman had occasion for it all. But as they that had it, were never the richer for it, so he that lost it, would often say that he found that God did so abundantly bless the remainder to him, that he was never the poorer; which he would mention for the encouragement of his friends, not to *balk duty*, (as he used to express it) *for fear of suffering*.

In the same year there was a public debate at Oswestry, betwixt the then Bp. of St. Asaph (Dr. *W. Lloyd*, late Bp. of Worcester) and some Nonconformist ministers, of which Mr. Henry was one. The story, in short, is this: that learned Bishop, at his first coming to the Diocese of St. Asaph, in his zeal for the established Church, set himself with vigour to reduce dissenters to it; and that he might do it with the *cords of a man*, he resolved, before he took any other methods, to reason the matter with them, and to endeavour their conviction by discourse, in which he had a very great felicity, both by his learning and temper. If there were any that declined discoursing with him, he improved that against them very much; urging (as he wrote afterwards to Mr. Henry) "That no man can pretend conscience for not coming, when he is required, to give an account of his religion, to them that have authority to demand it, by the laws under which he lives, and to hear from their mouths what can be said for the Established religion. These are things from which conscience is so far from exempting, that the great rule of conscience requires it, as an indispensable duty; that we should be always ready to give an account of the hope that is in us; and that we should hear them that are in Moses's chair, &c. and therefore those who refused this, he would consider as men governed, not by conscience, but obstinacy."

He publicly debated with the Quakers at Lanvillin in Montgomeryshire; their champion was Dr. Lloyd, a physician. One of the most considerable Nonconformist-Ministers in his Diocese, was Mr. J. Owen of Oswestry, then very young, but well-known since by his learned book, which he calls, "*A Plea for Scripture-Ordination;*" proving ordination by Presbyters, without Diocesan-Bishops, to be valid, (published in the year 1694) a point of controversy which he was then obliged, in his own defence, to search into. Several discourses the Bishop had with him in private; at last, his Lordship was pleased to appoint him to give him the meeting in the town-hall of Oswestry, on Tuesday, Sept. 27, 1681, there to give an account *by what right he exercised the ministry, not having Episcopal ordination.* He directed him also to procure what other ministers he could, to assist him, for he would be glad to hear what any of them had to say for themselves. The notice was very short, not above four or five days. Some whose assistance was desired, apprehended it might do more hurt than good, and might be prejudicial to their own liberty, and therefore declined it. It was not agreeable to Mr. Henry's mild and modest temper, to appear in such circumstances; but he was loath to desert his friend Mr. Owen, and so, with much importunity, he was prevailed with to come to Oswestry, at the time appointed; and there came no other than he and Mr. J. Roberts of Denbighshire, in the Diocese of Bangor, a plain man, of great integrity, and a very good scholar. The Bishop came, according to appointment, and brought with him for his assistant, the famous Mr. H. Dodwell. Mr. Henry, who was utterly a stranger to the Bishop, pressed hard to have had the discourse in private, before a select number; but it would not be granted. He also desired his Lordship, that it might not be expected from him, being of another Diocese, to concern himself in the debate, except as a hearer: "Nay, Mr. Henry," (said the Bishop) "it is not the concern of my Diocese alone, but it is the common cause of Religion; and therefore I expect you should interest yourself in it more than as a hearer." His Lordship was pleased to promise, that nothing which should be said by way of argument, should be any way turned to the prejudice of the disputants, nor advantage taken of it to give them trouble. There were present divers of the clergy and gentry of the country, with the magistrates of the town, and a great number of people, which, if it could have been avoided, was not pleasant to Mr. Henry, who never loved any thing that made a noise; herein like his Master, who *did not strive nor cry*. The debate began about two o'clock in the afternoon, and continued till between seven and eight at night; much was said *pro* and *con*, touching the identity of Bishops and Presbyters, the bishopping and unbishopping of Timothy and Titus, the validity of Presbyterian ordination, &c. It was managed with a great deal of liberty, and not under the strict laws of disputation, which made it hard to give any tolerable account of the particulars of it. The arguments on both sides may better be fetched from the books written on the subject, than from such a discourse. The Bishop managed his part of the conference with a great deal of gravity, calmness, and evenness of spirit, and therein gave an excellent pattern to all that are in such stations. Mr. Henry's remark upon this business, in his Diary is this; "That whereas many reports went abroad, far and near, concerning it, every one passing their judgment upon the result of it, as they stood affected; for my own part, upon

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upon reflection, I find I have great reason to be ashamed of my manifold infirmities and imperfections; and yet, do bless God, that, seeing I could manage it no better, to do the truth more service, there was not more said and done to its disservice; to God be glory." But there were others, who said that Mr. Henry was an instrument of glorifyng God and serving the Church, in that affair, almost as much as in any thing that ever he did, except the preaching of the Gospel. And some, who were adversaries to the cause he pleaded, though they were not convinced by his arguments, yet by his great meekness and humility, and that truly christian spirit which appeared so evidently in the whole management, were brought to have a better opinion of him, and the way in which he walked.

The conference broke off a little abruptly; the Bishop and Mr. Henry being somewhat close at an argument, in the recapitulation of what had been discoursed of; Mr. J. Roberts whispered to Mr. Henry, *Pray let my Lord have the last word;* which a Justice of Peace upon the Bench overhearing, presently replied, *You say, My Lord shall have the last word, but he shall not, for I will; we thank God we have the sword of power in our hands, and by the grace of God we will keep it, and it shall not rust; and I hope every lawful magistrate will do as I do: and look to yourselves, Gentlemen, by the grace of God, I'll root you out of the country.* To which a forward man in the crowd said, *Amen, throw them down stairs.* This the Bishop heard with silence, but the Mayor of the town took order for their safety.

Two days after this discourse, the Bishop wrote a very obliging letter to Mr. Henry, to signify to him how very much he was pleased with the good temper and spirit that he found in him at Oswestry, that he looked upon him as one that intended well, but laboured under prejudices, and that he desired further acquaintance and conversation with him: particularly that he would come to him to Wrexham: about three months after, he sent for him again to Chester; in both which interviews, a great deal of discourse, with much freedom, passed between them in private, in which they seemed to vie in nothing more than in candour and obligingness, shewing to each other *all meekness.* I remember the Bishop was pleased to shew him his plan for the government of his diocese, and the method he intended to take in church-censures, which Mr. Henry very well approved of, but pleasantly told his Lordship, he hoped he would take care that Juvenal's verse should not be again verified,

Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.—Sat. 2.
The crows are pardon'd, but the doves destroy'd.

which the Bishop smiled at, and told him he would take care it should not. His lordship observing his true catholic charity and moderation, told him, that he did not look upon him as χισματικὸν—*schismatical,* but only as παρασυναγωγὸν—*inclined to the conventicle,* and that if he were in his diocese, he did not question but that he should find out some way to make him useful. But all his reasonings could not satisfy Mr. Henry's conscience of the lawfulness of being re-ordained, and conforming. The Bishop, for some years after, when he came that way, towards London, either called on Mr. Henry at his house, or sent for him to him at Whitchurch, and still with all outward expressions of friendship.

The trouble which Mr. Henry was in, about the meeting at Weston, obliged him, for a while, to keep his sabbaths at home, somewhat private; in 1682, he took a greater liberty, and many flocked to him on Lord's-Days, through the kind connivance of the neighbouring magistrates; but in 1683, when the meetings were generally suppressed throughout the kingdom, he was again necessitated to contract his sails, and confine his labours more to his own family, and his friends that visited him. He continued his attendance at Whitwell chapel as usual; and when he was abridged of his liberty, he often blessed God for his quietness. Once when one of the curates preached a *bitter* sermon against the dissenters, on a Lord's-Day morning, some wondered that Mr. Henry would go again in the afternoon, for the second part; "But," (said he) "if he do not know his duty, I know mine; and I bless God I can find honey in a carcase."

In this time of *treading down, and of perplexity,* he stirred little abroad, being forced (as he used to express it) to *throw the plough under the hedge*; but he preached constantly at home without disturbance; and often comforted himself with this, "When we cannot do what we would, if we do what we can, God will accept of us; when we cannot keep open shop, we must drive a secret trade." And he would say, "There is a mean, if we could hit it, between fool-hardiness and faint-heartedness." While he had some opportunity of being useful at home, he was afraid lest he should prejudice that by venturing abroad. One of his friends in London, earnestly soliciting him to make a visit thither, in this time of restraint in the country, he thus wrote to him; "I should be glad once more to kiss my native soil, though it were but with a kiss of valediction; but my indisposedness to travel, and the small prospect there is of doing good to countervail the pains, are my prevailing arguments against it. I am here (it is true) buried alive, but I am quiet in my grave, and have no mind to be a walking ghost. We rejoice, and desire to be thankful, that God has given us a home, and continued it to us, when so many, better than we, have not where to lay their head, having no certain dwelling-place. (It was at the time of the dispersion of the *French* protestants.) Why they exiles, and not we? They strangers in a strange land, and not we? We must not say, we will die in our nests, lest God say, Nay; nor will we multiply our days as that bird the Phœnix, (referring to Job 29. 18.) lest God say, This night, &c. Our times and all our ways are at his disposal, absolutely and universally, and it is very well they are so."

At the time of the Duke of Monmouth's descent, and the insurrection in the West, in 1685, Mr. Henry, and many others, (pursuant to a general order of the Lord Lieutenant, for securing all suspected persons, and particularly all Nonconformist-Ministers,) were taken

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taken up by a warrant from the Deputy-Lieutenants, and sent under a guard to Chester-Castle, where he was, about three weeks, a close prisoner. He was lodged with some gentlemen and ministers that were fetched thither out of Lancashire, who were all strangers to him; but he had great comfort in the acquaintance and society of many of them.

He often spoke of this imprisonment, not as a matter of complaint, but of thanksgiving, and blessed God that he was "*in nothing uneasy all the while.*" In a sermon to his family, the day after he came home, he largely and affectionately recounted the mercies of that providence: as for instance; "That his imprisonment was for no cause; it is guilt that makes a prison: That it was his security in a dangerous time: That he had good company in his sufferings, who prayed together, and read the scriptures together, and discoursed to their mutual edification: That he had health there, not *sick and in prison:* That he was visited and prayed for by his friends: That he was very cheerful and easy in his spirit, many a time asleep and quiet, when his adversaries were disturbed and unquiet: That his enlargement was speedy and unsought for; and that it gave occasion to the magistrates who committed him, to give it under their hands, that they had nothing in particular to lay to his charge; and especially that it was without a *snare*, which was the thing he feared more than any thing else.

It was a surprise to some that visited him in his imprisonment, and were big with the expectations of the Duke of Monmouth's success, to hear him say, "I would not have you to flatter yourselves with such hopes, for God will not do his work for us in these nations by that man; but our deliverance and salvation will arise some other way."

It must not be forgotten, how ready he was, nay, how studious and industrious, to serve and oblige such as had been any way instruments of trouble to him, as far as it lay in his power, and he had any opportunity to do it; so well had he learned that great lesson of forgiving and loving enemies; of this it were easy to give instances:

When a gentleman who had sometimes been an instrument of trouble to him, had occasion to make use of his help, to give him some light into a cause which he had to be tried, Mr. Henry was very ready to serve him in it; and though he might have declined it, and it was somewhat against his own interest too, yet he appeared a witness for him, which so won upon the gentleman, that he was afterwards more friendly to him. Mentioning, in his Diary, the death of another gentleman in Shropshire; he notes, that he was one that had been his professed enemy; "but, (says he) God knows I have often prayed for him."

Some have wondered to see how courteously and friendly he would speak to such as had been any way injurious to him, when he met with them, being as industrious to discover his forgiveness of wrongs, as some are to discover their resentments of them. It was said of Abp. Cranmer, that the way to have him one's friend, was, to do him an unkindness; and I am sure it might be said of Mr. Henry, that doing him an unkindness would not make him one's enemy. This reminds me of a circumstance highly creditable to his worthy friend Mr. E. Laurence, who, once going with some of his sons, by the house of a gentleman that had been injurious to him, gave a charge to his sons to this purpose, That they should never think or speak amiss of that gentleman for the sake of any thing he had done against him; but that, whenever they went by his house, they should lift up their hearts in prayer to God for him and his family. And who is he that will harm those who are thus followers *of him that is good*, in his goodness? It is almost the only temporal promise in the New-Testament, which is made to the meek, (Mat. v. 5.) That *they shall inherit the earth;* the meaning whereof, Dr. Hammond, in his "*Practical Catechism*," takes to be especially this, that in the ordinary dispensations of God's providence, the most mild and quiet people are most free from disturbance. Those only have every man's hand against them, that have their's against every man.

CHAP. VIII.

The last Nine Years of his Life, spent in Liberty and Comfort at Broad-Oak, from 1687.

IT was in the latter end of 1685, when the stream ran so very strong against the dissenters, that Mr. Henry, being in discourse with a very great man of the Church of England, mentioned King Charles's indulgence in 1672, as that which gave rise to his stated preaching, in a separate assembly; and added, "If King James should, in like manner give me leave, I would do the same again." To which the great man replied, "Never expect any such thing from him; for, take my word for it, he hates you Nonconformists in his heart." "Truly, (said Mr. Henry,) I believe it, and I think he does not love you of the Church of England neither. It was then little thought that the same right reverend person, who said so to him, should have the honour, as he had, soon after to be one of the *seven bishops* committed to the tower by King James; as it was also far from any one's expectation, that the same King James should so quickly give liberty to the Nonconformists. But we live in a world, wherein we are to think nothing strange, nor be surprised at any turn of the *wheel of nature*, as it is called, Jam. 3. 6.

The measures then taken by King James's Court and council were soon laid open, not only to *view*, but to *contempt*, being, in a short time, by the over-ruling Providence of God, broken and defeated: however, the indulgence granted to Dissenters in *Apr.* 1687, must needs be a reviving to those who for so many years had lain buried in silence and restraint; nor can any who will allow themselves the liberty of supposing the case their own, wonder that they should rejoice in it, though, the design of it being manifest, they could not choose but rejoice with trembling. Mr. Henry's sentiments

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timents of it were, " Whatever men's ends are in it, I believe God's end in it is to do us good."

There were many that said, " Surely the Dissenters will not embrace the liberty which is intended only for a snare to them." Mr. Henry read and considered the letter of advice to the Dissenters at that juncture; but concluded, " Duty is ours, and Events are God's." He remembered the experience he had had of the like in King Charles's time; that did good, and no hurt; and why might not this do so too? *All power is for edification, not for destruction.* Did Jeremiah sit still in the court of the prison, because he had his discharge from the King of Babylon? Nay, did not Paul, when he was persecuted by his countrymen, for preaching the gospel, appeal to Cæsar, and find more kindness at Rome than he did at Jerusalem? In short, the principle of his *conversation in the world* being not *fleshly wisdom*, or policy, but *the grace of God*, and particularly the grace of *simplicity and godly sincerity*, he was willing to make the best of that which was, and to hope the best of the design and issue of it. Doubtless, it was intended to *introduce Popery;* but it is certain that nothing could arm people against popery more effectually, than the plain and powerful preaching of the gospel; and thus they, who granted that liberty, were out-shot *in their own bow*, which manifestly appeared in the event and issue. And as *they* did good service to the protestant religion among scholars, who wrote so many learned books against popery at that time, for which we return them our best thanks; so *they* did no less service among the common people, (who are the strength and body of the nation,) who preached so many good sermons, to arm their hearers against that *strong delusion*, which Mr. Henry (as the rest of the Nonconformists generally did) took all occasions to do. How often would he commend his hearers (as Dr. Holland, Divinity Professor in Oxford was wont to do) to the *love* of God, and the *hatred* of Popery!

Beside his preaching professedly to discover the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, (which he would have taken occasion to do more fully, had he seen those he preached to, in any immediate danger of the infection,) there could not be a more effectual antidote against popery, than the instructing and confirming of people in *the truth as it is in Jesus*, and advancing the knowledge of, and a value and veneration for, the Holy Scriptures; to which, how much Mr. Henry in his place did contribute, all that knew him will bear record. He used to observe, that the fall of Babylon followed upon the free and open preaching of the everlasting Gospel, Rev. 14. 6, 7. He apprehended this liberty likely to be of very short continuance, and to end in trouble; yet he could not see how his not using of it would help to prevent the trouble; but he did see that his vigorous improvement of it would help to prepare for the trouble; he therefore set himself with all diligence to make the best use he could of this gleam, both at home and abroad, on sabbath-days and week-days, to his power, yea, and beyond his power.

The great subject of debate at this time in the nation, was, concerning the repeal of penal laws and tests; Mr. Henry's thoughts were, as to the penal laws, that if those against the Dissenters were all repealed, he would rejoice in it, and be very thankful both to God and Man; for he would sometimes say, without reflection upon any, that he could not but look upon them as a national sin; and as for those against the papists, " If our law-givers see cause to repeal them in a regular way, I will endeavour (said he) to make the best of it, and to say, *The will of the Lord be done.*"

When King James came his progress into that country in *Sep.* 1687, to court the compliments of the people, Mr. Henry joined with several others, in and about Whitchurch, Nantwich, and Wem, in an address to him, which was presented, when he lay at Whitchurch; the purport of which was, not to sacrifice their *lives and fortunes* to him and to his interest, but only to return him thanks for the liberty they had, with a promise to demean themselves quietly in the use of it.

Some time after, Commissioners were sent abroad into the country, to inquire after the trouble that Dissenters had sustained by the penal laws; and how the money that was levied upon them, was disposed of, little of it being found paid into the Exchequer; they sent to Mr. Henry to have an account from him of his sufferings; he returned answer, by letter, that he had indeed been fined some years before, for a Conventicle, and distrained upon, and his goods carried away; which all the country knew, and to which he referred himself. But, being required to give a particular account of it upon Oath, though he said, that he should be glad to see such instruments of trouble legally removed; yet he declined giving any further information concerning it; having (as he wrote to the Commissioners) " Long since, from his heart, forgiven all the agents, instruments, and occasions, of it; and having purposed never to say any thing more of it."

It was on Tuesday, June 14, 1681, that he was disturbed at Weston in Shropshire, when he was preaching on Ps. 66. 18. and on Tuesday, June 14, 1687, that day six years, he preached there again without disturbance, finishing what he was then prevented from delivering, concerning prayer, and going on to v. 19, 20. *(But verily God hath heard me—Blessed be God—)* concerning the duty of thanksgiving. This seventh year of their silence and restraint, proved, through God's wonderful good providence, the year of release.

In May, 1688, a new commission of the peace came down for the County of Flint, in which, (by whose interest or procurement was not known,) Mr. Henry was nominated a Justice of Peace for that county. It was no small surprise to him, to receive a letter from the Clerk of the Peace, directed to *Philip Henry, Esquire*, acquainting him with it, and appointing him when, and whither, to come to be sworn. To which he returned answer, that he was very sensible of his unworthiness of the honour, and his unfitness for the office, which he was nominated to, and therefore desired to be excused; and he was so, and did what he could, that it might not be spoken of in the country. There were some, who, upon this occasion unhappily remembered, that a few years before, a reverend clergyman in Shropshire,

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shire, told Mr. Henry to his face, that he had done more mischief in the country, than any man that ever came into it; and that he himself hoped shortly to be in the Commission of Peace, and then he would rid the country of him. But, alas, he was quite disappointed. Thus honour is like the shadow, which flies from those that *pursue* it, and *follows* those that *flee* from it.

For two years after this liberty began, Mr. Henry still continued his attendance, as usual, at Whitwell-chapel, whenever there was preaching there; and he preached at his own house only, when there was no supply there, and in the evening of those days, when there was. For doing thus, he was greatly clamoured against by some of the rigid separatists, and called a *dissembler*, and one that halted between two, and the like. Thus (as he notes in his Diary) one side told him that he was the author of all the mischief in the country, in drawing people *from* the church; and the other side told him that he was the author of all the mischief, in drawing people *to* the church: "And which of these (says he) shall I seek to please? Lord, neither, but thyself alone, and my own conscience; and while I can do that, I have enough."

In a sermon at Whitwell-Chapel, one Lord's Day in the afternoon, where he and his family, and many of his congregation, were attending, much was said, with some keen reflections, to prove the Dissenters *schismatics*, and in a *damnable* state. When he came, immediately after, to preach at his own house, before he began his sermon, he expressed himself to this purport; "Perhaps some of you may expect now that I should say something in answer to what we have heard, by which we have been so severely charged; but truly I have something else to do;" and so, without any farther notice taken of it, went on to preach *Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

It was not without some fear and trembling, that Mr. Henry received the tidings of the Prince of Orange's landing, in Nov. 1688, as being somewhat in the dark concerning the clearness of his call, and dreading what might be the consequence of it. He used to say, *Give peace in our time, O Lord*, was a prayer that he would heartily set his *Amen* to. But when secret things were brought to light, and a regular course was taken to fill the vacant throne with such a King and such a Queen, none rejoiced in it more heartily than he did. He celebrated the national thanksgiving for that great deliverance, with an excellent sermon on that text, Rom. 8. 31. *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Soon after that happy settlement, there were overtures made towards a comprehension of the moderate Dissenters with the Church of England which Mr. Henry most earnestly desired, and wished for, if it could be had upon any terms less than sinning against his conscience; for never was any man more averse to that which looked like a separation, than he was, if he could possibly have helped it, *Salvâ Conscientiâ—Without wounding his conscience.* His prayers were constant, and his endeavours, as he had opportunity, that there might be some healing methods found out and agreed upon. But it is well known what was the *Vox Cleri—The voice of the clergy*, at that time, *viz.* That forasmuch as the oaths, subscriptions, and ceremonies, were imposed only to keep out such men, they would never consent to their removal, for the letting them in again. *Nolumus Leges Angliæ mutari—We object to any change in the laws of England*, was a saying perverted to this purpose. The fixed principle was, Better a schism *without* the church, than a faction *within* it, *&c.* This was at that time published, and owned, as the sense of the clergy in convocation. Which temper and resolve, so contrary to that which might have been expected, upon that happy and glorious Revolution, did a little alter his sentiments in that matter; and he saw himself perfectly *driven* from them. Despairing therefore to see an accommodation, he set himself the more vigorously to improve the present liberty. In *June* 1689, the *Act of Indulgence* passed, which not only tolerated, but *allowed*, the Dissenters' Meetings, and took them under the protection of the government.

Soon after which, though he never in the least changed his judgment, as to the lawfulness of joining in the Common-Prayer, but was still ready to do it occasionally; yet the ministers that preached at Whitwell-Chapel, being often uncertain in their coming, which kept his meeting at Broad-Oak at like uncertainties, to the frequent disappointment of many of his hearers that came from far, he was, at last, prevailed with to preach, in church-hours, every Lord's Day, which he continued to do while he lived, much to his own satisfaction, and the satisfaction of his friends. An eminent minister in Lancashire, who did in like manner alter his practice about that time, gave this for a reason, "That he had been for twenty-seven years striving to please a generation of men, who, after all, would not be pleased; and therefore he would no longer endeavour it as he had done."

It may be of use to give some account how he managed his ministerial work, in the latter part of his time, wherein he had as signal tokens of the presence of God with him, as ever; enabling him still to *bring forth fruit* in Old Age, and to *renew* his *youth like the eagles.* Though what he did, he still did *gratis*, and would do so, yet he was not willing to have any constant assistant, nor had he any; so much was he in his element, when he was about his master's work: *It was his meat and drink to do it.*

1. As to his constant Sabbath-Work, he was uniform and abundant in it. He began his morning family-Worship, on Lord's Days, at 8 o'Clock, when he read and expounded pretty largely, sung a psalm and prayed; many strove to come time enough to join with him in that service. He began, in public, just at 9 o'Clock, winter and summer. His Meeting-place was an out-building of his own, near to his house, fitted up very decently and conveniently for the purpose. He began with Prayer, then he sung Ps. 110, without reading the line; next, he read and expounded a Chapter

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Chapter in the O. Testam. in the morning, and in the N. Testam. in the afternoon. He looked upon the public reading of the Scriptures in religious assemblies, to be an ordinance of God, and that it tended very much to the edification of people by that ordinance, to have what is read expounded to them. The bare *reading* of the Word, he used to compare to the throwing of a net into the water; but the *expounding* of it, to the spreading out of that net, which makes it the more likely to catch fish; especially as he managed it, with practical, profitable observations. Some that have heard him read a chapter with this thought, "How will he make such a chapter as this useful to us?" have been surprised with such pertinent, useful instructions, as they have owned to be as much for their edification as any sermon. And, commonly, when he had expounded a Chapter, he would desire them, when they went home, to read it over, and recollect some of those things that had been spoken to them out of it.

In his expounding of the O. Testam. he industriously sought for something in it concerning *Christ*, who is the true *treasure hid in the field*, the true *Manna*, hid in the *Dew* of the Old Testament. Take one Instance: The last sabbath that ever he spent with his children at Chester, in the public morning worship, he read and expounded the last chapter of Job. After he had gone through the chapter, and observed what he thought fit out of it, he expressed himself to this purport: "When I have read a chapter in the O. Testam. I inquire what there is in it, that points at Christ, or is any way applicable to Christ? Here is in this chapter a great deal of Job; but is there nothing of *Christ* here? Yes, you have heard of the patience of Job, and have in him seen the end of the Lord. This in Job is applicable to Christ, that after he had patiently gone through his sufferings, he was appointed an intercessor for his unkind friends." (v. 8.) Go to my servant Job, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept. "If any one has an errand to God, let him go to Jesus Christ, and put it into his hand; for there is no acceptance to be hoped for with God, but by him, who is his beloved son; not only *with* whom he is well-pleased, but *in* whom, *viz.* with us in him; he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

After the exposition of the chapter, he sung a Psalm, and commonly chose a psalm suitable to the chapter he had expounded; and would briefly tell his hearers how they might sing that psalm with *understanding*, and what *affections of soul* should be working towards God in the singing of it. His hints of that kind were of great use, and contributed much to the right performance of that service. He often said "The more singing of Psalms there is in our families and congregations on Sabbath-Days, the more like they are to heaven, and the more there is in them of the everlasting Sabbath." He would say sometimes that, "he loved to sing *whole* psalms, rather than *pieces*."

After the sermon in the morning, he sung the 117th Psalm, without reading the line.

He intermitted at noon, about an hour and a half, but, on sacrament-days, not near so long, in which time he took some little refreshment in his study, making no regular dinner; yet many of his friends did partake of his carnal, as well as of his spiritual things, as those did that followed Christ, of whom he was careful that they should not *faint by the Way*. The morning-sermon was repeated, by a ready writer, to those that staid in the meeting-place, as many did; and when that was done, he began the afternoon's exercise; in which he not only read and expounded a chapter, but catechized the children, and expounded the catechism, briefly before sermon. Thus did he go *from strength to strength*, and from duty to duty; on sabbath-days, running the ways of God's Commandments with an *enlarged heart*. And the variety and vivacity of his public services made them exceeding pleasant to all that joined with him, who never had cause to complain of his being tedious. He used to say, "Every minute of Sabbath-time is precious, and none of it to be lost;" and that he scarcely thought the Lord's Day well-spent, if he were not weary in body at night; wearied *with* his work, but not weary *of* it, as he used to distinguish. He would say sometimes to those about him, when he had gone through the duties of a Sabbath; "Well, if *this* be not the way to heaven, I do not know what is." In pressing people to number their days, he would especially exhort them to number their *Sabbath-Days*, how many they have been, how ill they have been spent, how few may remain, that they may be spent better; and, to help in the account, he would say, that "for every twenty years of our lives, we enjoy above a thousand sabbaths," which must all be accounted for in the day of reckoning.

As to his constant preaching, it was very substantial and elaborate, and greatly to edification. He used to say that he could not *starch* in his preaching; that is, he *would* not; knowing that where the language and expression are stiff and forced, and fine, (as they call it,) it does not reach the greatest part of the hearers. When he grew old, he would say that surely he might now take a greater liberty to *talk* (as he called it) in the pulpit, that is, to speak familiarly to people; yet, to the last, he abated not in his preparations for the pulpit, nor ever delivered any thing raw and undigested, much less, any thing unbecoming the gravity and seriousness of the work. If his preaching was talking, it was talking *to the purpose*. His sermons were not common-place; but was even when his subjects were the most plain and trite, yet his management of them was usually peculiar and surprising. In those years, as formerly, he kept, for the most part, in a method for subjects, and was very seldom above one sabbath upon a text. His constant practice was, as it had been before, when he concluded a subject that he had been a good while upon, to spend one sabbath in a brief rehearsal of the marrow and substance of the many sermons he preached upon it; this he called the clenching of the nail, that it might be as a *nail in a sure place*. So very industrious was he, and no less ingenious in his endeavours, that his hearers might be *able, after his decease, to have those things always in remembrance*. (2 Pet. 1. 15.) and it is hoped that by the blessing of God,

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God, the effect did not altogether disappoint his expectation. In the latter times of his ministry, he would often contrive the heads of his sermons to begin with the same letter, or rather two and two of a letter; but he did not at all seem to affect or force it; only if it fell in naturally and easily, he thought it a good help to memory, and of use, especially to the younger part. And he would say that the chief reason why he did it, was, because it is frequently observed in the scripture, particularly in the Book of Psalms. And though it be not a fashionable ornament of discourse, if it be a scripture ornament, that is sufficient to recommend it, at least, to justify it against the imputation of childishness. Mr. Porter of Whitchurch very much used it, so did Mr. Malden. But the excellency of his sermons lay chiefly in the enlargements, which were always very solid, grave, and judicious; but in expressing, and marshalling his heads, he often condescended below his own judgment, to help his hearers' memories. Some of his subjects (when he had finished them) he made some short memoranda of in verse, a distich or two of each sabbath's work, and gave them out in writing among the young ones of his congregation, many of whom wrote them, and learned them, and profited by them.

It might be of use, (especially to those who had the happiness of sitting under his ministry,) to give some account of the method of his sabbath-subjects, during the last eight or nine years of his ministry; and it was designed, till it was found that it would swell this narrative into too great a bulk.

2. As to the administration of the sacraments, those mysteries of God, which ministers are the stewards of.

As to the sacrament of Baptism, he had never (that I know of) baptized any children, (except his own,) from the time he was turned out in 1662, till his last liberty came, though often desired to do it; such was the tender regard he had to the established church; but now he revived the administration of that ordinance in his congregation. The occasion was this: One of the Parish-Ministers preaching at Whitwell chapel, Mr. Henry and his family, and many of his friends, being present, was earnestly cautioning people not to go to conventicles, and used this as an argument against it, "That they were baptized into the church of England." Mr. Henry's catholic charity could not well digest this monopolizing of the great ordinance of baptism, and thought it time to bear his testimony against such narrow principles, which he ever expressed his dislike of, in all parties and persuasions. Accordingly, he took the next opportunity that offered itself, publicly to baptize a child, and desired the congregation to bear witness, "That he did not baptize that child into the church of England, nor into the church of Scotland, nor into the church of the Dissenters, nor into the church at Broad-Oak, but into the visible Catholic Church of Jesus Christ." After this, he baptized very many, and always publicly; though, being in the country, they were commonly carried a good way. The public administration of baptism he not only judged most agreeable to the nature and end of the ordinance, but found to be very profitable and edifying to the congregation; for he always took that occasion, not only to explain the nature of the ordinance, but affectionately and pathetically to excite people duly to improve their baptism. He usually received the child immediately out of the hands of the parent that presented it, and returned it into the same hands again, with this or the like charge, "Take this child, and bring it up for God." He used to say, that one advantage of public baptism was, that there were many to join in prayer for the child; in which, therefore, and in blessing God for it, he was usually very large and particular. After he had baptized the child, before he gave it back to the parent, he commonly used these words; "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's Church, having washed it with water, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in token that hereafter it shall not be ashamed to confess Christ crucified, and manfully to fight, &c."

He baptized many adult persons, who, through the error of their parents, were not baptized in infancy, and some in public.

The solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper he constantly celebrated in his congregation once a month, and always to a very considerable number of communicants. He did not usually observe public days of preparation for that ordinance, except as they fell in course in the weekly lectures; nor did he ever appropriate any particular subject of his preaching to Sacrament-Days, having a great felicity in adapting any profitable subject to such an occasion. He would say, "What did the primitive christians do, when they celebrated the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day?" His administration of this ordinance was very solemn and affecting. He had been wont to go about in the congregation, and to deliver the elements with his own hand; but, in his latter time, he delivered them only to those near him, and so they were handed from one to another, with the assistance of one who supplied the office of a deacon, as having also the custody and disposal of the money gathered for the use of the poor; Mr. Henry taking, and carefully keeping, a particular account of it.

Such as desired to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, he first discoursed with concerning their spiritual state, and how the case stood between God and their souls; not only to examine them, but to instruct and teach them, and to encourage them, as he saw occasion; gently leading those whom he discerned to be serious, though weak and timorous. He usually discoursed with them more than once, as finding *precept upon precept, and line upon line*, necessary; but he did it with so much mildness, humility, tenderness, and earnest desire to make the best of every body, as did greatly affect and win upon many. He was, herein, like our great Master, who *can have compassion on the ignorant*, and does not *despise the day of small things*.

But his admission of young people out of the rank of *Catechumens* into that of *Communicants*, had a peculiar solemnity in it. When he catechized those who were grown up to some years of discretion, if he observed them to be intelligent and serious, and to set their faces heaven-wards, he marked them out to be admitted to the

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the Lord's Supper; and when he had a competent number of such, twelve or fifteen perhaps, or more, he ordered each of them to come to him apart, and discoursed with them of the *things belonging to their everlasting peace*; he put it to their choice, whom they would serve, and endeavoured to affect them with those things with which, by their catechisms, they had been made acquainted; drawing them with the *cords of a man, and the bands of love*, into the way which is called *holy*. For several Lord's days, he catechized them, particularly in public, touching the Lord's Supper, and the duty of preparation for it, and their baptismal covenant, which, in that ordinance, they were to take upon themselves, and to make their *own act and deed*. He would often tell them, upon such occasions, that they were not to oblige themselves to any more than what they were already obliged to by their baptism, only to bind themselves faster to it. Then he appointed a day in the week, before the ordinance; when in a solemn assembly on purpose, he prayed for them, and preached a sermon to them, proper to their age and circumstances; and so, the following sabbath, they were all received together to the Lord's Supper. This, he looked upon as the *right confirmation*, or transition into the state of adult church-membership. The more solemn our covenanting with God is, the more deep and the more durable the impressions are likely to be. He has recorded it in his Diary, upon one of these occasions, as his heart's desire and prayer for those who were thus admitted; "That it might be as the *day of their espousals* to the Lord Jesus, and that they might each of them have a wedding garment."

3. The Discipline he observed in his congregation was not such as he could have wished for, but the best he could get, considering what a scattered flock he had, which was his trouble; but it could not be helped. He would sometimes apply to the circumstances he was in, that of Moses, Deut. xii. 8, 9. However, I see not but the end was effectually attained by the methods he took, though there wanted the formality of Officers, and Church-Meetings, for the purpose. If he heard of any that walked disorderly, he sent for them, and reproved them, (gently or sharply,) as he saw the case required. If the sin had scandal in it, he suspended them from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, till they gave some tokens of their repentance and reformation. Where the offence was public and gross, his judgment was, that some public satisfaction should be made to the Congregation before re-admission. But whatever offence did happen, or breaches of the christian peace, Mr. Henry's peculiar excellence lay in restoring with the spirit of meekness; which, with his great prudence, love, and condescension, did so much command the respect of his people, and win upon them, that there was a universal satisfaction in all his management; and it may truly be said of him, as it was of David, (2 Sam. 3. 36.) that *whatsoever he did, pleased all the people*. It is an instance and evidence, that those ministers who will rule by love and meekness, need no laws or canons to rule by, other than those of the Holy Scripture. *How forcible are right words!* Job 6. 25.

4. He was very strict and very serious in observing the public Fasts appointed by authority, and called them *a delight*. He had seldom any one to assist him in carrying on the duties of those days, but performed the service of them, himself alone. He began at nine o'clock, or quickly after, and never stirred out of the pulpit till about four in the afternoon, spending all that time in praying and expounding, and singing and preaching, to the admiration of all that heard him, who were generally more, on such days, than usual. And he was sometimes observed to be more warm and lively towards the latter end of the duties of a *fast-day*, than at the beginning; as if the spirit were most willing and enlarged, when the flesh was most weak. In all his performances on public fast-days, he attended to that which was the proper work of the day; every thing is beautiful in its season. His prayers and pleadings with God, on those days, were especially for *national mercies*, and the pardon of *national sins*. How excellently did he order the cause before God, and fill his mouth with arguments, in his large and particular intercessions for the Land, for the King, the Government, the Army, the Navy, the Church, the *French* Protestants, &c. He was another *Jacob*, a Wrestler, an *Israel*, a Prince with God. Before a fast-day he would be more than ordinarily inquisitive concerning the state of public affairs, as Nehemiah was, (Neh. 1. 2.) that he might know the better how to order his prayers and preaching; for, on such a day (he has sometimes said) "As good say nothing, as nothing to the purpose." He made it his business, on fast-days, to shew people their transgressions, especially the *house of Jacob, their sins*. "It is most proper" (said he) "to preach of Christ on Lord's-Days, to preach of Sin on Fast-Days, and to preach Duty on both." He went over the third chapter of the Revelation, in the fast-sermons of two years. Another year, he preached over the particulars of that Charge, Zeph. 3. 2. "Hypocrisy in hearers, and flattery in preachers," (as he would sometimes say,) "are bad at any time; but they are especially abominable upon a day of humiliation."

5. He preached a great many Lectures in the country about, some stated, some occasional, in supplying of which he was very indefatigable. He has sometimes preached a lecture, ridden eight or nine miles, and preached another; and the next day two more. To quicken himself to diligence, he would often say, "Our opportunities are passing away, and we must work while it is day, for the night cometh." Once, having very wet and foul weather to go through, to preach a lecture, he said that he comforted himself with two scriptures; one was, 2 Tim. 2. 3. *Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*; that the other (because he exposed and hazarded his health, for which some blamed him) was 2 Sam. 6. 21. *It was before the Lord*. He took all occasions, in his lectures abroad, to possess the minds of people with sober and moderate principles, and to stir them up to the serious regard of those things wherein we are all agreed. "We are met here together," (said he once in an exhortation, with which he often began at his lecture,) "not because we think ourselves better than

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than others, but because we desire to be better than we are."

He was very happy in the choice of his subjects for his week-day lectures. At one, which was stated, he preached against errors in general, from Jam. 1. 16. *Do not err, my beloved brethren*; from divers other scriptures he shewed, that we must not err concerning God, and Christ, and the Spirit; concerning sin and repentance, faith and good works; concerning God's ordinance; concerning grace and peace, and afflictions and prosperity, and the *things of the life to come*. At the monthly lectures at his own house, he chose to preach upon the four last things, (Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell,) in many particulars; but he had, commonly, a new text for every sermon. When he had, in many sermons finished the first of the four, one that used to hear him sometimes, inquiring of his progress in his subjects, asked him if he had done with death, meaning that subject concerning death; to which he pleasantly replied, "No, I have not done with him yet; I must have another turn with him, and he will give me a fall; but I hope to have the victory at last." He would sometimes remove the lectures in the country, from one place to another, for the benefit of those that could not travel. Once, having adjourned a lecture to a new place, he began it with a sermon on Acts 17. 6. *These men that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;* in which he shewed how false the charge is, as they meant it; for religion does not disturb the peace of families or societies, does not cause any disorder or inquietude, *&c.* And yet, that in another sense, there is a great truth in it; That when the Gospel comes in power to any soul, it *turns the world upside down* in that soul; such is the change it makes there.

All this he did *gratis*, and without being *burdensome to any;* nay, he was best pleased, when, at the places where he preached, nothing was got for his entertainment, but he came home (though some miles) fasting; as, in other places, it was a trouble to him to see his friends careful about much serving, though it was out of their respect to him.

Lastly, As he was an excellent *preacher* himself, so he was an exemplary *hearer* of the word, when others preached, though every way his inferiors; so reverent, serious, and attentive, was he in hearing, and so observant of what was spoken. I have heard him say, that he knew one, (and I suppose it was as Paul *knew a man in Christ,)* who could truly say, to the glory of God, that for forty years he had never slept at a sermon. He was diligent also to improve what he heard by meditation, repetition, prayer, and discourse; and he was a very great encourager of young ministers, that were humble and serious, though their abilities and performances were but mean. He has noted in his Diary, (as that which affected him,) this saying of a godly man, a hearer of his: "I find it easier to go six miles to hear a sermon, than to spend one quarter of an hour in meditating and praying over it in secret, (as I should) when I come home."

As to the circumstances of his Family in these last nine years of his life, they were somewhat different from what they had been; but the same *candle of God*, which had shined upon his tabernacle, continued still to do so. In 1687 and 1688, he married all his five children; the three eldest in four months time, in 1687, and the other two in a year and a half after; so many "swarms" (as he used to call them) "out of his hive;" and all not only with his full consent, but to his abundant comfort and satisfaction. He would say, that he thought it the duty of parents to study to oblige their children in that affair. And, though never could children be more easy and at rest in a father's house than his were; yet, he would sometimes say, concerning them, as Naomi to Ruth, (Ruth 3. 1.) *Shall I not seek rest for thee?* Two advices he used to give, both to his children and others, in their choice of that relation. One was, "Keep within the bounds of profession;" such a profession as, one may charitably hope, is from a good principle. The other was, "Look at suitableness," in age, quality, education, temper, &c. He used to observe from Gen. 2. 18. *I will make him a help meet for him*, that where there is not *meetness*, there will not be much *help*. And he would commonly say to his children, in reference to that choice, "Please God and please yourselves, and you shall never displease me;" and greatly blamed those parents who conclude matches for their children, and do not ask counsel at their mouth. He never aimed at great things in the world for his children, but sought for them, in the first place, the kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof. He used to mention, sometimes, the saying of a pious gentlewoman, that had many daughters: "The care of most people is, how to get good husbands for their daughters; but my care is, to fit my daughters to be good wives; and then let God provide for them." In this, as in other things, Mr. Henry steered by that principle; That *a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth*. And it pleased God so to order it, that all his children were disposed of, into circumstances very agreeable and comfortable, both for life and godliness. He was greatly affected with the goodness of God to him herein; without any forecast or contrivance of his own. "The country" (says he in his Diary) "takes notice of it; and what then shall I render? Surely this is a token for good."

All his four daughters were married at Whitwell-Chapel; and he preached a wedding-sermon for each of them, in his own family, after. He would often tell his friends, "that those who desire, in the married condition, to live in the *favour of God*, must enter upon that condition in the *fear of God*. For it is an ill omen to stumble at the threshold; and an error in the first concoction, is seldom amended in the second."

While he lived, he had much comfort in all his children and their yoke-fellows, and somewhat the more that, by the divine providence, four of the five families which branched out of his, were settled in Chester.

His youngest daughter was married Apr. 26, 1688; the same day of the year, (as he observes in his Diary,) and the same day of the week, and in the same place, that he was married to his dear wife, twenty-eight years before:

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before:—upon which, this is his remark; "I cannot desire for them, that they should receive more from God than we have received, in that relation and condition; but I would desire, and do desire, that they may do more for God in it, than we have done." His usual compliment to his new-married friends was, "Others wish you *all happiness;* I wish you *all holiness;* and then there is no doubt but you will have all happiness."

When the marriage of the last of his daughters was about to be concluded-on, he thus writes: "But is Joseph gone, and Simeon gone; and must Benjamin go also? We will not say, that all these things are against us,—but we will say that they are for us. If we must be thus, in this merciful way, bereaved of our children, let us be bereaved; and God turn it for good to them, as we know he will, if they love and fear his name." And when, some time after she was married, he parted with her to the house of her husband, he thus writes: "We have sent her away, not as Laban said he would have sent his daughters away,—with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp,—but with prayers, and tears, and hearty good wishes. And now" (says he in his Diary) "we are alone again, as we were in our beginning; God be better to us than twenty children." Upon the same occasion, he thus writes to a dear relation: "We are now left, as we were, One and One; and, yet, but one One: the Lord, I trust, that has brought us thus far, will enable us to finish well; and then all will be well, and not till then."

That which he often mentioned as the matter of his great comfort, that it was so, and his desire that it might continue so, was, the love and unity which prevailed among his children; and that (as he writes) the transplanting of them into new relations had not lessened that love, but rather increased it: for this he often gave thanks to the God of Love; noting from Job 1. 4. That their children's love to one another, is the parents' comfort and joy. In his last will and testament, this is the prayer which he puts up for his children: "That the Lord would build them up in holiness, and continue them still in brotherly love, as a bundle of arrows which cannot be broken."

When his children were removed from him, he was a daily intercessor, at the Throne of Grace, for them and their families. Still the burnt-offerings were offered according to the number of them all. He used to say, "Surely the children of so many prayers will not miscarry." Their particular circumstances of affliction and danger, were sure to be mentioned by him with suitable petitions. The greatest affliction he saw in his family, was, the death of his dear daughter-in-law, Katherine, the only daughter of S. Hardware, Esq. who, about a year and a half after she was transplanted into his family, (to which she was the greatest comfort and ornament imaginable,) died of the small-pox in child-bed, upon the thanksgiving-day for King William's coming-in. She died a few weeks after Mr. Henry had married the last of his daughters; upon which marriage, she had said, "Now we have a full lease, God only knows which life will drop first." She comforted herself, in the extremity of her illness with this word: "Well, when I come to Heaven, I shall see that I could not have been without this affliction." She had been, for some time before, under some fears as to her spiritual state; but the clouds were, through grace, dispelled,—and she finished her course with joy, and a cheerful expectation of the glory to be revealed. When she lay ill, Mr. Henry (being in fear not only for her that was ill, but for the rest of his children in Chester, who had none of them past the pikes of that perilous distemper) wrote thus to his son, on the evening of the Lord's-day: "I have just done the public work of this day, wherein, before many scores of witnesses,—many of whom, I dare say, are no little concerned for you,—I have absolutely, freely, and unreservedly, given you all up to the good will and pleasure of our Heavenly Father; waiting what he will do with us: for good, I am sure, we have received; and shall we not receive evil, also?" He preached at Chester, upon occasion of that sad breach in his family, on Job 10. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.*

When two of his children lay ill, and in perilous circumstances, after he had been wrestling with God in prayer for them, he wrote thus in his Diary: "If the Lord will be pleased to grant me my request this time, concerning my children, I will not say as the beggars at our door use to do,—I will never ask any thing of him again,—but, on the contrary, he shall hear oftener from me than ever; and I will love God the better, and love Prayer the better, as long as I live." He used to say, "Tradesmen take it ill, if those that are in their books, go to another shop: while we are so much indebted to God for past mercies, we are bound to attend him, for further mercies."

As he was an intercessor for his children at the Throne of Grace, so he was, upon all occasions, a remembrancer to them, both by word and letter, to quicken them to that which is good. How often did he inculcate this upon them, "Love one another, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Do all you can, while you are together, to help one another to Heaven; that you may be together there for ever, and with the Lord." When the families of his children were in health and peace, the *candle of God* shining upon their tabernacles, he wrote thus to them: "It was one of Job's comforts in his prosperity, that his children loved one another, and feasted together. The same is ours in you, which God continue. But you will not be offended if we pray, that you may none of you *curse God in your hearts.* Remember, the wheel is always in motion; and the spoke that is uppermost, will be under; therefore, mix tremblings always with your joy."

He much rejoiced in the visits of his children, and made that, as other things which were the matter of his rejoicing, the matter of his thanksgiving. His usual saying at parting, was—"This is not the world we are to be together in, and it is well it is not; but, there is such a world before us." And his usual prayer was—"That our next meeting might be either in heaven, or farther on in our way towards it."

He had, in eight years time, twenty-four grand-children born; (some by each of his children;) concerning whom

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whom he would often bless God, that they were all "the sealed ones of the God of heaven, and enrolled among his lambs." On the birth of his second grand-child, at a troublesome time as to public affairs, he thus writes: "I have now seen my children's children, let me see peace also upon Israel; and then I will say, *Lord! now lettest thou thy servant depart.*" Some were much affected, when he baptized two of his grand-children together, at Chester, publicly, and preached on Gen. 33. 5. *They are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.* He observed, in what a savoury, pious, gracious manner Jacob speaks. He had spoken good sense, if he had only said, "They are my children;" but, then he had not spoken like Jacob; like one that had so lately *seen the face of God.* Though our speech be not always *of* grace, yet it must be always *with* grace: grace poured into the lips. There is a kind of language, the air of which bespeaks it the Language of Canaan; Christians should speak like Christians.

It was not long after his children were married from him, that his house was filled again with the children of several of his friends, whom he was, by much importunity, persuaded to take to table with him. All that knew him, thought it a thousand pities, that such a master of a family should have but a small family; and should not have many, to sit down under his shadow. He was first, almost necessitated to it, by the death of his dear friend and kinsman, Mr. Benyon of Ash; who left his children to his care. Some he took *gratis*, or for small consideration; and when, by reason of the advances of age, he could not go about so much as he had done, doing good, he laid out himself to do the more at home. He kept a teacher to attend their school-learning; and they had the benefit not only of his inspection in that, but (which was much more) his family-worship, sabbath-instructions, catechizing, and daily converse; in which his tongue was as choice silver,—and his lips fed many. Nothing but the hopes of doing some good to the rising generation could have prevailed with him to take this trouble upon him. He would often say, "We have a busy house, but there *is a rest remaining.* We must be doing something in the world while we are in it; but this fashion will not last long, methinks I see it passing away."

Sometimes he had such with him, as had gone through their course of university-learning, at private academies, and desired to spend some time in his family, before their entrance upon the Ministry; that they might have the benefit, not only of his public and family instructions, but of his learned and pious converse; in which, as he was thoroughly furnished for every good word and work, so he was very free and communicative. The great thing which he used to press upon those who intended the Ministry, was, to study the scriptures, and make them familiar. *Bonus Textuarius est bonus Theologus—a good textuary is a good divine,* was a maxim he often reminded them of. For this purpose, he recommended to them the study of the Hebrew, that they might be able to search the scriptures in the original. He also advised them to the use of an *interleaved* Bible, wherein to insert such expositions and observations, as occur occasionally in sermons or other books, which, he would say, are more happy and considerable, sometimes, than those that are found in the professed commentators. When some young men desired the happiness of coming into his family, he would tell them, "You come to me as Naaman did to Elisha,—expecting that I should do this and the other for you,—and alas! I can but say as he did, *Go, wash in Jordan;*—Go, study the Scriptures. I profess to teach no other learning than scripture-learning." It was but a little before he died, that, in reading Isa. 50, he observed from ver. 4,—(*The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,* &c.) That the true learning of a Gospel-Minister, consists not in being able to talk Latin fluently, and to dispute in philosophy; but in being able to *speak a word in season* to weary souls. He that knows how to do *that* well, is a learned Minister.

CHAP. IX.

His Sickness and Death.

IN the time of his health, he made death very familiar to himself, by frequent and pleasing thoughts and meditations of it; and endeavoured to make it so to his friends, by speaking often of it. His letters and discourses had still something or other which bespoke his constant expectations of death: thus did he learn to *die daily.* And it is hard to say, whether it was more easy to him, to speak, or uneasy to his friends, to hear him speak, of leaving the world. This reminds me of a circumstance I was told by a worthy Scotch Minister, Mr. P. Adair, that, visiting the famous Mr. Durham of Glasgow, in his last sickness, which was long and lingering, he said to him, "Sir, I hope you have so set all in order, that you have nothing else to do but to die."—"I bless God," (said Mr. Durham,) "I have not had that to do neither these many years." Such is the comfort of dying daily, when we come to die indeed.

Mr. Henry's constitution was but tender; and yet,—by the blessing of God upon his great temperance, and care of his diet, and moderate exercise by walking in the air,—he did, for many years, enjoy a good measure of health, which he used to call, "The sugar that sweetens all temporal mercies," for which, therefore, we ought to be very thankful, and of which we ought to be very careful. He had sometimes violent fits of the colic, which would be very afflictive for the time. Towards his latter end, he was distressed sometimes with a pain, which his doctor thought might arise from a stone in his kidneys. Being once upon the recovery from a severe fit, he said to one of his friends that asked him how he did,—that he hoped, by the Grace of God, he should now be able to give one blow more to the devil's kingdom, and often professed, that he did not desire to live a day longer than he might do God some service. He said to another, when he perceived himself recovering, "Well, I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but find I must to-sea again."

He was sometimes suddenly taken with fainting fits; which,

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which, when he recovered from, he would say, "Dying is but a little more."

When he was in the sixty-third year of his age,—which is commonly called the *grand climacteric*, and has been to many the *dying year*, and was so to his father,—he numbered the days of it, from Aug. 24, 1693, to Aug. 24, 1694, when he finished it. And when he concluded it, he thus wrote in his Diary: "This day finishes my commonly *dying year*, which I have numbered the days of; and should now apply my heart, more than ever to heavenly wisdom." He was much pleased with that expression of the Liturgy in the office of burial, and frequently used it: "In the midst of life we are in death."

The infirmities of age, when they grew upon him, did very little abate his vigour and liveliness in preaching; but he seemed even to renew his youth as the eagles, as those who are *planted in the house of the Lord*, who *still bring forth fruit in old age;* not so much to shew that they are upright, as to *shew that the Lord is upright*, Ps. 92. 14. 15. But, in his latter years, travelling was very troublesome to him; and he would say, as Mr. Dod used to do, that when he thought to shake himself as at other times, he found his *hair was cut:* his sense of this led him to preach an occasional sermon, not long before he died, on John 21. 18. *When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself*, &c. Another occasional sermon he preached when he was old, for his own comfort, and the comfort of his aged friends, on Ps. 71. 17, 18. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth*, &c. He observed there, "That it is a blessed thing to be taught of God from our youth; that those who have been taught of God from their youth, ought to declare his wondrous works all their days after; and that those who have been taught of God from their youth, and have, all their days, declared his wondrous works, may comfortably expect, that, when they are old, he will not forsake them. Christ is a master that does not use to cast off his old servants."

For some years before he died, he used to complain of an habitual weariness; contracted, he thought, by his standing to preach, sometimes very uneasily, and in inconvenient places, immediately after riding. He would say, Every minister was not cut out for an *Itinerant;* and sometimes the manifest attention and affection of people in hearing, enlarged him both in copiousness and fervency, somewhat more than his strength could well bear. It was not many months before he died, that he wrote thus to a dear relation, who inquired solicitously concerning his health: "I am always habitually weary, and expect no other till I lie down in the bed of spices. And (blessed be God) so the grave is to all the saints, since He lay in it, who is the *rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.*" When some of his friends persuaded him to spare himself, he would say, "It is time enough to rest when I am in the grave; What were candles made for, but to burn?"

It does not appear that he had any particular presages of his death; but many instances there were of his actual gracious expectation of it, somewhat more than ordinary, for some time before. The last visit he made to his children in Chester, was in July, 1695, almost a year before he died; when he spent a Lord's-Day there, and preached on Phil. v. 25: *The Grace of our Lord Jesus be with your Spirit.* By Grace he understood not so much the good will of God towards us, as the good work of God in us, called the *Grace of Christ;* both, because he is the author and finisher of it; and because, he is the pattern and sample of it. "Now, the choicest gift we can ask of God for our friends, is, that this Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with their Spirit. *This is the one thing needful; the better Part; the Root of the Matter; the whole of Man; the Principal Thing; the more excellent Way; a Blessing indeed; and the Thing that accompanies Salvation.* The Grace of Christ in the Spirit, *enlightens* and *enlivens* the Spirit; *softens* and *subdues* the Spirit; *purifies* and *preserves* the Spirit; *enlarges* and *guides* the Spirit; *sweetens* and *strengthens* the Spirit; and, therefore, what can be more desirable? A Spirit without the Grace of Christ, is a field without a fence; a fool without understanding; it is a horse without a bridle, and a house without furniture; it is a ship without tackle, and a soldier without armour; it is a cloud without rain, and a carcase without a soul; it is a tree without fruit, and a traveller without a guide. How earnest therefore should we be in praying to God for Grace, both for ourselves and for our relations! He had intended to preach upon that text, when he was at Chester the year before; but was then prevented by a particular sad occasion, which obliged him to preach a Funeral Sermon: Divine Providence reserving that *Benediction* (which his heart was much upon) for his *Valediction.* The Thursday following being kept as a fast in his son's congregation in Chester, he preached on Luke 19. 41. *He beheld the city and wept over it;* which proved his farewell to the town, as the former was his farewell to his friends and relations in it.

It was not many weeks before he died, that he wrote thus to one of his children: "We are well here, thanks be to God, and are glad to hear that you and your's are well also, God in mercy continue it. But why should we be well always? Do we deserve it? Are there no mixtures in our obedience? Are there any persons or families, at whose door sickness and death never knocked? Must the *earth be forsaken* for us, or the *rock removed out of its place?* Is it not enough that we be dealt with *according to the manner of men?* And that we have a promise, that it shall *end* well, everlastingly well?"

To another of his children, about the same time, he writes: "We are sensible that we decline apace,—but the best of it is, that, as time goes, eternity comes; and we are in good hope, through Grace, that it will be a comfortable eternity."

It was in Apr. 1696, a few weeks before he died, that his son's father-in-law, Robert Warburton, Esq. was gathered to his grave in peace, in a good old age. Upon the tidings of whose death, Mr. Henry wrote thus to his son; "Your fathers, where are they? Your Father-in-Law gone, and your own Father going; but

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you have a God-father that lives for ever." He was wont sometimes to subscribe his Letters, " Your ever-loving, but not ever-living, father."

It was not a month before he died, that, in a letter to his very dear and worthy Friend and Brother, Mr. Tallents of Shrewsbury, he thus wrote: " Methinks it is strange, that it should be your lot and mine, to abide so long on earth by the stuff, when so many of our friends are dividing the spoil above,—but God will have it so; and to be willing to live in obedience to his Holy Will, is as true an Act of Grace, as to be willing to die when he calls; especially when life is labour and sorrow. But when it is labour and joy, service to his name, and some measure of success and comfort in serving him; when it is to stop a gap, and stem a tide, it is to be rejoiced in; it is heaven upon earth: Nay, one would think, by the Psalmist's oft repeated plea, Ps. 6, and 30, and 88, and 115, and 118, that it were better than to be in heaven itself: and can that be?"

A little before his sickness and death, being summer-time, he had several of his children, and his childrens children, about him, at Broad-Oak, with whom he was much refreshed, and very cheerful; but, ever-and-anon, he spake of the *fashion* he was in, as *passing* away; and often told them that he should be there but awhile to bid them welcome. And he was observed frequently, in prayer, to beg of God, that " he would make us ready for that which would come certainly, and might come suddenly." One asking him how he did? He answered, " I find the chips fly off apace, the tree will be down shortly."

The last time he administered the Lord's Supper, a fortnight before he died, he closed the administration with that scripture, (1 Joh. 3. 2.) *It doth not yet appear what we shall be;* not yet, but it will shortly.

The sabbath but one before he died, being, in the course of his exposition, come to that difficult part of scripture, the 40th of Ezekiel, and the following chapters; he said that he would endeavour to explain those prophecies to them: and added, " If I do not do it now, I never shall:" And he observed, that the only prophetical sermon which our Lord Jesus preached, was but a few days before he died. This many of his hearers not only reflected upon afterwards, but took notice of, at that time, with particular concern, as having something in it more than ordinary.

On Lord's-Day, June 21, 1696, he went through the work of the day with his usual vigour and liveliness. He was then preaching over 2 Pet. ch. 1, and was that day on those words, *Add to your Faith Virtue, v. 5.* He took Virtue for christian courage and resolution in the exercise of faith; and the last thing he mentioned, in which christians have need of courage, is, in dying; " For, (as he was often used to say,) it is a serious thing to Die, and to Die is a work by itself." That day, he gave notice, both morning and afternoon, with much affection and enlargement, of the public Fast, which was appointed by authority, the Friday following, June 26, pressing his hearers, as he used to do upon such occasions, to come in a prepared frame, to the solemn services of that day.

The Tuesday following (June 23) he rose at Six o'Clock, according to custom, after a better night's sleep than ordinary, and in wonted health. Between seven and eight o'clock, he performed family-worship, according to the usual manner. He expounded very largely the former half of the 104th Psalm, and sung it; but he was somewhat shorter in prayer than he used to be, being then (as it was thought) taken ill. *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he comes shall find so doing.* Immediately after prayer, he retired to his chamber, not saying any thing of his illness; but was soon after found upon his bed in great extremity of pain in his back, breast, and bowels; it seemed to be a fit of the stone and colic together, in a very severe degree. The means that had been used to give him relief in his illness, were altogether ineffectual. He had not the least intermission or remission of pain, either up, or in bed, but was continually restless. He had said sometimes, that God's *Israel* may find *Jordan rough;* but there is no remedy, they must through it to Canaan; and would tell of a good Man who used to say, that he was not so much afraid of Death, as of dying. We know that they are not the godly people, part of the Description of whose Condition, it is, that there are no *Bands in their Death*; and yet it is of the godly alone that we can say, Their *End is peace,* their *Death is Gain,* and they have *Hope* in it.

In this extremity, he was still looking up to God, and calling upon him, who is a present help in the needful hour. When the exquisiteness of his pain forced groans and complaints from him, he would presently correct himself with a patient and quiet submission to the hand of his heavenly Father; and a cheerful acquiescence in his heavenly will. " I am ashamed (says he) of these groans, I want virtue; O for virtue now when I have need of it; (referring to his subject the Lord's-Day before;) Forgive me that I groan thus, and I will endeavour to silence them; but indeed *my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*" It is true, as Mr. Baxter said in his pain, there is no disputing against sense. It was his trouble, as it was Mr. Baxter's, that by reason of his bodily pain, he could not express his inward comfort; however, that was it, with which God graciously strengthened him in his soul. He reminded those about him, that they must remember what instructions and counsels he had given them when he was in health; for now he could say but little to them, he could only refer them to what he had said, as that which he would live and die by.

It was two or three hours after he was taken ill, before he would suffer a messenger to be sent to Chester for his son, and for the doctor; saying, that he should either be better or dead, before they could come; but, at last, he said, as the Prophet did to his importunate friends, *Send.* About eight o'clock that evening, they came, and found him in the same extremity of pain, which he had been in all day. And nature, being before spent, with his constant and indefatigable labours in the work of the Lord, now sunk, and did perfectly *succumb* under its burthen, and was quite disabled to grapple

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grapple with so many hours incessant pain. What further means were then used, proved fruitless, and did not answer the intention. He apprehended himself going apace, and said to his son, when he came in, "O Son, you are welcome to a dying Father: *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.*" His pain continued very acute, but he had peace within. "I am tormented, (said he once,) but, blessed be God, *not in this flame*;" and, soon after, "I am all on fire," (when at the same time his extreme parts were cold,) but he presently added, "Blessed be God it is not the fire of Hell." To some of his next neighbours, who came in to see him, (for those at a distance had not notice of his illness,) he said, "O make sure work for your souls, by getting an interest in Christ while you are in health; for if I had that work to do now, what would become of me? But, I bless God, I am satisfied." It was a caution he was often wont to give, "See to it, that your work be not undone, when your time is done, lest you be undone for ever."

Towards ten or eleven o'clock that night, his pulse and sight began to fail; of the latter, he himself took notice, and inferred from it the approach of his dissolution. He took an affectionate farewel of his dear yoke-fellow with a *thousand thanks* for all her love and care, and tenderness; left a blessing for all his dear children and their dear yoke-fellows, and little ones, that were absent. He said to his son, who sat under his head, "Son, the Lord bless you, and grant that you may do worthily in your generation, and be more serviceable to the church of God than I have been:" such was his great humility to the last. And when his son replied, "O Sir, pray for me, that I may but tread in your steps;" he answered, "Yea, follow peace and holiness, and let them say what they will."—More he would have said, to bear his dying testimony to the way in which he had walked; but nature was spent, and he had not strength to express it.

His understanding and speech continued almost to the last breath, and he was still in his dying agonies, calling upon God, and committing himself to him. One of the last words he said, when he found himself just ready to depart, "*O Death where is thy*"——; with that, his speech faltered, and within a few minutes (after about sixteen hours illness,) he quietly breathed out his precious Soul into the embraces of his dear Redeemer, whom he had trusted, and faithfully served in the work of the ministry, about forty-three years. He departed betwixt twelve and one o'clock in the morning of June 24, (Midsummer-Day) in the sixty-fifth year of his age. Happy, thrice happy he, to whom such a sudden change was no surprise; and who could triumph over death, as an unstung, disarmed, enemy, even when he made so fierce an onset. He had often spoken of it, as his desire, that if it were the Will of God, he might not out-live his usefulness; and it pleased God to grant him his desire, and give him a short passage from the pulpit to the kingdom; from the height of his usefulness to receive the recompense of reward. So was it ordered by him, in whose hands our times are.

After the account we have given of his great usefulness, it is easy to imagine what sorrow and mourning there was among his friends, when they heard that the Lord had taken away their master from their head. One that lived so much desired, could not but die as much lamented. The surprise of the stroke put people into a perfect astonishment; and many said, "The Lord removed him so suddenly, because he would not deny the many prayers that would have been put up for his recovery, had it been known that he was in peril." One thing that aggravated this severe dispensation, and made it, in the apprehension of many, look the more dismal, was, that this powerful intercessor was taken away just before a Fast-day, when he would have been wrestling mightily with God for mercy for the land. However, it proved a fast-day indeed, and a day of humiliation to that congregation, to whom an *empty pulpit* was an awakening *sermon*. The Broad-Oak was then like that under which Rebekah's Nurse was buried, (Gen. 35. 8.) *Allon-bachuth*, The oak of weeping. Those who had often sat with dry eyes, under melting ordinances, could not sit so, under such a melting providence, by which the Lord God called so loudly to *weeping and to mourning, and to girding with sackcloth*. But because Mr. Henry had been wont to give it for a rule, that "Weeping must not hinder sowing;" a mite was cast into the treasury of the nation's prayers, and a word spoken to bring the work of the day, and the event of the day, together, from 2 Kin. 13. 20.

The day following being Saturday, (June 27,) the *earthen vessel*, in which this treasure had been lodged, was laid up in the grave in Whitchurch Church; attended thither with a very great company of true mourners, all the country round: many from Chester and Shrewsbury, and the towns about, came to do him honour at his death. And beside the floods of tears that were shed, there were abundance of testimonies given to him, by persons of all sorts, like that to Jehoiadah, (2 Chr. 24. 16.) That he was one *that had done good in Israel*. And there were those who said, "He was a man that no body did or could speak evil of, except for his nonconformity." He was used to say to his relations, "When I am dead, make little ado about me, a few will serve to bring me to my grave;" but his mind could not be observed in that; it was impossible that such a burning and shining light could be extinguished, without universal notice being taken of it. Multitudes came unsought unto, "*not to fill their eyes*, (as Mr. Vines expresses it,) *but to empty them*;" nor was there any other noise there, than that of general lamentation.

That morning, before the removal of the corpse, a most affectionate sermon was preached in Mr. Henry's Meeting-place, by his dear and worthy friend, Mr. Tallents of Shrewsbury, who was eleven years older than he, and who, through God's goodness, still survives him. He was willing to take that opportunity, to testify the great love and honour that he had for Mr. Henry, whom he called *a friend that is nearer than a Brother*. His Text was Rom. 8. 23. *And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for*

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for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. In his application, he shewed excellently, and with much affection, how the consideration of the spirit and life of this eminent servant of God, would greatly lead us to believe on Christ, to shew the spirit of Christ, to live after it, to suffer with Christ, and to groan for our adoption. Several things were hinted concerning him, which have been mentioned already in this narrative, and a very honourable testimony borne to him. From a long acquaintance with him, he witnessed concerning him, to those who knew his record to be true, that "he was humble and meek, kind and peaceable, wise and charitable, and one in whom the *fruits of the Spirit* were eminent: that he was a Friend, a Counseller, and a Father to many; that his expounding and preaching were plain and pleasant, warm and savoury, full and such as few could reach, and greatly blessed by God; and that in it he laboured more abundantly than any." After a great *encomium* of him, it was excellently observed, and must be mentioned here, as that which was highly agreeable to Mr. Henry's spirit, and his expressions upon all occasions; "That it was not his own righteousness that saved him, nor his own strength that quickened and upheld him, but *Christ's righteousness* and *Christ's strength;* (for to him to *live was Christ;*) and that, in all his discourses, sermons, and letters, he was very careful to ascribe the honour of all to Christ, and to make CHRIST HIS ALL IN ALL." He concluded with some words of seasonable advice to those of that society and neighbourhood.

1. "Give thanks to God that ever you had him or saw him; and that you had him so long—above thirty years, in this place. Do not many of you owe even your very souls to him, under God? While you mourn, give thanks to God that you ever knew him; old and great mercies must be thankfully remembered."

2. "Rejoice in the glory that he now enjoys: *weep not for him, but weep for yourselves:* it was the text on which he preached, not much above a year ago, at the funeral of that intelligent, holy, useful man, Mr. Laurence of Wem. The primitive christians buried their saints with hymns and psalms of joy; Chrysostom on the Hebrews says, "We are to glorify God, and give thanks to him, that he hath crowned the *deceased,* and freed them from their labours;" and chides those that mourned and howled. The days of their death were called *Natalitia Martyrum & Sanctorum.—The Birth-days of the Saints and Martyrs.* And Hierom, in his Epitaph on holy Paula, (and in the lives of other holy persons, written by him,) says,—"That at her funeral no shrieks were heard, but multitudes of psalms and hymns were sung in divers languages."

3. "Bewail the loss, the general loss, and yours' in particular, yet so as to have hope in God. I need not tell you how great your loss is; you feel it more than I am able to express. If any rejoice that he is gone, because he tormented them, say as the Church," Mic. 7. 8, 9.

4. "Seek out for a supply; do not mourn and sit still, but up and be doing in your places; you have had a cheap gospel hitherto; God sent you one that *could* preach freely; and, which is more, that *would* do so too; one that sought not your's, but you; and now God will see what you will do for yourselves, that now, when the shepherd is smitten, the sheep may not be scattered. Pray to God to raise up others like him, and graciously to give you one."

5. "Take heed of disliking every preacher, now that he is gone. This is a usual fault among many that have had excellent preachers; no body can please them. But God may bless weaker means, and make your souls live and thrive under them.

6. "Hold fast that which you have; it is the advice given to Philadelphia, the best of the churches, *Rev.* 3. 11. Keep that good thing which is committed to you; that savouriness of heart, that love to Christ and to saints, to all saints. Keep to the knowledge of the truth. Keep to his sober principles. Remember his dying counsel, *follow peace and holiness;* have these things always in remembrance. Take heed of falling off, take heed of falling away; the world will draw you, and satan will tempt you, and your own busy hearts will be apt to betray you; but go on humbly and honestly in the strength of Christ, and fear not. Be not like those Jews that turned aside, when John Baptist was dead, John 5. 35. The Lord keep you from being such, and give you to go on to his heavenly Kingdom."

It would have swelled this book too much, if we had inserted the sermon at large; and therefore we forbear it.

The next day, being Lord's-Day, Mr. Owen of Oswestry preached a most excellent sermon in the morning, agreeable to that sad occasion, upon that pathetic farewell which Elisha gave to Elijah, (2 Kin. 2. 12.) *My Father! My Father! The Chariots of* Israel, *and the Horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more; and he took hold of his own cloaths and rent them.*—He observed, I. "Faithful Ministers are the Fathers of a people, and their Chariots and horsemen; the former, a metaphor taken from a family, a peaceable society; the latter, from an army, a warlike body. Fathers, to provide good things; Chariots and Horsemen, to protect from evil things." II. "There is a time when we shall see these Fathers, these Chariots and Horsemen of Israel no more. Their time is appointed, their work cut out for them; and when these are finished, they are removed." III. "When God takes away our Fathers, the Chariots of our Israel, and the Horsemen thereof, it is a proper season for mourning and lamentation." —Under this, he did most affectionately excite us, 1. To be sensible of our loss, which is better felt than expressed. It is the loss of one that was a Father; a Father to his Family, to whom he was constant, in unfolding the holy oracles; a Father to the Prophets, for counsel, and conduct, and example; the Sons of the Prophets never conversed with him, but they were, or might have been, the better for him; a Father to his Congregation, now left orphans. It is the loss of one of *the Chariots and Horsemen of our Israel;* so eminent was he for prevalency in prayer, courage in duty, conduct in affairs, constancy in religion, a firm adherence to

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to his ministerial vows, and, lastly, a contempt of the world, in which, as he that warreth, he did not entangle himself." 2. To be sensible of those sins, which have provoked God to deprive us of him. Barrenness and unfruitfulness under his ministry; it is for this that God *has a controversy with us.* 3. To bless God that we enjoyed him so long: eaten bread must not be forgotten. 4. To be followers of him, as he was of Christ. He was a pattern for ministers, excelling in the knowledge of the Scriptures, which made this *Man of God perfect*, and industrious to advance the honour of Jesus Christ, whom he made the *Alpha* and *Omega* of his religion; not addicted to controversies, but walking in the good old way, unwearied in the work of God. It was the delight of his heart, to be laying out himself for the good of Souls. He was exemplary for humility, and low thoughts of himself, and his own performances; for meekness and readiness to forgive injuries; for candour in speaking of others; and their words and actions, on which he ever put the best construction, and was never apt to speak evil of any man. He was eminent for family religion, and, in that, an excellent copy to all masters of families. Those things, therefore, do, which you have heard and seen him do, and the God of peace shall be with you." These were the heads which were copiously and excellently enlarged upon in that sermon.

In the afternoon of that Sabbath, another sermon was preached by a near relation of Mr. Henry's, on Heb. 11. 4. *And by it, he being dead yet speaketh,* ἔτι λαλεῖται—*is yet spoken of* by us, and yet speaketh to us.

The Wednesday following, (July 1.) being the lecture in course at Dantford in Whitchurch Parish, Mr. Laurence of Nantwich, whose turn it was to preach that lecture, brought up the long train of mourners, (as he expressed it,) in a most savoury and pertinent discourse on Heb. 13. 7. *Remember them which have* (or *have had) the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose Faith follow, considering the End of their Conversation.* " Bishops, no doubt, (says he) are here meant, Scripture Primitive Bishops, the Pastors of particular Congregations; for they were such as had spoken to them the word of God, and watched for their souls, *v.* 17. Such a one Mr. Henry was, that great man, who is fallen this day in *Israel*, removed from us, but he has left behind him a good name to be remembered, a good example to be imitated; many a good word spoken to us, and many a good prayer put up for us. Remember him with thankfulness, that God has given such power, such gifts and graces, unto men; (I never knew a man, said he, in all my acquaintance, in whom I have seen so much of God, as in good Mr. Henry; whose holy, humble, heavenly, gracious conversation, has been to me no small confirmation of the truth of the Christian Religion;) that God gave him to you, and continued him so long, to see the Church in a better state than he had sometimes seen it in; that God crowned his labours with such great success; many Souls in Heaven, and some on Earth, blessing God that ever they saw his face; and that God continued him in his usefulness to the last. Remember him with a quiet submission to the hand of God in his removal from us. Sensible we must be of the stroke; it is a public loss, a loss to the ministry, our hands are this day weak; a loss to the nation, for which he was a powerful intercessor; a loss to this country, in which he was a burning and shining light: but yet we must acquiesce in the Divine Will. The treasure was an earthen vessel, and God will bring us to depend more upon himself; and he is teaching us to live, and to live to Christ, without good Mr. Henry; though we have sometimes said, We did not know how we could live without him. Remember him, to pay all honour and respect to his name and memory: rise up, and call him blessed. That is a foul tongue, as well as a lying one, that can say any thing of him unbecoming a disciple, servant, and minister, of Jesus Christ. Remember him, to imitate his good example. Many of you will be called Mr. Henry's followers: be so indeed. He was a Pattern to Ministers, of diligence, zeal, humility, and great meekness, in dealing with all people; which contributed abundantly to his success: his preaching was affectionate, without affectation. To all people he was a pattern of faith, charity, and contempt of the world, of zeal and moderation, of patience in suffering, and of constancy and perseverance to the end. Remember him, and remember your sins which have provoked God to take him away. Have not we grieved this good Man's Spirit? &c. Remember him, and remember Christ's fulness, who is the same, (*v.* 8.) and has the residue of the Spirit. Instruments are shifted, Cisterns are emptied, but there is the same in the Fountain. Remember him, and remember your own death, and heaven where he is. We may think the worse of this world, which is much impoverished, and the better of Heaven—which is somewhat enriched, by the removal of this good man.

Thus we have gleaned a little out of the sermons, which very well deserved to have been published at large, some of the testimonies that were borne to him, by such as had had long and intimate acquaintance with him, such as knew his excellencies very much, and knew as little how to give flattering titles. Nor was it any invidious piece of service, to speak thus honourably of one, who, like Demetrius, had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself.

Nor was it there only, but from abroad, that very honourable testimonies were given of him. Sir Henry Ashurst, (whose great worth and usefulness the world has been made to know, by some of the best pens of the age,) beside the personal acquaintance he had with Mr. Henry, both at Boreatton and in London, had kept up a constant correspondence with him for many years. Read the character he gave of him, in a letter to a near relation of Mr. Henry's, upon the tidings of his Death: " I need not tell you how sadly I received the doleful news of Mr. Henry's translation; who, I do think, lived the greatest example of sincere godliness, with prudence and sweetness of temper, of any I ever knew." And in another letter, not only proposing, but pressing, the publication of an Account of his Life, he professes, that he thought there was " none like him in

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in his day," at least, of his acquaintance; which is known to have been both of the largest and of the best. "And (says he) if Sir Fulk Grevil would have it inscribed upon his tomb-stone, that he was a friend to Sir Philip Sidney, I may well be pleased to have it told to the world, that I loved and honoured blessed Mr. Henry; a man of so much prudence, and withal so much sincerity, of so good a temper, so much a gentleman, and yet of such strict piety and devotedness to God, that I scarcely ever knew his fellow."

The Rev. W. Turner, now Vicar of Walburton in Sussex, of whom mention was made before, lately sent to me a very kind letter, *Ex mero motu—spontaneously*, with his free consent to have it inserted in this account: some hints whereof I think fit to subjoin.

"Worthy Sir,

"I am glad to hear that you have been prevailed with to set upon so good a work, as recording the most remarkable passages of Mr. Henry's Life. I doubt not but you will meet with some that will give such a history but a cold reception. All that part of the world that lies in darkness, will be offended, when beams of clear light and sun-shine first dart into their faces. *Virtutem præsentem odimus—We hate virtue when it is embodied before us.*

"A little before I went to the University, I was, upon the recommendation of my worthy school-master Mr. E. (yet living,) and with my father's consent, half a year, in his house, partly as a tutor to his young ones, partly as a pupil to himself, and, in some little degree, as a companion; there I had the opportunity of informing myself more fully concerning the humour, principles, and conversation, of a sort of people, (and especially him and his family,) whom I had heard aspersed very freely in former companies, and represented to the world as very hypocritical and disloyal people. At my first going, I resolved to stand on my Guard, and pry into the Cause which was then the great subject of difference and dispute; and upon the whole, I do say, that Mr. Henry was a man of so clear a brain, so gentle a behaviour, so steady a conversation, so regular a devotion; was so courteous and condescending to inferiors, so respectful and dutiful to superiors, so sweet and obliging to all; was so careful to improve his time well, and to do as much good as possible to every body; so constantly affectionate in his prayers for the King and Government, so desirous to keep up a fair correspondence and communion with his conforming brethren, so very indifferent in making proselytes to his particular opinions, and, withal, so zealous to promote substantial goodness and true christianity, so inoffensive and peaceable in all his expressions and actions, so prudent, pure, pious, just, sober, charitable, cheerful, and pleasant, that I profess I am almost afraid to give him his *due character* without some correctives, lest they that knew him not, should suspect my veracity, and imagine my pen to be managed by some mercenary hand. I remember the Worshipful Rowland Hunt of Boreatton, Esq. speaking of Mr. Henry, thus expressed himself to me, (and, if I mistake not, the Lord Ambassador Paget was present) 'I was (said he) near seven years resident in the 'Universities, and seven more at the Inns of Court in 'London, and had opportunity of knowing and acquainting myself with the most eminent divines and 'preachers in both those places; yet I never found 'any every way so accomplished, for clearness and 'quickness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, and 'smoothness of style, as Mr. Henry is.' I have noted in my 'Book of Providences,' the remark I made upon the temporal blessings God rewarded him with, *viz.* a good and virtuous consort, who brought him a good estate, gave him due reverence, loved him with an entire affection; an ingenuous and hopeful offspring, well-affected, well-educated, and well-disposed of in the world; the favour of men, and a quiet undisturbed habitation upon earth, in great measure," *&c.*

Sic testatur, sic monet, sic precatur,
Amicus mœrens, anhelus, superstes.

—Such is the testimony, such are the sentiments and prayers, of the friend whose lot it is to sigh over his removal.

W. Turner, A. M.

Another very worthy *Conformist* formerly of his acquaintance, but now living at a great distance, having occasion to mention him in a letter to a friend, calls him, "The Great, Good, and *now* Glorious, Mr. Henry; whose memory (says he) shall ever be precious, and even sacred, to me."

Such as these were the honourable testimonies which all that knew him, and knew how to value true excellency, attended him with. It is part of the recompense of charity and moderation in this world, that it obtains a *good report of all Men. The Kingdom of God* (says the blessed Apostle, Rom. 14. 17, 18.) *is not meat and drink*, (which were then the matters of doubtful disputation,) *but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; and *he that in these things serveth Christ, is not only acceptable to God, but approved of Men:* as, on the contrary, they that *judge*, will be *juaged:* and with what *measure we meet, it will be measured to us again.* And this is the excellency of a good name, that it is out of the reach of death; and is not buried in the grave, but rather grows up from it. It is not for nothing, that Solomon has joined this *Good name*, which is better *than precious ointment*, with the *day of one's Death*, which, upon this account, is *better than the day of one's Birth*; that it completes the Character of those that finish their course well, and are faithful unto Death: whereas a Great Name, like the names of the great ones of the earth, is often withered and blemished by Death. We read of those that *bear their shame* when they *go down to the pit*, though *they were the terror* of the mighty *in the land of the living*, Ezek. 32. 25.

At a Meeting of the Dissenting Ministers of Cheshire at Knutsford, in May, 1696, a few weeks before Mr. Henry died, it was agreed, that their next meeting should be at Chester, (though inconvenient to many of them,) upon condition that he would meet them there, and

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and give them a sermon. It was with much difficulty that he was prevailed with to promise it; but his Master called for him before the time appointed came. Mr. Flavel of Devonshire died when he was under a like appointment. But happy they that are come to the *General Assembly, and Church of the First-born, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect.*

As to his person, he was of middle stature; his complexion not approaching to any extreme; of a very pleasant aspect, and an unusual mixture of gravity and sweetness in the air of his countenance, which was the true *Index of his mind.* When some of his friends solicited him to have his picture drawn, he would put them off with this, "that the best Picture of a Minister is in the Hearts of his People."

CHAP. X.

A miscellaneous Collection of Maxims and Remarks extracted from his Sermons, Letters, and Discourses.

MR. Henry, through the excess of his *modesty* and *self-diffidence,* never published any of his labours to the world; nor ever fitted or prepared any of them for the press: and yet none more valued the labours of others, or rejoiced more in them, nor have I heard any complain less of the multitude of good books, concerning which he often said, that "store is no sore;" and he was very forward to persuade others to publish; and always expressed a particular pleasure in reading the Lives, Actions, and Sayings, of eminent Men, ancient and modern, which he thought the most useful and instructive kind of Writings. He was also a very candid reader of books; not apt to pick quarrels with what he read, especially when the design appeared to be honest; and when others would find fault, and say, This was wanting, and the other amiss, his usual excuse was,—*There is nothing perfect under the Sun.*

It will be but a small repair of this want of the publishing of some of his Works, (but I doubt it will prove the best we can make,) to glean up some few of many of his *Maxims and Remarks* (as his *Remains,*) which we shall not marshal in any order, but give them as they occur, beside those which have been already inserted into this Narrative.

It was a Saying he frequently used, which has been mentioned already, "Every creature is that to us, and only that, which God makes it to be." And another was,—"Duty is ours; events are God's." And another was,—"The Soul is the Man; and therefore, that is always best for us, which is best for our Souls." And another was,—"The Devil cozens us of *all* our Time, by cozening us of the *present* Time."

In his Thanksgivings for temporal mercies, he often said,—"If the end of one mercy were not the beginning of another, we were undone." And to encourage to the work of thanksgiving, he would say,—"New Mercies call for new returns of Praise; and then those new returns will fetch in new Mercies:" and from Ps. 50. 23, *He that offers Praise, glorifies me, and to him that orders his Conversation aright,* he observed,—"Thanks-*giving* is good, but Thanks-*living* is better."

When he spake of a Good Name, he usually described it to be—"a Name for good Things with good People."

When he spake of contentment he used to say,—"When the mind and the condition meet, *there* is Contentment. Now, in order to that, either the condition must be brought up to the mind; and that is not only unreasonable, but impossible; (for, as the condition rises, the mind rises with it;)—or else the mind must be brought down to the condition, and that is both possible and reasonable." And he observed, "No condition of life will of itself make a man content, without the Grace of God: for we find Haman discontented in the Court; Ahab discontented on the Throne; Adam discontented in Paradise; nay, (and higher we cannot go,) the Angels that fell, discontented in Heaven itself."

The three Questions which he advised people to put to themselves, in *Self-Examination,* before the Sacrament, were,—"What am I?"—"What have I done?"—"What do I want?"

He used to recommend to his friends these four Scripture-Arguments against *Sin;* expressed, for Memory-Sake, in four verses, to be ready in an hour of temptation.

'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?
'It will be bitterness in the end.
'The vows of God upon me lie;
'Should such a man as I am fly?'

He said, There are four things which he would not, for all the world, have against him: "The Word of God,—His own Conscience,—The Prayers of the Poor,—and The account of Godly Ministers."

"He that has a *blind* Conscience which sees nothing, a *dead* Conscience which feels nothing, and a *dumb* Conscience which says nothing, is in as miserable a condition as a Man can be in, on this side Hell."

Preaching on 1 Pet. 1. 6. *If need be, ye are in heaviness;* He shewed what need the people of God have of afflictions. "The same that our bodies have of *physic;* that our trees have of *pruning;* that gold and silver have of the *furnace;* that liquors have of being *emptied from vessel to vessel;* that the iron has of a *file;* that the fields have of a *hedge;* that the child has of the *rod.*"

Preaching on that Prayer of Christ for his Disciples, (John 17. 21.) *That they all may be one;* which, no doubt, is an answered Prayer, for the Father heard him always; He shewed, "That notwithstanding the many sad divisions that are in the Church, yet all the Saints, as far as they are sanctified, are *One:* one in relation, one flock, one family, one building, one body, one bread; one by representation, one in image and likeness, of one inclination and disposition, one in their aims, one in their requests, one in amity and friendship,

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friendship, one in interest, and one in their inheritance; nay, they are one in judgment and opinion; though in some things they differ, yet those things in which they are agreed, are many more, and much more considerable, than those things wherein they differ: they are all of a mind concerning Sin, that it is the worst thing in the world; concerning CHRIST, that he is ALL IN ALL; concerning the favour of God, that it is better than life; concerning the world, that it is vanity; concerning the Word of God, that it is very precious, &c.

Preaching on Gal. 1. 16.—concerning the Conversion of Paul; he began his Sermon with this remark, to raise attention; "Much is said in story, concerning the seven wonders of the world; the Temple of Ephesus, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Tomb of Mausolus, &c. all which are now no more; but I have been sometimes thinking, whether I could not name seven things which I would call the seven wonders of the church; and what do you think of these seven? Are they not wonderful? 1. Our Redemption by Jesus Christ, who is called Wonderful. 2. The Salvation of Noah in the Ark. 3. The Faith of Abraham in offering up Isaac. 4. The Patience of Job. 5. The Providences of God towards the Jews. 6. The pouring out of the Spirit upon the Apostles. 7. The Conversion of Paul."

But it would be endless to gather up such passages as these out of his sermons, which were full of them; and we mention these only, because they occur first.

He used to observe concerning the nation of the Jews, "That before the captivity in Babylon, no people could be more strongly addicted to idols and idolatry than they were, an astonishing circumstance considering what clear warnings they had against it. But *after* that captivity, never was any people more averse to idols and idolatry than they; that the Promise might be fulfilled, *Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?*" And he looked upon it, that the idolatry of the Papists was one of the greatest obstructions to the Jews' Conversion; which he did expect and look for, as not apprehending how the Promises, Rom. 11. have yet had their full accomplishment; not that they shall again be incorporated into a people, but shall join themselves to the Churches of Christ, in the several nations among which they be scattered.

The great thing that he condemned and witnessed against, in the Church of Rome, was, their monopolizing of the Church, and condemning all that are not in with their interests; which is so directly contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, that nothing can be more so. He sometimes said,—"I am too much a Catholic to be a *Roman* Catholic."

He often expressed himself well-pleased with that healing rule, which, if duly observed, would put an end to all our divisions: *Sit in necessariis Unitas, in non necessariis Libertas, in omnibus Charitas—Let there be in necessary things Unity; in every thing Charity; and then there needs not be, in every punctilio, Uniformity.*

By the institutions of the Gospel, (he said,) "I know of no Holy Place; one Holy Day: two Holy Sacraments; and four Holy Canons. Let all things be done *in Charity*. Let all things be done *to edifying*. Let all things be done *decently* and in *order*. And let all things be done *to the Glory of God*."

When his opinion was asked about any doubtful matter, as playing at Cards, the Marriage of Cousin-Germans, or the like, he was very cautious in determining such things to be sinful;—but he would say, "It is good keeping on the safer side; and a man would not choose to go upon a precipice, when he might go upon even ground, Prov. 10. 9. *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely,*—in opposition to walking at all adventures."

In the observations he made of God's Providences, he frequently took notice, in discourse with his friends, of the fulfilling of the Scripture in them: "for," (says he,) the Scripture has many accomplishments, and is fulfilling every day." Speaking of a wicked son in the neighbourhood, that was very undutiful to his mother, he charged some of his children to observe the Providence of God concerning him: "Perhaps," (says he,) "I may not live to see it; but do you take notice, whether God do not come upon him with some remarkable judgment in this life; according to the threatening implied in the reason annexed to the Fifth Commandment:" but he himself lived to see it fulfilled not long after, in a very signal Providence.

He observed from Scripture-instances, as well as from some Providences which he had taken notice of in his own day,—"That if any begin well in the ways of religion and godliness, and afterwards cast off their profession, and returned to profaneness again, usually God sets a mark of his displeasure upon them, by some visible judgment in this world; their estates ruined; their reputation blasted; their families sunk; or themselves brought to misery; so that all who passed by, might say, This was an Apostate. *If any man draw back, my Soul shall have no pleasure in him.*"

He observed from Num. 10. 12. "That all our removes in this world are but from one wilderness to another. Upon any change that is before us, we are apt to promise ourselves a Canaan; but we shall be deceived, it will prove a wilderness."

Once pressing the study of the Scriptures, he advised to "take a verse of Ps. 119. every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the Psalm twice in the year; and that (says he) will bring you to be in love with all the rest of the Scripture;"—and he often said, "All Grace grows, as Love to the Word of God grows."

One asking his advice, what to do when (as often unavoidably) we are in the sight and hearing of the *wickedness of the wicked*, and whether we are to reprove them; "Why," (says he,) "you know what an angry countenance does; and we may sometimes give a reproof by our looks, when we have not opportunity of giving it otherwise."

He would not bear that any should be evil-spoken of in his hearing; it was to him *as vinegar to the teeth*. He would remind those who reflected upon people, behind their backs, of that Law, (Lev. 19. 14.) *Thou shalt not curse the Deaf*: "Those that are absent, are Deaf, they cannot right themselves; and therefore say no ill of them." A friend of his inquiring of him concerning a matter

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matter which tended to reflect upon some people, he began to give him account of the story, but immediately brake off, and checked himself with these words: "But our rule is, to speak evil of no man," and would proceed no further in the story. It was but the week before he died, that one desired him to lend him such a book: "Truly," (says he,) "I would lend it you, but that it rakes in the faults of some, which should rather be covered with a mantle of love." It were easy to multiply instances of this.

To quicken people to diligence and liveliness in the Worship of God, he would sometimes observe,—"That the Temple was built upon a Threshing-Floor, a place of labour." He would also urge that circumstance, in answer to those who turned it to his reproach, that his Meeting-Place had been a barn; "No new thing, (would he say, (to turn a Threshing-Floor into a Temple."

When some zealous people in the country would have him to preach against *top-knots*, and other vanities in apparel; he would say, That was none of his business; if he could but persuade people to Christ, the pride and vanity, and excess of those things would fall of course;—and yet, he had a dislike to vanity and gaiety of dress, and allowed it not in those that he had influence upon. His rule was, that "in such things we must neither be owls nor apes; not affect singularity, nor affect modishness; nor (as he used to observe from 1 Pet. 3. 3.) make the putting on of apparel our adorning, because Christians have better things to adorn themselves with." When some complained to him of a relation of their's, that would not let them dress his children with ribbons, and other fine things, "Why, truly, (says Mr. Henry,) those things are fit for *Children*;" thereby reproving both him that would not allow them to his children, and them that, perhaps, minded them too much themselves.

He often, both in sermons and discourses, would press people to fix to themselves some good *principles*; and to come off from the corrupt and carnal principles that worldly people go by. He took all occasions to recommend such principles as these: "That God, who is the first and best, should have the first and best. That a Part in Christ is a good Part. That Soul-Prosperity is the best Prosperity; and that it is well or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our Souls. That Honesty is the best Policy. That those that would have the Comfort of Relations, must be careful to do the Duty of them. That all is well, that ends everlastingly well. That Time, and the Things of Time are nothing, compared with Eternity and the Things of Eternity. That it is better to suffer the greatest Affliction, than to commit the least Sin. That it highly concerns us to do that now, which we shall most wish we had done when we come to die. That Work for God is its own Wages. That it is Folly for a Man to do that which he must certainly undo again by Repentance, or be undone to all Eternity." Such as these were the principles he would have christians to govern themselves by.

Speaking of the causes of Atheism, he had this observation,—"That a Head full of vain and unprofitable Notions, meeting with a Heart full of Pride and Self-Conceitedness, disposes a Man directly to be an Atheist."

A gentlewoman, who, upon some unkindness betwixt her and her husband, was parted from him, and lived separately near a twelvemonth, grew melancholy, and complained of sin, the withdrawing of the *light of God's countenance*, and want of assurance; he told her she must rectify what was amiss between her and her husband, and return into the way of duty; else it was in vain to expect peace. Her friends were against it; but he said he was confident it would prove so.

He said,—He had observed concerning himself, that he was sometimes the worse for *eating*, but never for *abstinence*; sometimes the worse for wearing too *few clothes*, but never for wearing too *many*; sometimes the worse for *speaking*, but never for keeping *silence*.

As to his letters, he was very free in writing to his friends. "A good Letter," he would say, "may perhaps do more good than a Sermon, because the address is more particular; and that which is written remains." His language and expressions in his Letters were always pious and heavenly, and seasoned with the Salt of Grace; and, when there was occasion, he would excellently administer counsels, reproofs, or comforts, by Letter. He kept no copies of his Letters, and it is impossible, if we should attempt it, to retrieve them from the hands into which they are scattered. Mr. Rutherford's and Mr. Allen's Letters, which (like some of the most excellent of Paul's Epistles) bore date out of a prison, have a deep tincture of their peculiar *prison-comforts* and enlargements: we have none such to produce of Mr. Henry's, no Pastoral-Letters, or Prison-Letters; he was himself, in his whole conversation, an *Epistle of Christ*.

But we shall only glean some passages out of such of his Letters as are in our hands, which may be affecting and edifying.

To his Son, when he was abroad for improvement at London, in the years 1685 and 1686, with the common business of his letters, which was always written with a savour of religion, he would intermix such lines as these: "We are all well here; thanks be to God, the Divine Providence watching about our tabernacle, and compassing us about *with favour, as with a shield*. Our great inquiry is, *What shall we render?* Alas! our *renderings* are nothing to our *receivings*: we are like the barren field, on which much cost is bestowed, but the crop is not accordingly. Our Heavenly Father is loading us with his benefits, and we are loading him with our sins, grieving him that comforts us; and how long, how long shall it be so? O, that it might be otherwise! That our mercies might be as oil to the Wheels, to make us more active and lively in our Master's work; especially considering how it is with our Fellow-Servants, they empty and we full; they *Marah* and we *Naomi*. There may a day come, when it may cost dear to be honest; but, after all, *To fear God and keep his Commandments, is the Whole of Man*. I therefore commend it to you, and you to God, who is a *Shield and Buckler to them that fear him*.

"We are well, but in daily expectation of that which we are *born*, and *born again* to, and that is trouble in

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this world; yet rejoicing in hope of the Glory of God, which we are reaching after, and pressing towards, as we trust you are also. Where you are, you see more of the glittering vanities of this world in a day, than we here do in an age; and are you more and more in love with them, or dead and dying to them? I hope, dead and dying to them; for they are poor things, and perish in the using; they make many worse that enjoy them, but none better. What is translated *vexation of Spirit*, (Eccl. 1. 2.) may be read, *Feeding upon wind;* (comp. Hos. 12. 1.) and can *wind* satisfy? The Lord preserve and keep you from all evil; the Lord preserve and keep your Soul. We both send you our love, and bless you together and apart, every day in the name of the Lord. Amen and Amen.

" Be sincere, and humble, and choice in your company; always either getting good or doing good, gathering in or laying out. Remember to *keep the heart with all diligence*, and *above all keepings;* for there the *fountain* is, and if that be well kept and clean, the streams will be accordingly.

" It is some short refreshment to friends and relations, to see and hear from one another, but it passes away, and we have here no continuing city, no abiding delights in this world; (our rest remains elsewhere;) those we have, lose much of their sweetness from the thoughts of parting with them while we enjoy them, but the happiness to come is eternal. After millions of millions of ages, (if we may so speak of Eternity,) as far from an end as the first moment; and the *last of Glory will be Glory*, (so some read,) Prov. 25. 27. Keep that in your eye, my *dear Child*, and it will, as much as any thing, *dazzle* your eyes, as to all the fading, deceiving, vanities of this lower world, and will be a quickening motive to you, to abound always in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. The Lord bless you, who *blesseth indeed.*

" See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as the wise; many eyes are upon you, His especially, who is all eye; *Cave Deus videt. Memento hoc agere—Beware! the eye of the Lord is upon you: remember to do this:*—our blessing with 1 Chr. 28. 9.

" The same which is yet the *Prologue* of your's, is of our's also. *Omnia bene, laus Deo!—All things work together for good: praise the Lord!* but he that *girdeth on the harness, must not boast as he that putteth it off*. While the world we live in, is under the moon, constant in nothing but inconstancy, and such changes are made in other families, why should we alone promise ourselves immunity from the common lot? There would be no need of faith and patience, which are Winter-Graces, if it should be always Summer-Time with us. We have three *unchangeables* to oppose to all other *mutabilities:* an *unchangeable Covenant;* an *unchangeable God;* and an *unchangeable Heaven:* and while these things remain the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever, welcome the will of our Heavenly Father, in all events that may happen to us; come what will, nothing can come amiss to us.

" Keep the invisible things of the other world always in your eye. He that ventures the loss of an eternal Crown and Kingdom, for a cup or two of *Puddle-Water*, (such as all terrene pleasures, in comparison, are,) makes a bargain, which no less a space than that which is everlasting, will be sufficient to bewail and repent of. How much better is it to lay up in store now a *good foundation for time to come*, and to *lay hold on Eternal Life!* Doing those works which we should wish hereafter to follow us, yet still making the Blessed Jesus our *All in All.*

" The further progress you make in your studies, you will find them the easier: it is so with Religion; the worst is at first. It is like the picture that frowned at first entrance, but afterwards smiles, and looks pleasant. They that walk in sinful ways, meet with some difficulties at first, which custom conquers, and they become as nothing. It is good to accustom ourselves to that which is good. The more we do, the more we may do, in religion. Your acquaintance (I doubt not) increases abroad, and accordingly your watch must be; for by that often, ere we are aware, we are insnared. *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.*

" The return of the Spring invites our thanksgiving for the mercy of it. The Birds are singing early and late, according to their capacity, the praises of their Creator: but Man, only, who has most cause, finds something else to do. It is *Redeeming Love* that is the most admirable Love; less than an Eternity will not suffice to adore it in. *Lord, how is it! Lord! What is Man!* As the streams lead to the fountain, so should all our Mercies lead us to their source. We, both of us, send you our most affectionate Love and Blessing; Blessing? That is, we pray and beseech the most Blessed God, even *our own God*, to give you his Blessing; for he only can *command* the Blessing, and those whom He Blesses, are Blessed indeed. Let us still hear, to our comfort, that you *walk in the truth;* living above the things of the world, as dead to them. The Lord in Mercy fit us for his Will in the *next* Providence, Public and Personal, for Time is always coming.

" Your Improvement is our Joy. Be sincere and serious, clothed with humility, abounding always in the work of the Lord; and, when you have done all, saying, *I am an unprofitable servant.* It was the good advice of the Moral Philosopher, in your converse with Men, Μίμνησο ἀπιστίν—*Distrust;* but I must add, in every thing towards God, Μίμνησο πιστεύειν—*Believe:* expect Temptation and a Snare at every turn, and walk accordingly. We have a good *Cause*,— a vanquished *Enemy*,—a good *Second*,—an extraordinary *Pay;* for he that overcomes, needs not desire to be more happy than the second and third of the Revelations bespeak him to be. The God of all Mercy and grace compass you about always with his *favour as with a shield.*

" I would have you redeem time for hearing the Word in season and out of season; your other studies will prosper never the worse; especially if you could return immediately from it to the closet again, without *cooling divertisements* by the way.

" See your need of Christ more and more, and live upon him: no life like it; so sweet, so safe. *Christus meus*

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meus mihi in omnia—My Saviour is mine in all things. We cannot be discharged from the guilt of any evil we do, without his merit to satisfy: we cannot move in the performance of any good required, without His Spirit and grace to assist and enable for it; and when we have done All, that All is nothing, without his mediation and intercesssion to make it acceptable; so that, every day, in every thing, he is *All* in *All*. Though you are at a distance from us now, we rejoice in the good hope we have through Grace, of meeting again in the Land of the Living; that is, on earth, if God see good; however, in heaven, which is the true Land of the truly Living, and is best of all. The Lord God everlasting be your Sun and Shield in all your ways. See time hasting away apace towards eternity, and the Judge even at the Door; and work accordingly; where-ever you are, alone, or in company, be always either doing or getting good; sowing or reaping. As for me, I make no other reckoning, but that the *Time of my departure is at hand;* and what trouble I may meet with before, I know not; the Will of the Lord be done. One of my chief cares is, that no Iniquity of *mine* may be laid up for *you*; which God grant for his Mercy-Sake in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

" Be careful of your Health. Remember the rule, *Venienti occurrere,—Prevent by meeting*; but especially neglect not the main matter. The Soul is the Man; if that do well, all is well. *Worship God in the Spirit; rejoice in Christ Jesus;* and *have no confidence in the flesh.* God be gracious unto thee, my Son! *Redeem Time;* especially for your Soul. Expect trouble in this world, and prepare for it; expect happiness in the other world, and walk worthy of it, unto all pleasing.

" A good book is a good companion at any time; but especially a good God, who is always ready to hold communion with those that desire and seek communion with him. Keep low and humble in your thoughts and opinion of yourself; but aim high in your desires and expectations, even as high as the Kingdom of Heaven itself, and resolve to take up with nothing short of it. The Lord guide you in all your ways, and go in and out before you, and preserve you blameless to his Heavenly Kingdom."

Immediately after his Son was ordained to the Work of the Ministry at London, in 1687, he thus wrote to him: " Are you now a Minister of Jesus Christ? Has he *counted you faithful, putting you into the Ministry?* Then be Faithful; out of Love to him, *feed his Lambs.* —Make it your τὸ ἔργον—*your business*, as a *workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.* I hope what you experienced of the presence of God with you in the solemnity, has left upon you a truly indelible character, and such impressions, as neither time nor any thing else shall be able to wear out. Remember Ps. 71. 16. It is, in the eye of sense, a bad time to set out in; but, in sowing and reaping, Clouds and Wind must not be heeded. The Work is both comfortable and honourable, and the reward rich and sure; and if God be pleased to give opportunity and a heart, though there may be trouble attending it, it will be easily borne. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. I am, and shall be, according to my duty and promise, earnest at the Throne of Grace, on your behalf, that the Lord will pour out upon you of his Holy Spirit, that what he calls you to, he would fit you for; especially that he would take you off your own bottom, and lay you low in the sense of your own unworthiness, inability, and insufficiency, that you may say with the evangelical *Prophet, Woe is me, I am undone!* And with *Jeremiah, I am a child;* and with *Paul, I am nothing:* where this is not, the main thing is wanting; for God resists the Proud, but gives Grace to the Humble. Now the Lord give you that Grace to be Humble; and then, according to his Promise, he will make you rich in every other Grace."

It were very easy to transcribe many more such lines as these out of his Letters to his Son; but these shall suffice.

We shall next gather up some few passages out of some of his Letters to a Person of Quality in London, such of them as are come to our hands, which are but few of many. The beginning of his Correspondence with that Gentleman, (which continued to his death, and was kept up monthly for a great while,) was in 1686, and the following Letter broke the Ice. In 1686, a monthly correspondence began with that Gentleman with the following Letter, and was continued, with some intermission, until his Death.

" Honoured Sir,

" Hoping you are, by this time, as you intended, returned to *London*, to your home and habitation there, I make bold according to my Promise, to salute you in a few lines. In the first place, to be your *Remembrancer* of the Vows of God, which are upon you, upon the account of the many Mercies of your journey both in your going out, and in your coming in. Was not every step you took, hedged about with special Providence? Had not the Angels *charge over you?* Did not they pitch their Tents where you pitched your's? Did not Goodness and Mercy *follow you;* and should it not, then, be had in thankful remembrance? Where Mercy goes before, should not Duty follow after? If you have Mr. *Angier's* Life, you will find there, (pa. 88.) a collection out of his Diary, of ten heads of Mercies, acknowledged in a Journey, to heighten God's praises, and to quicken his own, and others' hearts therein, and they are certainly very affecting. Next, Sir, I am to acquaint you, that I have faithfully disposed of the money you left with me, at parting, to eight poor Widows in this neighbourhood, as you appointed. This, among all the rest of your Alms-Deeds, is had in memorial before God: it is fruit that will abound to your account; *bread* sent a voyage *upon the Waters,* which you and your's will *find again after many days;* for he is Faithful that hath promised. The Apostle's Prayer shall be mine, (2 Cor. 9, 10.) *Now he that ministereth Seed to the Sower, both minister Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed sown, and increase the Fruits of your Righteousness.* Amen."

And some time after, he writes, " Your acknowledging God in all your affairs, I cannot but rejoice in, as an evidence of the uprightness of your Heart towards him:

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him: it is the *Life* and *Soul* of all *Religion*; it is indeed to *walk with God*. *In all thy Ways acknowledge him*, is a command as comprehensive as any of the same length. In every thing thou doest, (such is its import) have an eye to him; make his word and will thy rule; his glory thy end; fetch in strength from him; expect success from him; and in all events that happen, which are our ways too, (whether they be for us or against us,) he is to be acknowledged, that is, adored: if prosperous, with thankfulness; if otherwise, with submission: as Job, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken;* and *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* This is to set the Lord always before us, to have our eye ever towards the Lord; where this is not, we are so far *without God in the World.*" In another Letter, "As to the accession lately made to your estate, much good may it do you; that is, much good may you do with it; which is the true Good of an Estate. The Lady Warwick would not thank him that would give her a thousand a year, and tie her up from doing good with it. I rejoice in the *large heart* which God has given you with your large estate; without which Heart, the Estate would be your *Snare.*"

I have lately met with a Letter of Mr. Henry's, to a Couple, related to him, who, to their great grief had, in a very short time, buried all their Children of the Small-Pox; it was in 1679. What comfort and counsels he administered to them, may be of use to others in their afflictions; and therefore, I shall transcribe the whole Letter, though it be long.

"Dear Cousins,

This is to you both, whom God has made one in the *Conjugal Relation*, and who are one also in the present affliction, only to signify to you, that we do heartily sympathize with you in it. The trial is indeed sharp, and there will be need of all the wisdom and grace you have, and of all the help of friends you can get, both to bear and to improve it aright. You must bear it with silence and submission. *Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement.* He is Sovereign Lord of all, and may do with us and our's as pleaseth him. It is not for the *Clay* to quarrel with the *Potter.* It was Mercy that you had children, and comfort with them, so long; it is Mercy that yet you have *one-another*, and your children are not lost, but *gone before*, a little before, whither you yourselves are hastening after. And if a *storm* be coming, (as God grant it be not,) it is best with them that put first into the Harbour. Your Children are taken away from the Evil to come, and you must not mourn as they that have *no hope.* Sensible you cannot but be, but dejected and sullen you must not be; that will only put more bitterness into the cup, and make way for another, perhaps a sharper stroke. You must not think, and I hope do not, that there cannot be a sharper stroke, for God has many arrows in his quiver; he can heat the furnace seven times hotter, and again, and again, seven times hotter, till he has consumed us; and if he should do so, yet still we must say, He has *punished us less than our Iniquities have deserved.* For examples of patience in the like kind, we have two eminent ones in the Book of God; those are Job and Aaron; of the latter it is said, (Lev. 10. 3.) *He held his Peace;* and that which quieted him, was what his brother Moses said to him, *This is that which the Lord hath said, I will be sanctified;*—and if God be *sanctified*, Aaron is *satisfied;* if God have Glory from it, Aaron has nothing to say against it. Of the former it is said, (Job 1. 20.) he *fell down*, but it was to *worship;* and we are told how he expressed himself, *The Lord gave, &c.* He acknowledges God in all. Indeed, after all, this is it, my dear cousins, that you must satisfy yourselves with, under the sad Providence —that the Lord hath done it, and the same Will that ordered the thing itself, ordered all the Circumstances of it; and who are we that we should dispute with our Maker? Let *the Potsherds strive with the Potsherds of the Earth; but let not the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* And as for the improvement of this affliction, (which I hope both of you earnestly desire, for it is a great loss to lose such a Providence, and not to be made better by it,) I conceive there are four Lessons which it should teach you, and they are good lessons, and should be well-learned; for the advantage of them is unspeakable. 1. It should for ever imbitter Sin to you; you know what the woman of Sarepta said to the Prophet, (1 Kings 17. 18.) *Art thou come to call my sins to Remembrance, and to slay my Son?* It is sin, sin, that is the old *kill-friend;* the Jonah that has raised this storm; the Achan that has troubled your House: then how should you grow in your hatred of it, and endeavours against it, that you may be the Death of that which has been the Death of your dear Children? I say the Death of it, for nothing less will satisfy the true penitent, than the Death of such a Malefactor. 2. It should be a *spur* to you, to put you on in Heaven's way. It may be, you were growing remiss in *duty*, beginning to slacken your former pace in religion; and your Heavenly Father saw it, and was grieved at it, and sent this sad Providence to be your *Monitor;* to tell you that you should remember whence you were fallen, and do your first works, and be more humble, holy, heavenly, self-denying, and watchful; *abounding always in the Work of the Lord.* O blessed are they that come out of such a furnace thus refined! They will say hereafter, that it was a happy day for them, that ever they were put in. 3. You must learn by it, as long as you live, to keep your affections in due bounds towards Creature-Comforts. How hard is it to *love* and not to *over-love*! To delight in Children or Yoke-fellows, and not over-delight! Now God is a jealous God, and will not give his Glory to any other; and our excess, this way, often provokes him to remove that Mercy from us, which we thus make an Idol of; and our duty is to labour, when he does so, to get that matter amended, and to rejoice in all our enjoyments with trembling, and as if we rejoiced not. 4. It should be a means of drawing your hearts and thoughts more upwards and homewards; I mean your *everlasting Home.* You should be looking oftener now, than before, into the other world. *I shall go to him*, says David, when his little Son was gone before. It is yet but a little while ere all the things

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things of *Time* shall be swallowed up in *Eternity*. And the matter is not great, whether we or our's die first, while we are all dying; *in the midst of Life we are in Death. What manner of Persons then ought we to be?* Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, be your support under, and do you good by, this dispensation, and give you a name *better than that of Sons and Daughters*. We are daily mindful of you at the *Throne of Grace*, in our poor measure, and wish to be dearly recommended to you, &c."

We shall now select some passages, out of his Letters to his *Children*, after they were married.

To one of his Daughters, pregnant with her first Child, he thus writes: "You have now one kind of burthen more than ever you had before, to *cast upon God*; and if you do so, he will sustain you according to his promise."

And when the time of travail was near,—thus: "You know whom you have trusted; even him who is true and faithful, and never yet did, nor ever will, forsake the Soul that seeks him. Though he be Almighty, and can do every thing, yet this he cannot do, he cannot deny himself, nor be worse than his Word. But what is his Word? Has he promised that there shall be always a safe and speedy delivery? That there shall be no *Jabez*, no *Benoni*? No: but if there be, he has promised that it shall *work together for good*; has promised that if he do not save *from*, he will save *through*. If he call to go even through the *Valley of the shadow of Death*, (and what less is Child-bearing?) He will be with you, his Rod and his Staff shall comfort you; and that is well. Therefore, your Faith must be in those things as the Promise is; either so, or so; and which way soever it be, *God is good and doth good*. Therefore, my dear daughter, *lift up the hands that hang down;* cast your burthen upon him; trust also in him; and let your thoughts be established. We are mindful of you in our daily prayers; but you have a better Intercessor than we, who is heard always."

To another of them in the same circumstance, he thus writes; "Your last Letter bespeaks you to be in a good frame, which rejoiced my heart, that you were *fixed, fixed, waiting upon God:* that your Faith was uppermost, above your Fears;—that you could say, *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, let him do with me as seemeth good in his eyes*. We are never fitter for a Mercy,—nor is it more likely to be a *Mercy indeed*, than when it is so with us: now the Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thoughts of your heart." And he concludes; "Forget not 1 Tim. 2. 15."

When one of his Daughters was safely delivered; in a Letter to another of them, that was drawing near to that trying Hour, he observed, that when *David* said, (Ps. 116. 12.) *What shall I render?* He presently adds, (*v.* 13.) *I will call upon the Name of the Lord.* "As if (says he,) calling upon the Name of the Lord for Mercy for you, were one way of rendering unto the Lord for the great benefit done to your sister."

On occasion of affliction in their Families by the sickness or death of Children, or otherwise, he always wrote some word in season.

"In the *Furnace* again? (says he,) But a good friend sits by, and it is only to take away more of the dross. If less fire would do, we should not have it so much, and so often. O for faith to trust the *Refiner*, and to refer all to his Will and Wisdom, and to wait the issue! For I have been young, and now am old, but I never yet saw it in vain to seek God, and to hope in him."

At another time he thus writes: "Tough and knotty *blocks* must have more and more *wedges:* our Heavenly Father, when he judges, will overcome. We hear of the death of dear *S. T.* and chide ourselves for being so often pleased with his little pretty *fashions*, lest we offended therein, by being too much so. No rival must sit with him in his throne, who deserves all our love and joy, and has too little of it."

At another time, upon the death of another little one: "The dear little one (says he) made but a short passage through this, to another world, where it is to be for ever a living member of the great body, whereof Jesus Christ is the ever living head; but for which hope there were cause for sorrow indeed. If he that gives, takes, and it is but his own, why should we say, *What doest thou?*"

At another time, upon the like occasion; "Our *quiver* of childrens' children is not so full, but God can soon empty it. O for Grace, Grace at such a time, which will do that which nature cannot! The God of all Grace supply your need and our's, according to his *riches in Glory*. The Lord is still training you up in his good school; and though no affliction for the present be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yields well; your work is, in every thing, to bring your will to the will of God."

To one of his daughters concerning her little ones, he thus writes: "They are but bubbles: we have many warnings to sit loose; the less we rely upon them in our joys and hopes, the more likely we are to have them continued to us. Our God is a jealous God, nor will he suffer the creature to usurp his throne in our affections.

Upon the Death of a little Child, but a few days old, he thus writes: "The tidings of the death of your little one were afflicting to us; but the clay must not say to the potter—What doest thou? If he that took, be the same that gave, and if what he gave and took, was his own, by our own consent, it becomes us to say, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* I hope you have been learning to acknowledge God in all events; and to take all as from his hand, who has given us to *know*—I say to *know*, (for Paul says so,) that all things *do work together* (not only *shall*, but *do*,) for our good; that we may be, more and more, *partakers of* his *Holiness*. He can make the two left, as comfortable to you as all the three: as all your five could have been. However, if all the *cisterns* were drawn dry, while you have your *Fountain* to go to, you are well off, you may also by Faith look forward, and say, It was a *Covenant-Child*, and through Mercy, we shall see it again in a better world."

Upon the Sickness of a dear Child, he thus writes to the

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the Parent: "You and we are taught to say, *It is the Lord;* upon his Will must we wait, and to it must we submit in every thing: not upon constraint, but of choice; not only because he is the potter, and we the clay, and, therefore, in a way of *sovereignty* he may do what he pleases with us and our's, but because he is our Father, and will do nothing but what shall be for *good* to us. The more you can be satisfied in this, and the more willing to *resign*, the more likely to *have*. Be strong, therefore, in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus; it is given for such a time of need as this. I hope your fears and our's will be prevented, and pray they may; but, thanks be to God, we know the worst of it, and that worst has no harm in it, while the *better part* is our's, which *cannot be taken away from us.*"

To one of his Children in Affliction he writes thus: "It is a time of trial with you, according to the Will of your and our Heavenly Father. Though you see not, yet, what he means by it, you shall see: he means you good, and not hurt; he is shewing you the vanity of all things under the sun—that your happiness lies not in them, but in himself only; that they and we are passing away, withering flowers; that, therefore, we may learn to die to them, and live above them; placing our hope and happiness in better things; trusting in him alone, who is the *Rock of Ages*, who fails not, neither can fail, nor will fail, those that fly to him. I pray you, think not a hard thought of him; no, not *one* hard thought, for he is good, and doeth good in all he doeth; and, therefore, *all* shall work for good: but then, *as you are called according to his purpose*, (blessed be his Name for it,) so you must love him, and Love (you know) *thinks no evil*, but puts the best construction upon all that the person loved says or does; and so must you, though now, for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness."

At another time: "Your times, and the times of your's, are in the Lord's good Hand, whose *Will* is his *Wisdom*. It is one thing, (as we read and observed this Morning, out of Ezek. 22.) to be put into a furnace, and left there as dross to be consumed; and another thing, to be put in as gold or silver, to be melted for use, and to have the refiner sit by. You know in whom you have believed; keep your hold of the everlasting covenant: *he is faithful, that hath promised.* We pray for you, and we give thanks for you, daily, for the cup is mixed; therefore trust in the Lord for ever, and rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice."

To one of his Sons-in-Law that was a little engaged in building, he thus writes: "Be sure to take God along with you in this, as in all your other affairs; for *except he build the House, they labour in vain, that build it.* Count upon troublesome occurrences in it; keep the Spirit quiet within; and let not God's time or dues be intrenched upon, and then all will be well."

It was but a little before he died, that he wrote thus to one of his Children: "We rejoice in God's goodness to you, that your distemper has been a rod *shaken* only, and not *laid on*. He *is* Good, and *doeth* Good; and should not we love him, and rest in our love to him? He saith, that he resteth in his to us, and *rejoiceth over us with singing*, Zeph. 3. 17. And have not we much *more* cause? What loveliness in us? What not in him? I pray you, let me recommend *him* to your *love;* love him, love him with all the *powers* of your *Soul*, and out of love to *please him.* He is pleased with honest endeavours to please him; though, after all, in many things we come short, for *we are not under the Law, but under Grace.*"

To one of his Children recovered from sickness he gives this hint: "Remember that a *New Life* must be a *New Life* indeed; *Reprieves* extraordinary, call for *Returns* extraordinary."

The last Journey he made to *London*, was in *Aug.* 1690. Before he went, he sent this *Farewel-Letter* to his Son at *Chester:* I am going forth this morning towards the great city, not knowing but it may be *Mount Nebo* to me. Therefore I send you this as full of *blessings* as it can hold, to yourself, my Daughter your Wife, all the rest of my Daughters, their Husbands, and all the little ones, *together* and *severally.* If I could command the Blessings, I would; but I pray to him that *hath* and *doth*, and I trust *will.* The Lord *bless you*, and *keep you*, and *lift up the Light of his Countenance upon you.* As you have *received*, and you, for your part, preached, *Christ Jesus the Lord*, so *walk in him;* keeping a *conscience* always *void of offence, both towards God and towards* all *Men.* Love your *Mother*, and be dutiful to her, and live in Love and Peace among yourselves, and the God of *Love* and *Peace* who hath been, will be, with you. *Amen.*

To one who desired his direction for the attaining of the *Gift of Prayer*, he wrote the following Letter of advice.

If you would be able in words and expressions of your own, without the help of a form, to offer up *Prayers* to God, observe these following *Rules of direction;* in the use whereof, by God's blessing, you may in time attain thereunto.

1. You must *be thoroughly convinced that where such a Gift is, it is of great use to a Christian*, both very *comfortable* and very profitable, and therefore very *desirable*, and worth your serious *endeavours.* This must first be, or else all that follows, will signify nothing; for it is as the wise Man says, (Prov. 18.1.) *Through Desire, a Man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all Wisdom*, that is, till we are brought in some good measure to desire the *end*, we shall never in good earnest apply ourselves to the Use of *means* for the obtaining of it. It is a *Gift* that fits a person to be of use to others in the duty of Prayer, according as there is occasion, either in a *Family* or in *Christian Communion.* It is also of great advantage to ourselves. For how can any *Form* (though ever so exact) be possibly contrived, so as to reach *all* the circumstances of *my particular case?* And yet it is my duty *in every thing to make my requests known to God.*

2. As you should be persuaded of the excellent Use of it, where it is attained, so also *you should believe, that where it is not, it may be attained, and that without any great difficulty.* No doubt many are discouraged from

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from endeavouring after it, by an opinion they have, that it is to no purpose; they think it a thing so far above their abilities that they may as well sit still and never attempt it. This is of very bad consequence, as in other matters of Religion, so particularly in this; and therefore watch against this suggestion, and conclude, that (though it may be harder to some than others) yet it is *impossible* to none. Nay, this *Wisdom is easy to him that understandeth*, where means are used in the fear of God.

3. *You must rightly understand and consider who it is, with whom you have to do in Prayer*, for your encouragement to come to him, though in the midst of many infirmities and imperfections. He is your FATHER, your loving tender-hearted Father, who *knows your frame, and remembers you are but Dust*; who is not extreme to mark what we do amiss, in manner and expression, where the Heart is upright with him. You may judge a little concerning his Love, by the *Disposition* that is in you towards *your Children*, when they come to ask things needful of you. And believe him to be infinitely more *merciful* and *compassionate*, than the most merciful and compassionate of Fathers and Mothers are or can be; especially remembering that we have an *Advocate with the Father*, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the *great High-Priest of our Profession*, and whom he *heareth always*.

4. You must *pray, that you may pray*; beg of God, the *Father of Lights*, from whom every good and perfect Gift comes, to bestow this Gift upon you. We read, (Luke 11. 1.) that one of the Disciples came to Jesus Christ upon this errand, *Lord teach us to pray*; and he had his request granted presently. Go you to him on the same errand. You may plead the *Relation* of a Child, from that Scripture, (Gal. 4. 6.) *And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* And the *Promise* also from that Scripture, (Zech. 12. 10.) *I will pour upon the House of* David, *and the Inhabitants of* Jerusalem, *the Spirit of Grace, and of supplication*; which two, Relation and a Promise, if they be not sufficient to encourage your *Faith* and *Hope* in this Address, what is or can be?

5. *It is good, before you address yourself to the Duty, to read a portion of Holy Scripture*, which will be of great use to furnish you both with matter and words for Prayer, especially *David's* Psalms, and *Paul's* Epistles. The Holy Spirit has provided for us a *Treasury*, or *Storehouse*, of what is suitable for all occasions; and where both the word and the matter are his own, and of his own framing and inditing, if affections be stirring in us accordingly, we have great reason to believe he will accept of us. In divers places, he has himself put words into our mouths for the purpose, as (Hos. 14. 2.) *Take with you Words*, (Mat. 6. 9.) *After this Manner therefore pray ye*, and often elsewhere.

6. There *must be some acquaintance with our hearts, with our spiritual state and condition, our wants and ways*, or else no good will be done in this matter. It is sense of need, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, that supplies the poor *Beggar* at your door, with pertinent expressions and arguments, he needs not the help of any friend or book to furnish him; so, if we know ourselves, and feel our condition, and set God before us as *our* God, able and ready to help us, words will easily follow wherewith to offer up our desires to him, who understands the language even of sighs and tears, and *groanings which cannot be uttered*, Rom. 8. 26.

7. *It is of use in stated Prayer, ordinarily to observe a method*, according to the several Parts of Prayer, which are these four:

1. *Compellation*, or *Adoration*, which is the giving of due *Titles* to God in our addresses to him, and therein ascribing to them *the Glory due unto his Name.* With this we are to begin our Prayers, both for the working of a holy *awe* and *dread* upon our Hearts towards him, on the account of his *greatness* and *majesty*, as also for the strengthening of our *faith* and *hope* in him, upon the account of his *goodness* and *mercy*.

2. *Confession; Sin* is to be confessed in *every* Prayer: *Original Sin* as the root, spring-head, and fountain; and *Actual Sin* as the fruit and stream proceeding from it. Herein you must not rest in *Generals*, as most do, but, especially when you are in secret before the Lord, you must descend to *Particulars*, opening the whole wound, hiding nothing from him; also *aggravating* the fault from the circumstances of it, *judging* and *condemning* yourself for it in the sight of God; and for your help herein, you must acquaint yourself with the Divine Law, the precepts and prohibitions of it, especially their *extent* and *spiritual nature*, as the rule, and then bring your own thoughts, words, and actions, to it daily, to be tried by it.

3. *Petition* for such good things as God has promised, and you *have need of*, both concerning this Life, and *that which is to come.* As to the latter, you are to pray for *Mercy to pardon*, and *Grace to help in time of need.* As to the former, for *bread to eat, raiment to put on*, and a Heart to be *therewith contented.* You are to pray for others also, the Church of God, the Land of your Nativity, Magistrates, Ministers, Relations, and Friends, not forgetting the Afflictions of the Afflicted.

4. *Thanksgiving*, which should have a considerable share in every Prayer; for our duty is, *in every thing to give Thanks* for mercies received, public and personal, *which is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.*

This Rule of *Method* is not so necessary to be observed in Prayer, as in no case to be varied from; but it is certainly very *useful* and expedient, and a great help to *young beginners* in that duty.

8. My advice is, that *you would delay no longer*, but forthwith apply yourself, in the Strength of Jesus Christ, to this sweet and excellent way of Praying; and I dare say, in a short time, you will find, through the aids and supplies of *Divine Grace*, that what is at first hard and difficult, will by degrees be easy and delightful. The promise is, *To him that hath*, that is, *that hath, and useth what he hath*, more shall be given. Though you cannot do what you would, yet fail not to do what you can, wherein the Lord will accept of you, according

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according to his Everlasting Covenant in Christ Jesus, for *we are not under the Law, but under Grace.*

CHAP. XI.

A short Account of some of his Friends, especially his Brethren in the Ministry, that died before him.

WE think ourselves obliged to add this Account out of his own Papers, partly as an evidence of the great esteem he had of the gifts and graces of others to whom he delighted to do honour, (an Instance of that humility which he was in all respects a great example of,) and partly that we may preserve the remembrance of some in that country, whose names ought not to be buried in oblivion. It is part of that honour which we owe to *them that fear the Lord*, to mention them with respect when they are dead and gone, that we may contribute something to the fulfilling of the Promise, That the *Righteous*, and especially they who *turn many to Righteousness, shall be had in everlasting Remembrance.* While their glorified Souls shine as *the Stars in the Firmament of our Father*, it is fit that their embalmed Memories should, in these lower regions, go forth *as a Lamp that burneth.* The *Jewish* Rabbins read Prov. 10. 7. as a Precept, *Let the Memory of the Just be blessed.* We will take them in the order wherein we find them in his Diary, according to the time of their death, premising only this note of his, occasioned by a particular instance; "Such a Day, I read the Life of old Mr. Bruen of Stapleford, in which I met with some things that shame me, some things that confirm me, and some things that quicken me." Blessed be God for that Cloud of Witnesses which we are compassed about with.

Mr. *John Machin* was buried at Newcastle, Sep. 8, 1664, a worthy Instrument in Gospel-Work; laborious, faithful, and successful, above his fellows; taken away in the midst of his days; the first *Candle* I have heard of put out by God, among the many hundreds put under a bushel by Men.*

Mr. *Heath*, late Minister of Alkman's Church in Salop, was buried May 28, 1666. He was of Christ's College in Cambridge, where he was much valued for his great knowledge of the Oriental languages, in which he was one of the greatest Masters of his Age. He was employed to correct the Syriac and Arabic of the *Polyglot Bible*, which was sent down to him in sheets for that purpose, for which Bp. Walton gave him a Copy. He read the *Liturgy* till Aug. 24, 1662, and then was silenced, because he could not come up to the imposed terms of Conformity. When the *Five Mile Act* commenced, (Mar. 25, 1666,) he removed to Willington, and there, within a few weeks, died and was buried. When he lay upon his death-bed, Mr. Laurence asked him what reflections he had upon his Nonconformity? "Truly, (said he) I would not but have done as I did for a thousand worlds." He had great confidence that God would provide for his widow and children, *according to promise.* Mr. Baxter characterises him as moderate, sedate, quiet, and religious.

Much about the same time, Mr. York died in Salop, a holy, good man, and well approved in the Ministry, who wasted his own Candle in giving Light to others, even after he was removed out of the Candlestick. Lord! Is this the meaning of Rev. 11, 12, concerning the *Witnesses?*

Mr. *Porter*, late Minister of Whitchurch, died at Salop in a good old age, June 19, 1667. He was born in Northamptonshire, bred in Cambridge; he was settled Minister of Hanmer in Flintshire long before *the Wars*, by the means of Sir John Hanmer the Patron, who was a very worthy pious gentleman, and a great promoter of religion in that parish, but died in the midst of his days. Here Mr. Porter's Ministry was blessed with wonderful acceptance and success, both in that and the neighbouring Parishes, and a great *harvest of souls* was there gathered in to Christ. After the Wars were over, (during the heat of which he was forced to withdraw) he procured Mr. Steel for Hanmer, and he removed to Whitchurch, were he continued an instrument of much good, till the King came in, and then he gave way to Dr. Bernard, a worthy moderate man. He preached his Farewell-Sermon at Whitchurch, Aug. 28, 1660, on Col. 1. 24, and spent the rest of his days in silence and affliction.—He was exercised long with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain. If this be done *to the green Tree, what shall be done to the dry?* His dying counsel to the Lord's people was, to "stick to Christ, and not to let him go, come Life, come Death."

The worthy Col. *Hunt* died at his house in Shrewsbury, Apr. 12, 1669, a true *Nathanael*, an *Israelite indeed, in whom was no Guile:* one that, like *Caleb*, followed the Lord fully in difficult trying times; he represented Shrewsbury in the long Parliament, and was very active for God in his Generation, abounding in good works, and his memory is blessed. I was going to Shrewsbury, upon an appointment of his, and, by the way, met the sad news of his death, which was sudden, but not surprising, to one that was always ready. He was twice at public ordinances the day before, being Lord's-Day, worshipped God with his Family in the evening, went to bed well as at other times, but, about two or three o'clock in the morning, waked very ill, and, before five, fell asleep in the Lord. *Help, Lord, for the Godly Man ceaseth.*

Mr. *G. Mainwaring*, a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, and my worthy friend, died in a good old age, Mar. 14, 1670, gathered as a *shock of Corn in his Season.* He was born in Wrenbury Parish in Cheshire, supported at the University by Mr. Cotton of Cumbermere, where he had the reputation of a good scholar; he was brought acquainted with the Ways of Religion, by means of Mr. Buckly his Uncle, a strict Puritan. He was first Chaplain to Sir Henry Delves, afterwards Rector of Baddely, and Chaplain to Sir T. Manwaring. After the Wars, he was removed to Malpas, whence he

* An account of his holy exemplary life, was printed many years after, drawn up, I think, by Mr. Newcome.

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he was ejected upon the King's coming in. His conversation was exemplary, especially for plainness and integrity; he was eminent for expounding Scripture. While he was at Malpas, he constantly gave to the poor all the Milk which his dairy yielded on the Lord's-Day.

Mr. *J. Adams*, of Northwood, was buried at Ellesmere, Apr. 4, 1670. He was a faithful Minister of the Gospel.

Mr. *Z. Thomas*, my worthy Friend, died of a Consumption at Nantwich, Nov. 14, 1670, in the 41st year of his age. He was bred up for a tradesman in Suffolk, but was always addicted to his book, and was ordained a Minister after the King came in, and received as a Curate at Tilstock, under Dr. Bernard, but, by reason of his Nonconformity, could not continue there long. On the Monday before he died; he said to those about him, that towards Wednesday he should take his leave of them, and did so. He was buried at Acton; Mr. Kirkes, Vicar of Acton, preached, and gave him a worthy character, and such as he deserved, for uprightness, humility, moderation, prayer, faithfulness in reproving, patience under affliction; and, in saying that he was an *Israelite indeed* without guile, he said all. The Lord make me a follower of him, and of all the rest, who, through *Faith and Patience, inherit the Promises.*

Mr. *Josh. Richardson*, my truly worthy Friend and Brother, died at Alkinton in Whitchurch Parish, Sep. 1, 1671. Blessed be God for his holy Life and happy Death. He was several years Minister of Middle in Shropshire, and was turned out thence for Nonconformity. He was a holy, loving, serious, man. Dr. Fowler preached his Funeral-Sermon at Whitchurch, on Dan. 12. 3, highly praising him as he deserved, for wisdom, piety, and peaceableness.

Mr. *S. Hildersham* died near Bromicham, in Apr. 1674, the only son of Mr. A. Hildersham of Ashby, whose works praise him in the Gates; Fellow of Emanuel-College in Cambridge, Bachelor of Divinity, 1623, settled Rector of West-Felton in Shropshire, in 1628, and continued there till silenced by the *Act of Uniformity*. He was one of the *Assembly of Divines;* a Father to the Sons of the Prophets in and about Shropshire. He was learned, loving, and charitable; an excellent preacher, an eminent expositor, and very much of the gentleman: he was about fourscore years of age when he died. He ordered by his Will, this Inscription upon his Grave-Stone: *Samuel Hildersham, B. D. Rector of* West-Felton, *in the County of* Salop, *84 Years, till* Aug. *24, 1662.*

Mr. *R. Sadler*, my worthy Friend and Fellow-Laborer, died at Wixal in Prees Parish, Apr. — 1675. He was born in Worcester; went, when young, with his Father into New England; after the Wars, he returned into England, was ordained at Wixal-Chapel, May 16, 1648, and was removed thence to Ludlow. Being turned out there upon the King's coming in, he spent the rest of his days in privacy at Wixal: a man of great piety and moderation.

Mr. *R. Nevet*, died at his house near Oswestry, Dec. 8, 1675, and was buried at Morton-Chapel. I preached his Funeral-Sermon at Swinny, on 2 Pet. 1. 14. *Knowing that I must shortly put off this my Tabernacle:* thence shewing that the *Ministers of Christ must certainly and shortly die.* He was born in Hodnet Parish, *A. D.* 1609, brought up at Shrewsbury School, was afterwards of Edmund-Hall in Oxford, commenced A. M. in 1634. He was Episcopally ordained; in 1635, he was presented to the Vicarage of Stanton in Shropshire, where he continued many years, with great success in his Ministry. Even while he was single, he kept house, judging that more for the furtherance of his work among his people. After the War, he removed to Oswestry, where he *laboured abundantly* in the Work of the Lord; and even after he was silenced for Nonconformity, he continued among his people there to his dying-day, doing what he *could* when he might not do what he *would.* He would say, he thought most of his converting work was done at Oswestry, the first seven years of his being there. He loved to preach, and to hear others preach, concerning the great Things of Religion, Redemption, Reconciliation, Regeneration, *&c.* for these (said he,) are the main matter. When the Plague was at Oswestry, he continued with his people, and preached to them, and it was an opportunity of doing much good.

His conversation, from his youth, was not only blameless, but holy and pious, he was exemplary for Family-Religion, and great care and industry in the education of his children. He was looked upon as a *Congregationalist* in judgment and practice, and was not satisfied to join in the Common-Prayer, but he was free to communicate with those that did. It was his judgment that Ministers should be ordained by Ministers; and that a Minister is not only a Minister of the particular Congregation in which he labours. He greatly bewailed the divisions of the Church, and the intemperate heats of some of all persuasions. He was exceeding kind and loving to his friends, very frequent in pious ejaculations to God. Being often distempered in body, he would say that he was *never better than in the Pulpit*, and that it *was the best place he could wish to die in.* He often blessed God for a fit of sickness which he had, which he said he would not have been without for a world; the foundation of his comfort, and hope of Heaven, being laid then. When he was sometimes much spent with his labours, he would appeal to God, that *though he might be wearied in his service, he would never be weary of it.* His dying Prayer for his Children, (after many sweet exhortations,) was, *That the Mediator's Blessing might be the Portion of every one of them:* Adding, *I charge you all, see to it, that you meet me on the right hand of Christ at the great day.* A little before he died, he had this expression, *Go forth, my Soul, go forth to meet thy God;* adding, by and by; *It is now done; Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* One present saying to him, that he was now going to receive his *Reward*, he replied, *It is free Grace.* Mr. Henry was much importuned to print his sermon at Mr. Nevet's funeral, with some account of his Life and Death, which he was somewhat inclined to do, but was

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discouraged by the difficulties of the times, and it was never done. But some materials he had for it, out of which we have collected these hints.

Mr. *R. Fogg*, my old dear friend, was buried at Acton near Nantwich, Apr. 21, 1676. He died in a good old age, about eighty. He was Minister of Bangor in Flintshire till after the King came in, and thenceforward to his death was a poor silent Nonconformist, but of a bold and zealous spirit; giving good counsel to those about him. A little before he died, he had this weighty saying among others, *Assure yourselves the Spirit of God will be Underling to no Sin.*

[Mr. *A. Parsons*, some time Minister of Wem, died at London, Oct. 1, 1684. He was born in Devonshire, and was Minister there some years before the Wars; being driven thence to London, he became well known to Mr. Pym, who sent him down to Wem, when that town was garrisoned for the Parliament. There he continued in the exercise of his Ministry, till 1660. He was an active, friendly, generous Man, and a moving, affecting Preacher. Mr. Baxter in his Life, (*Pt. 3. pa.* 94.) commends him for a moderate man, and speaks of his being in trouble, under a charge of uttering seditious words, which were these: preaching from 2 Tim. 3. 13. he said, *The Devil was like a King, that courted the Soul, and spoke fair till he was gotten into the Throne, and then played Pranks.* The witnesses deposed, contrary to the coherence of his discourse, that he said the King was like the Devil. He was tried at Shrewsbury before my Lord Newport, Mr. Sergeant Turner, and others, May 28, 1662. It was also charged upon him, that he had said, *There was more Sin committed now in England in a Month, than was heretofore in seven Years;* and *that there had been more and better preaching in* England *for twenty years past, than was ever since the Apostles' Days.* He had Counsel assigned him, who pleaded that the Time limited by the Statute in which he was indicted, was expired. The Court yielded that it was so, allowing 28 days to a month; but they would understand it of 30 days to a month; so he was found GUILTY, and fined 200*l.* and ordered to be imprisoned till it should be paid.

Mr. *H. Rogers*, a worthy faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, turned out for Nonconformity, from Newtown in Montgomeryshire, was buried at Welshpool, Mar. 17, 1680. He was looked upon as a Congregationalist; but his declared judgment was, "That Ministers ought to be ordained by Ministers, and to give themselves wholly to that work; that none but Ministers have authority to preach and govern in a constituted Church; that Christ's Ministers are his Ministers in all places; and that where the Word of Christ is preached, and his Sacraments administered, there is a true Church." He was a man of excellent converse, and whose peculiar felicity lay in pleasant and edifying discourse.

July 2d and 3d, 1680, these two days brought tidings of the death of Mr. *Haines*, some time Minister of Wem in Shropshire, and since at New-Chapel in Westminster; and of Mr. *R. Edwards*, Minister at Oswestry; both worthy Conformists, pious, peaceable, and good Men, whom I hope, through Grace, to meet shortly in Heaven. The Lord raise up others in their room to be, and do, better.

Mr. *R. Bosier*, my dear friend and kinsman, having just completed the 23d year of his age, died of a fever, Sept. 13, 1680, at Mr. Doelittle's house in Islington, whither he was gone but a few weeks before for improvement in learning; being formerly a Commoner of Edmund-Hall in Oxford; and having since spent some years in my family, and designed himself for the service of Christ in the work of the Ministry. He was a young man of good abilities, great industry, and exemplary seriousness and piety, and likely to be an eminent instrument of good in his day. His friends and relations had promised themselves much comfort in him, but we know who *performeth the thing that is appointed for us*, and *giveth not account of any of his matters.*

Mr. *J. Malden*, my dear and worthy friend, turned out from Newport in Shropshire, for Nonconformity, died at Alkinton near Whitchurch, May 23, 1681; a man of great learning, an excellent *Hebrician*, an exemplary christian, and a solid preacher; as he lived, so he died, very low in his own eyes; esteeming himself good for nothing, though really good for every thing, which was manifestly a prejudice, both to his comfort and to his usefulness. He said, he was far from repenting being a sufferer against Conformity. The relics of so much learning, piety, and humility, I have not seen, this great while, laid in a grave: but, blessed be God, that we had such a one so long.

Dr. *J. Maddocks*, a beloved physician, our very dear friend and kinsman, died of a fever at Whitchurch, in the midst of his days, July 27th, 1682, a very pious man, and especially eminent for meekness, an excellent scholar, and particularly learned in the mathematics. He lived much desired, and died much lamented.

Mr. *T. Bridge*, who had been Rector of the higher Rectory of Malpas about 57 years, being aged about 82 years, was buried at Malpas, Oct. 7, 1682. In his last sickness, which was long, he had appointed Mr. Green, one of the curates there, to preach his funeral sermon, (on 1 Tim. 1. 16. *Howbeit, for this Cause I obtained Mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long Suffering,*) and to say nothing in his commendation, but to give a large account of his repentance upon his death-bed, &c. He was a taking popular preacher, preaching often and almost to the last. When old, he could read the smallest print without spectacles.

Mr. *W. Cook*, an aged, painful, faithful Minister of Jesus Christ in Chester, finished his course with joy, July 4, 1684, in the midst of the cloudy and dark day.* He was eminent for great industry, both in public and private work; great self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world, and a strict adherence to his principles in all the turns of the times. He was first Minister at Wroxal in Warwickshire; there he published two Treatises against the *Anabaptists*. From thence he was, by the advice of the London Ministers, removed to Ashby in Leicestershire, whence he was turned out for refusing the engagement, and afterward settled in

* See his character, *Baxter's Life, Pt. 3. pa.* 98. and in the Preface to Mr. Bold's book, entitled *Man's Great Duty.*

Chester,

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Chester, where he was Minister of Michael's Church, till he was ejected by the *Act of Uniformity*. He was an active man for Sir George Booth, when he made that attempt to bring in the King in 1659, for which he was brought up a prisoner to London, and continued long under confinement in Lambeth-house; had not the times turned, he would have been tried for his life. During the Usurpation, his frequent Prayer was, That *God would pull down all usurped Power, and restore the banished to their right.* After he was silenced by the *Bartholomew Act*, he continued to his death in a pastoral relation to a society of many worthy eminent Christians in Chester; though, during the heat of the Five-mile Act, he was forced to withdraw to Puddington in Wirral, where (as in Chester, till King Charles's Indulgence) he constantly attended on the public ministry, and he himself preached, in the intervals. He would say sometimes to his friends, when he was in that retirement, that he thought "what little peace and quietness there were in this world, God's people enjoyed it in their corners." Soon after he was silenced, he was committed to the common jail of Chester, for preaching in his own house, by the Mayor, at the instigation of the then Bp. Hall. He was very indefatigable in his ministerial labours, in which he never sought the assistance of any other minister; though, while he had liberty, he constantly kept a public fast in his congregation every month, as he did also a private fast in his own closet and family every week. He usually set apart one afternoon every week, to visit the families of *his* congregation, and to catechize their children and servants, and discourse with them personally about their souls; his visits were short and edifying, (he managed them as one that was a great husband of his time,) and he seldom or never parted without prayer. He was not free to join in the *Common-Prayer*, and bore his testimony against *Prelacy* and the *Ceremonies*, with something of zeal; but his great piety, integrity, mortification, and charity, recommended him to the respect even of many that differed from him. If any asked his advice relative to any thing which might draw *suffering* upon them, he would be very tender, and desire them not to depend upon *his* judgment; but, since it was a matter of suffering, to be fully *persuaded in their own minds.* He was a great scholar, and a hard student to the last, and was far from entangling himself in the affairs of this life, not knowing aught he had, save the bread that he did eat. In worldly matters, he was not very conversable; but in discourse of the things of God, none more free and affable, or more ready to do good. He lived and died a great example of strict and close walking with God, and a heavenly conversation; and his memory is very precious with many. He died in the seventy-third year of his age. When he lay on his death bed, an aged friend of his asking him, if he had not comfort in reflection upon his labours in the Work of God? He presently replied, *I have nothing to boast of.* He was buried in Michael's Church in Chester; and, though for some time before he died, such was the heat of the persecution, that he durst not shew his face in the city, yet many considerable persons were very forward to do him honour at his death.

Mr. *J. Roberts*, of Llvair in Denbighshire, my dear and precious friend, and a faithful minister of Christ, died at Mr. Thomas's house in West-Felton, and was buried there, Sep. 26, 1684. A true *Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed*, for plainness and integrity; a silent sufferer for his Nonconformity, for which he quitted a good living in Denbyshire. He was a learned man, a *Master of Arts* of Oxford: He died with comfort in his Nonconformity, and with confidence of a return of mercy in God's due time. The summer before he died, he had been at Oxford, Cambridge, and London, where he heard and saw that which much confirmed him in his dissent.

Mr. *Zec. Cawdrey*, Minister of Bartomley in Cheshire, a learned and godly divine, was buried Dec. 24, 1684, a Conformist, and formerly a great sufferer for the King; but, in his latter times, much maligned and reproached by some people for his moderation towards Dissenters, for his book of *Preparation for Martyrdom*, and for his zeal in keeping up the *Monthly Lectures* at Nantwich and Tarvin. But he is gone to the world of peace, and love, and everlasting praises.

Mr. *Tit. Thomas*, Minister of the Independent Congregation at Salop, was buried at Felton, Dec. 10, 1686. He was a worthy good man, and not so strait-laced as some others. We were six Nonconformist Ministers there at the funeral, and the seventh dead in the midst of us, saying to us, *Therefore be ye also ready.*

Mr. *J. Cartwright*, my worthy friend and brother, a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, was buried at Audlem in Cheshire, Feb. 17, 1687, formerly minister of West-Kerby in Wirral, afterwards chaplain to the pious Lady Wilbraham at Woodhey.

Mr. *E. Gregg*, of Chester, a worthy gentleman, and my dear friend, died July 9, 1689, of a fever, in the midst of his days. He was one that feared God above many, of a meek and quiet spirit, and eminently active and useful in his generation. The Lord is pulling our earthen props from under us, that we might lean upon, and trust in, himself alone, and might learn to *cease from Man.*

Mr. *D. Benyon* of Ash, my dear friend and kinsman, died June 25, 1690, a very serious, pious, gentleman, and an *Israelite indeed*; a true lover of, and a ready benefactor to all good men, especially good ministers. He told me a little before he died, that God had made use of me (though most unworthy) as an instrument of his conversion; for which I bless his Holy Name. He had a long and lingering sickness, which he bore with great patience.

Mrs. *Crew* of Utkington in Cheshire, an aged servant of the Lord, was buried July 8, 1690. She kept her integrity, and abounded in works of piety and charity, to the last, and finished well; to God be praise.

Mrs. *Hunt* of Shrewsbury, the relict of Col. Hunt, another rare pattern of zealous piety, abounding charity, and eminent usefulness in her place, finished her course Oct. 23, 1690, after two days sickness.

The reverend, and learned, and holy, Mr. *Rich. Baxter*, died at London, Dec. 8, 1691, aged seventy-six, and

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and one month; as much vilified by some, and magnified by others, as most men that ever were; but it is a small thing to be judged of man's day. He was buried at Christ-Church, London, with great honour.

Mr. *J. Wood*, my good friend, died Sep. 19, 1692, at Mitton in Shropshire, aged about seventy: He was some time *Fellow* of Magdalen-College in Cambridge, whence he was ejected for Nonconformity; a learned man, but wanted the faculty of communicating; one that feared God, and walked in his integrity to the last; had no certain dwelling-place on earth, but I trust has one in Heaven. *Hic tandem requiescit—Here he rests at length.*

Mr. *R. Steel*, my old and dear friend, and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, died at London, Nov. 16, 1692, in the sixty-fourth year of his age. A man that had been greatly useful in his generation, both in the country and at London.

Mr. *T. Gilbert*, died at Oxford, July 15, 1694, formerly Minister of Edgmond in Shropshire, aged eighty-three, a learned good man.

Luke Lloyd, Esq. of the Bryn in Hanmer parish, my aged worthy friend, finished his course with joy, Mar. 31, 1695, being Lord's-Day. He was in the 87th year of his age, and had been married almost sixty-nine years to his pious wife, (of the same age,) who still survives him. He was the glory of our little congregation, the top-branch in all respects of our small vine, and my friend indeed.

[When he made his will, under the subscription of his name, he wrote, Job. 19. 25, 26, 27. On which text of scripture, *(I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c.) Mr. Henry, at the request of some of his relations, preached a sermon at the licensed house near Hanmer, some time after his funeral; in which sermon, he bore a very honourable testimony to that worthy gentleman, who (as he says) went to Heaven without a blot, held fast his integrity, and was lively and zealous in the christian profession to the end of his days. He was very exemplary for his love to the ordinances of God, and his delight in attending on them, his living upon Christ for strength and righteousness, his great humility, and condescending obliging carriage in all his converse. He was a man of great courage and resolution; and yet, in prayer, tender and self-abasing to admiration, often melting into tears at the confession of sin; and his charity and moderation were known unto all men.

He lived and died a pattern of piety and primitive christianity, and still *brought forth fruit in old age*; his vigour, both of body and mind, being wonderfully preserved to the last; and by the Grace of God he finished well, and his sun set under no cloud. Such good men are intended to be to us, as the star that led the wise men to Christ; and as far as they do so, we are to follow them. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of* THAT *man is peace.*

Mr. *S. Taylor*, an aged Minister of Jesus Christ, and my true friend and fellow-labourer, died at Wem, June 26, 1695. He was turned out from Edstaston chapel near Wem, by the *Act of Uniformity;* choosing rather to beg his bread, than to wrong his conscience. He continued in Wem ever since, and preached there as his strength and liberty would permit. He had his house burnt in the dreadful fire that was there in 1676, and had a child born that very night. He was a man of a very tender spirit, humble and low in his own eyes, of approved integrity, and finished well. [Mr. Henry preached his funeral sermon at Wem, on 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this Treasure in earthern Vessels.*]

Sep. 21, 1695, I heard of the death of two holy and aged *Bartholomew-Witnesses*, Mr. Mayo of London, and Mr. Newcome of Manchester, Ps. 12. 1

Mr. *E. Laurence* of London, my dear and worthy friend, and a faithful minister and witness of the Lord Jesus, died Nov.—, 1695, about the 70th year of his age; born at Moston in Shropshire, of Magdalen-College, in Cambridge, turned out from Baschurch in Shropshire, by the *Act of Uniformity*, in 1662; he was driven from Whitchurch by the violent persecution of the *Conventicle Act*, in 1670, when he removed to London, and there spent the rest of his days.

He had many children, but great affliction in some of them, which gave occasion to his book entitled, *Parents' Groans over their wicked Children.* [It is a very high but just character, which Mr. Vincent has given of him in his sermon at his funeral; of which let me take leave to add some few instances that occur to us, which may be instructive, beside those which we have already mentioned occasionally.] At his meals, he would often speak of "using God's creatures as his Witnesses that he is good;" and we cannot conceive "how much good our God does *every* moment." An expression of his great regard to justice, was that common caution he gave his children, "Tremble to borrow Twopence;" and of his meekness and tenderness this, "Make no Man angry nor sad." He often said, "I adore the *Wisdom* of God that has not seen meet to trust me with Riches." When he saw little children playing in the streets, he would often lift up his heart in an ejaculatory prayer to God for them, calling them "the Seed of the next Generation." When his friend chose to ride the back-way into the town, he pleasantly checked him, telling him, that his heart had been often refreshed when he hath looked out of the window, and "seen a good man go along the Streets." He used to say that Cromwell did more real prejudice to religion by his hypocrisy, than King *Charles* II. did, who never pretended to it. As also, that "he feared the Sins of the Land more than the French."

A friend of his in the country, writing to him not long before he died, desired his thoughts concerning the differences among the *London*-Dissenters; to which he returned this answer: "I can say little concerning our Divisions; which, when some men's judgments and tempers are healed, will be healed. But, when will that be? They that have most Holiness, are most peaceable, and have most comfort."

Mr.

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Mr. PHILIP HENRY'S *Monument, in Whitchurch Church is of Marble, with this Inscription:*

M. S.

PHILIPUS HENRY,

DE BROAD-OAK, IN COMITATU FLINT, A. M.
SACRI MINISTER EVANGELII; PASTOR OLIM WORTHENBURIENSIS;
IN AULA REGIA NATUS PIIS & HONESTIS PARENTIBUS;
SCHOLÆ WESTMONASTERIENSIS, INDEQ; ÆDIS CHRISTI OXON.
ALUMNUS REGIUS:
VIR PRISCA PIETATE & VERE CHRISTIANA,
JUDICIO SUBACTO & LIMATO,
MEMORIA PRÆSTANTI, MAGNO & FŒCUNDO INGENIO,
ERUDITIONE PERPOLITA, SUMMO ANIMI CANDORE, MORUM VENUSTATE
IMPRIMIS SPECTABILIS, & IN EXEMPLUM NATUS:
CUI SACRA SEMPER SUA FIDES ALIORUMQUE FAMA:
DIVINI NUMINIS CULTOR ASSIDUUS;
DIVINI VERBI INTERPRES EXQUISITISSIMUS
ALIORUM AFFECTUS MOVERE NON MINUS POLLENS,
QUAM SUIS MODERARI:
CONSCIONANDO PARITER AC VIVENDO PALAM EXHIBENS
CHRISTI LEGEM & EXEMPLAR CHRISTUM:
PRUDENS PERITUSQUE RERUM; LENIS, PACIFICUS, HOSPITALIS,
AD PIETATIS OMNIA CHARITATISQUE OFFICIA USQUE PARATUS;
SUIS JUCUNDUS; OMNIBUS HUMANUS;
CONTINUIS EVANGELII LABORIBUS SUCCUMBENS CORPUS,
NEC TANTÆ JAM PAR AMPLIUS ANIMÆ,
IN DORMITORIUM HIC JUXTA POSITUM DEMISIT,
JUN. 24°. ANNO DOM. MDCXCVI. ÆTATIS LXV.
Viro opt. multúmque desiderato mœrens posuit Gener ejus J. T. M. D.

Sacred to the Memory of

PHILIP HENRY,

OF BROAD-OAK, IN THE COUNTY OF FLINT, A. M.
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, AND PASTOR OF WORTHENBURY:
BORN IN THE PALACE OF WHITEHALL, OF PIOUS AND RESPECTABLE PARENTS;
ON THE KING'S FOUNDATION, A SCHOLAR AT WESTMINSTER, AND AFTERWARDS
AT CHRIST-CHURCH COLLEGE, OXON.
A MAN OF PRIMITIVE AND TRULY CHRISTIAN PIETY;
OF CORRECT AND REFINED JUDGMENT;
OF SUPERIOR POWERS OF MEMORY, OF EXTENSIVE AND FERTILE GENIUS.
HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN LITERATURE, JOINED TO PERFECT CANDOR
AND AMIABLE MANNERS,
RENDERED HIM AN OBJECT OF ESTEEM AND IMITATION.
HE CHERISHED A FIDELITY INVIOLABLE, AND EVER HELD SACRED
THE REPUTATION OF OTHERS.
CONSTANT IN ADORING THE GREAT CREATOR,
SUCCESSFUL IN INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURES,
HE MOVED THE AFFECTIONS OF OTHERS NOT LESS COMPLETELY
THAN HE REGULATED HIS OWN;
IN HIS SERMONS, AND LIFE, EQUALLY PUBLISHING
THE LAW AND EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.
HE WAS EXPERIENCED AND SKILFUL IN HIS NECESSARY TEMPORAL AFFAIRS;
MILD; PEACEFUL; HOSPITABLE;
EVER READY TO ALL OFFICES OF PIETY AND CHARITY;
ENDEARED TO HIS FRIENDS; BENEVOLENT TO MANKIND.
HIS BODY, SINKING UNDER HIS INCESSANT LABORS IN THE GOSPEL,
AND NO LONGER EQUAL TO SO LARGE A SOUL,
WAS SEPARATED FROM IT, JUNE 24TH, 1696, IN THE 65TH YEAR OF HIS AGE,
AND IS BURIED IN AN ADJOINING SEPULCHRE.

This Memorial, of a Man highly venerated and deeply regretted, was erected by his inconsolable Son-in-Law, JOHN TILSTON, M. D.

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A

SERMON

PREACHED AT BROAD-OAK,

JUNE 4, 1707,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF MRS. KATHARINE HENRY,

RELICT OF THE

Rev. Mr. PHILIP HENRY,

Who fell asleep in the LORD, May 25, 1707, in the 79th Year of her Age.

By her Son, the Reverend MATTHEW HENRY.

Prov. 31. 28.

Her Children arise up, and call her Blessed.

THIS is a part of the just debt owing to the *Virtuous Woman*, that answers to the characters laid down in the foregoing verses; and part of the reward promised and secured to her by him, who, in both worlds, is, and will be, *the Rewarder of them that diligently seek and serve him.*

It is enough indeed, to make virtuous persons truly and eternally happy, that they are *Blessed of God;* that the Lord Jesus is *raised up* in his Gospel to *bless them,* will *arise up,* at the Great Day, to *call them Blessed; Come, ye Blessed of my Father;* of him they are sure to be Blessed. *He that sows Righteousness, has that sure Reward;* and *those whom he Blesseth, they are Blessed indeed;* his pronouncing them Happy, makes them so. This is enough to engage us all to, and encourage us all in, the study and practice of virtue and piety, that the *Praise* of it, whether it be *of Men,* or no, is *of God.* If men should be unrighteous, yet God will not, to *forget the work and labour of Love;* though men should put slights, God will put honours, upon those that *fear his Name.*

Yet *ex abundanti—over and above,* this is *thrown in* as the reward of virtue, that among *Men* also, ordinarily, it has its praise; all that are wise and good, are, of course, of God's mind, and will say as he says, and praise those whom he praises; and even in the consciences of others too, it is many times powerfully made manifest. [a] *If there be any Virtue,* (says the Apostle,) *if there be any Praise,* which intimates that *Virtue* is a *Praise,* not only praise-worthy, and the real praise of those who wear that crown, but is attended with the praises of others, who praise it, and praise God for it. What is Heaven, but *Holiness in Honour;* Grace crowned with glory; shining in the perfection of lustre to the blessed inhabitants of the upper world? And such praise as a dark and weak capacity is able to give in this distant and imperfect state, is made likewise to attend virtue, and is one of the present recompenses of obedience in obedience. *In keeping of them there is this great Reward.*

It follows here, (*v.* 30.) *A Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised;* which is, 1. A *promise* to those who are virtuous, that they shall have not only the *comfort of it* in their own bosoms, living and dying, but the *credit, of it* also among their relations, friends, and neighbours of whom they shall be had in honour, both present and absent. 2. It is a *precept* to those that are about them, that they give them the praise of it. That of Solomon the Jews read as a precept, (Prov. 10. 7.) *Let the Memory of the Just be Blessed;* and therefore, when they make mention of any eminent saint, they add, *Sit Memoria ejus Benedicta—Let his Memory be Blessed.* We call the burying of our dead friends, the *last office of our Love to them;* but it is *not so,* there is a *further* office of Love owing to them, a debt to their Memories, which we must always be *paying,* and must not, while we live, think ourselves discharged from.

Though we must not make the *praise of men* our chief end, (far be it from us to do so,) for if we seek honour from men, we implicitly slight that which comes from God, as not sufficient to reward our services, and balance our losses, yet, in order, and in subordination to the glory of God, we must have an eye to our reputation with men; *Let your light so shine before men,* in a good conversation, which is both pleasing and guiding as the light, *that they may* not only hear your good words, but *see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,* from whom proceeds every grace, and *every good and perfect gift,* [b] and who therefore is *the Father of* all those *lights.* Not that they may see your good works and glorify you, (you must expect to be abased and vilified, and not seek

[a] Phil. 4. 8.

[b] Ja. 1. 17.

your

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your own glory,) but *see your good works, and glorify your Father;* and that from him all your glory may result, and be reflected.

We are to value things as they are rated in God's books; and there we are told that a *good name* is better, not only than *precious ointment,*[a] but than *great riches;*[b] not only than all the pleasures, but than all the profits of this world. A *good name* is a name for good things, with God and good people; and this is *therefore* to be valued, desired, and pursued, because it is an honour to religion, gives occasion for the thanksgivings of many to God, it is an advantage to us in serving God and our generation, and, when we are gone, will be an encouragement to those that shall come after us, to keep close to the ways of God and godliness. Therefore, *whatsoever things are honest and lovely, amiable and of good report,* let us *think of those things,* and abound in them.

The *praise* which particularly attends the virtuous woman, is here described to come, among others, from her own children, *Her children shall rise up and call her Blessed.* This virtuous woman then is not a recluse, one shut up, and cut off from the business of this life, and the affairs of a family, under pretence of devotion, and separation to God; the church of Rome make such only their religious, (as they call them,) and celebrate *their* sanctity, who abandon the relations they have, and abjure those they might have, as if none besides entered into religion, and professed it. But the Scripture-Canon gives other measures by which to judge of religion, and other rules by which to steer in it, than their canons do; [c]*I will* (says the Apostle) *that they marry, bring up children, guide the house, and give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully,* as *they* do, who, under pretence of overcoming the world, *run away from it.* They who in these things faithfully serve God and their generation, not only *give no occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully* of them, but *give occasion* to all to speak honourably of them, and, among the rest, *their children shall rise up and call them blessed.*

1. It is here implied, that it is a great comfort to those who are good themselves, to see *their children rising up,* risen up. Many good people are taken away, and see their children but just come into the world, putting forth like flowers, when they that should have nursed them up, are removed from them, leave them in the cradle, or leave them (as we say) to the wide world. This occasions them some sad thoughts upon their death-beds; and, if other difficulties be got over, yet this makes them loath to die. But in that case, it is a comfort that the fatherless, motherless, children may be, must be, left with one who will preserve them, and who has many a time remarkably owned and blessed the orphans, and proved himself the best of guardians; [d]*he is the helper of the fatherless* that *commit themselves to him.*

But if God prolong the days of his people in the land he has given them, so that they live to see their children grown up, and applying themselves to the service of God in their generation, likely to honour God in their day, as the parents did in theirs; it is very comfortable, and makes it easier to them, when they are called, to bid farewell to this world, and very comfortable to think that their children will be praising God on earth, when they are praising him in heaven. You that are parents, who see your children risen up, and bidding fair for usefulness on this earth, and happiness in a better place, bless God for it; look upon it as one of the comforts of the lengthening out of your life, that as you yourselves, through grace, grow riper for heaven, so you live to see your children, by the influence of the same grace, setting their faces thitherward. This may encourage you to say, *Now let thy servant depart in peace.*

When godly parents are removed by death, and the *place* they adorned and filled up, *must know them no more,* it is a very happy thing, and bodes well to the land, to the age, to the next age, if their children *rise up* in their room, a generation of humble, holy, serious, christians, followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises. It is very threatening, and a bad omen to the public, when (as Moses says of the two tribes and a half, Num. 32. 14.) a generation of sinful men, riseth up in the room of their sinful parents, to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and *augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord.* But on the contrary, it is comfortable to those who are concerned for the honour of Christ, and the prosperity of his church, to see a generation of godly people rising up in the room of their godly predecessors, to bear up the name of Christ in his truths, ordinances, and laws, and to be to him for a name, and a praise, and a glory, *a seed to serve him,* and the interests of his kingdom among men, which shall be *accounted unto him for a generation;* when it may be said, as it is of the church, Ps. 45. 16.) *Instead of the fathers shall be the children.* It is for the honour of God's promises concerning the seed of the upright, and of his covenant with them, it is for the credit of good education, and an answer to many prayers, when the children of religious families are religious, when the entail is preserved, and piety becomes an *heir born to a house;* but if it should be interrupted, and cut off, in particular families, we may with comfort assure ourselves, that the sacred line shall be as long as the utmost line of time. Children shall rise up to bless the Lord, if not *our* children: though there be a degeneracy in some families, we hope there shall be an improvement in others to balance it; so that in every age the Son of David shall not want those that will be his witnesses; though not always alike numerous, or alike conspicuous, yet *one generation shall certainly praise his Works to another*; *children* shall be created (rather than fail) to *praise the Lord;* Children raised up out of stones to Abraham, even out of the stones of Jerusalem to cry *Hosanna.* The promise is sure, it is inviolable, it is what we may depend upon, that the name of Christ shall endure for ever, (whether in our families or no, we cannot tell, but somewhere it shall,) and his throne as the days of heaven; so that as long as the world stands, there shall be a people in it,

[a] Ecc. 7. 1. [b] Pro. 22. 1. [c] 1 Tim. 5. 14. [d] Ps. 10. 14.

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in one place or other, that shall fear God, and work righteousness, and be accepted of him. Let God alone to secure his own interest, do his own work, and fulfil his own counsels; when the mystical body is completed, then cometh the end.

Her children shall rise up. We will suppose the virtuous woman described here to have finished her course, and then her children rise up, that is, stir up themselves with so much the more vigour and zeal to pursue the same course, and do so much the more and better service to God and their generation. *Note.* The *dying* of old christians should be the *quickening* of young ones. When our godly parents are removed, and an end put to their usefulness, it is time for us to *rise up*, to put forth ourselves with so much the more liveliness and resolution in serving Christ, and striving against sin, that we may do something toward making up the breach and repairing the loss. When good people are removed, it is time for those that are left behind, to stir up themselves, and contrive what they shall do more for God, that those that are gone, may be the less missed; to apply themselves with double diligence to all the services of religion, that though there be fewer hands, there may not be less work done. [a] *Moses, my servant, is dead;* (says God,) *now therefore,* Joshua, *arise:* such and such good christians are dead, that prayed much, and did much good; now therefore let us arise, that are left behind, and take so much the more care and pains in religion, that though there be fewer praying, teaching, benevolent, people, yet there may be no less praying, no less teaching and exhorting one another, and no less good done. Holy Job, speaking of his own afflictions, and approaching death, says, [b] *Upright men shall be astonished at this,* astonished to see such a useful man as Job removed in the midst of his usefulness; and many such astonishing breaches have been made upon us; astonished to see those soon removed, that could be ill-spared. Sometimes the sun goes down at noon; no marvel if at that we stand astonished, and know not what to make of such dispensations: the flowers are plucked up, while the weeds are left to grow. But shall we then succumb, and sit still in the astonishment? Shall we lie down, and despair of keeping up the work of God? By no means; the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite, and resolve to make his part good with him; shall neither desert the cause, nor despair of success, but exert himself so much the more for the glory of God, that religion's righteous cause may not sink for want of hands to bear it up.

2. The *children* of the virtuous woman that *rise up,* shall *call her blessed.* It is her honour that she shall be praised by them, by them that were best acquainted with her, and most indebted to her. It is their duty to praise her in return for all the care she has taken of them, the pains she has taken with them, and the pleasure she has taken in them. *Give her of the fruit of her hands,* (such the honours paid her by her children are,) *and let her own Works,* those she bare, those she nursed, those she taught, *praise her in the Gates.*

[a] Jos. 1. 2. [b] Job. 17. 8.

That this place has lately parted with a virtuous woman, I believe you will all own; one that was here a pious, prudent, generous, charitable, housekeeper about threescore years; one that was born here, and that here spent almost all her days, and here ended them in a good old age, with a great deal of holy security, and serenity of mind; one, of whom it might be said, as it was of Ruth, [c] *All the city of my people doth know that she was a virtuous Woman.* You have been told it from this place already, and have been stirred up (God grant the excitement may not be in vain) to follow her and others, who are gone before us to the better country, Heb. 6. 12.

But *we must also bear record,* [d] and we must do it with the more assurance, because *you know that our record is true;* nor can we be suspected of partiality herein, but might rather be charged with injustice and ingratitude, should we neglect to pay this debt. You then will witness for us in this matter, that now the virtuous Woman is gone to receive the Reward of her Virtue in a better State, her Children, those of them that are left behind, rise up and *call her Blessed,* while those of them that are gone before, are sharers with her in her blessedness. It is a comfort to us, and we reckon it a great instance of the distinguished mercy and favour of our God, that we are the children of those whom we have reason to call *blessed.* The greatest honour that some children can do to their parents, is, only like Shem and Japhet, to conceal their shame, and cast a mantle over their follies; but, blessed be God, we need not that. Nay, we may go further than the daughters of Zelophehad did in the account they gave of *their* father, of whom they could say, that he had not been any of the plagues of his generation; (Num. 27. 3.) we can say more than that of our parents, that they were not only blessings to their family, but blessings to the country, blessings to the age in which they lived; and for this, their children shall rise up and *call them blessed.*

Doct. The Children of virtuous and godly parents ought to rise up when they are gone, and call them blessed.

Here I shall endeavour to shew,

I. What is the character of those parents to whom this honour is due from their children.

II. What is the duty of the children, that they may in a right manner discharge this debt to the memory of their good parents.

I. What must the parents be, that their children, when they are gone, may *call them blessed?* If their parents be atheistical and profane, drunkards and unclean, swearers, sabbath-breakers, and scoffers at religion, or if they be mere carnal worldlings, if covetous and contentious, deceitful and oppressive, the children have no reason to *call them blessed.* If the *way* of the parents be *their folly,* let not their *posterity approve their sayings,* nor like a *vain conversation* on account of its being [e] *received by tradition from their fathers.* They who train up their children in ungodliness and immorality, in prejudices against religion, and enmity to the serious

[c] Ruth 3. 11. [d] 3 Joh. 12. [e] Ps. 49. 13.

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serious professors of it, and so help to ruin them, may see the day, when their children will rise up in judgment against them, and call them *cursed*. But such black instances make our's shine the brighter.

Her children! Whose? Why, the children of the *virtuous woman* here described; *her husband praiseth her*, for his heart safely trusts in her, and that gives her no small commendation; yet that is not all, he takes all occasions to speak well of her. The children do the same, and both concur in the matter of the praise. Now, let us briefly inquire after some of the characters of those whose children must *rise up and call them blessed;* and this inquiry I intend, not only for a just encomium of her that is gone, and indeed of both our parents, but for instruction to myself, and others of you that are parents. Let us learn so to qualify ourselves, by the grace of God, and so to conduct ourselves, that our children may *rise up and call us blessed.* As children should be afraid of losing their parents' good wishes, so parents should be afraid of doing any thing justly to lose their children's good word and good will.

Now for the drawing of the character of those whose children shall call them *blessed*, I shall look but little further than the two verses before the text, and the two verses after it; and there we shall find that such as are *wise*, and such as are *kind;* such as are *industrious*, and such as are *charitable;* such as are *virtuous*, and such as are truly *pious* and *religious*, are the parents whose children shall *rise up and call them blessed.* Such, by the grace of God our parents were; may the same grace make us such.

1. Those that are *truly wise*, deserve praise. It is part of the character of the virtuous woman here, that she *opens her mouth with wisdom;* (v. 26.) she is not doomed, nor has she doomed herself, to perpetual silence; but what she does say, wisdom has the dictating of it, and it turns to her praise. Wisdom not only *makes the face to shine* for the present, but leaves a good report to succeeding generations, like the after beams of the sun when he is set, surrounded with which he lies down in honour.

If we be wise, we shall not only be wise for ourselves, but wise also for our children, and for their good, especially if we *open our mouth with wisdom*, and so instil into their minds what they will afterward have use for; if we know when to speak, and what, and how; if we speak calmly and considerately; if our heart study to answer; if our lips bring forth wisdom out of a good treasure of it in the heart; if we put away all that foolish talking which corrupts good manners, and debauches the minds, especially of young people, and *keep our mouth as with a bridle* at all times, particularly when our children are before us; they will have reason to *call us blessed*, for setting them an example of the good government of the tongue. Children learn to speak from their parents and nurses; let them from us learn to speak well, and not to mix the *language of Ashdod* with the *Jews' language*. We have the bending of the bough when it is yet young and tender; let us be wise in managing it, that we may set it right. We know how long a word from a parent to a child, that is just coming to years of understanding, will be remembered; I know it by experience; what the vessel is then seasoned with, it will retain the savour of; let us then open our mouths with wisdom, that our lips, if they do not feed many, yet, at least, may feed our own children, *with wisdom and understanding.*

Some of you will say, that you have now lost (I am sure I have lost) a very discreet and prudent counseller, that not only ordered her own affairs with wisdom, but knew very well how to advise others, and was many a time *Eyes to the blind;* one that was very well versed in Solomon's Proverbs, and the rules of wisdom, which may be fetched thence for the conduct of human life, and knew how to apply them, and to *use knowledge aright.* Let us, in like manner, stock ourselves with the principles of wisdom, govern ourselves by the rules of wisdom, submit ourselves to the laws of wisdom, and be ready, on all occasions, to speak pertinently, and to the purpose; that, *opening our mouths with wisdom*, our children may receive it when they are young, and shew it forth when they are old, and then they will have reason to rise up and *call us blessed.*

2. Those that are *truly kind* deserve this honour. I say *truly kind;* for many are very *fond*, as David of Adonijah, but are therein really *unkind;* those are truly kind, that are wisely so, that are tender of their children's comfort, but not indulgent to their children's follies. The character of the virtuous woman as described here is, that *in her tongue is the law of kindness*, not the humour of kindness, or the pang of it, but *the law* of it, such kindness as receives law from wisdom, and gives law to the whole conversation. Those parents that have this law in their tongues, in their hearts, and are always under the command and regulation of it, gain their children's love, and are entitled to their good word; those parents that make conscience of that command, which we have more than once among the laws of Christ, *Parents, provoke not your children to wrath*, by haughtiness and moroseness, and keeping them at an unreasonable distance, by constant chiding, and severe correction, *lest they be discouraged;* but those that are gentle toward them, as it becomes parents toward those that are parts of themselves, and that derive their follies from them; that reprove with the meekness of wisdom, restrain with reason and a due consideration of all circumstances, counsel and admonish with compassion and affection, and rule with a steady gentle hand; such parents as these, the children *will rise up and call blessed.*

And for this, (I am sure,) we have reason to *call our parents blessed;* never were any more under the government of the *law of kindness*, kindness, particularly to their Children, than they were. To be kindly affectioned is of *good report with all men*, recommends religion as that which softens and sweetens men's tempers, fits them for all relations, and makes them the joy of all the societies they are members of; by this, among other things, they *obtained a good report.*

Would we then be called *blessed?* Let us study the art of obliging, and not only be compassionate, but be courteous; compassionate to the miserable, courteous

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to all; let us be governed at all times by that wisdom from above, which is *gentle and easy to be entreated;* let our passions be always under the check and conduct of religion and right reason; let all bitterness, and frowardness, and peevishness be put far away from us, and every thing that is morose and supercilious; let us not be like Nabal, whose character it was, that he was such a son of Belial, that a man could not speak to him; they that are so, trouble their own houses: but let us study how to put a due respect upon all, and particularly to convince our children that we love them, and seek their good; let the law of love rule in our hearts, and the law of kindness in our tongues, and let us study to make ourselves, and all about us, easy, always easy, be pleasing, be pleased; then shall our children *rise up and call us blessed.*

3. Those that are *industrious* and *careful,* deserve this honour. This is the character of the virtuous woman here, (v. 27.) That she *looketh well to the ways of her household;* and most of the characters given of her in the verses before, fall under this head, where she is commended for her diligence and consideration, in the management of her house and the affairs of it, which is *her particular calling,* and that in which she is to *abide with God.* It is not made her praise, that she spends her time in reading and contemplation; no, nor that she spends all her time in devotion neither, though she has her stated times for that: but that she *looks well to the ways of her household,* appointing them their *portion of meat,* and work too, *in due season;* has her eye upon all under her charge, to see that they both *do,* and *have* what is right. It is required from wives, that they *guide the house;* and they have need of wisdom to do it well. That is their place, their post. *Man goes forth to his work and to his labour,* but the woman stays at home. *Where is Sarah thy wife? Behold, in the tent;* where should she be else? The virtuous woman is a good house-keeper; one, that in managing the affairs of the house, prudently avoids both the extremes of undue *sparing,* and undue *spending;* that does not, on the one hand, over-work her household, and yet, on the other hand, suffers them not to mispend their time, and neglect their business; that orders every thing to its proper time and place, and yet is not over nice, or troublesomely curious; that is neither anxiously careful with that fear which has torment and amazement, nor yet careless and thoughtless of the morrow. This is the wise woman that [a] *builds her house,* while the foolish, by neglecting it, does, in effect, *pull it down with her hands,* and let it go to wreck and ruin. This is she that knows and observes a due proportion between *laying up* for her children, and *laying out* upon them, so that neither unduly excludes or intrenches upon the other, but both according to their place. Such a mother in Israel has this place now lost, that provided well for her household, with a great deal of ease and order, and looked well to all the ways of it, and answered all the characters of the virtuous woman here described: if her children, that reap so much benefit by her good example, and the good education she gave them, do not call her *blessed,* let every body call them *ungrateful,* and you can call them no worse.

And let all parents thus merit their children's respects, by consulting the prosperity of their family, and providing for them *food convenient,* both for the present, and for hereafter, so that there may be an equality as far as human prudence, in dependence upon God's providence, can order. If all be *laid out,* and none *laid by,* they must afterward *come down,* and that will be a temptation one way; if all be *laid by,* and none be *laid out,* they will afterward *rise,* and that will be a temptation another way. It is neither the wisdom nor kindness of parents to their children to make it all their care and business either to hoard for them; (we have *seen riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt;*) or, on the other hand, to set them off with advantage to the world, by their making a shew; (that likewise has been of fatal consequence to many;) but to give them an education according to their rank, to do all they can to fit them for business, for the service of God, and their generation, according to the will of God; to give them good instructions, and good examples of humility, industry, beneficence, and honesty; to put up good prayers for them, and with them. This is that care of children, for which we must *rise up and call our parents blessed.*

4. Those that are *charitable,* and *do good in their places,* are worthy of this praise; and this is here made part of the character of the virtuous woman, v. 20. *She stretcheth forth her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.* Her prudence and diligence find out the *poor* and *needy,* the proper objects of her charity; and she leaves not the distribution of her alms with others, (as if she thought it below her,) but with her own hands relieves and succours the necessitous. Her charity is extended to those at a distance, intimated in the *stretching forth of her hand* to them. It also intimates that she does it cheerfully and heartily, with a willing mind, and not grudgingly; first [b] *drawing out her soul* to the hungry, and then *reaching out her hand* to them.

Those who do this, set their children a good example, going before them in good works. They likewise leave them, if not a *great,* yet a *good* inheritance, which will be sweet and sure to them; and though they may leave them so much the less of this world's goods, yet they will leave them so much the more of the blessing of God, which *makes rich, and adds no sorrow.* He that disperses and gives to the poor, not only has a [c] *righteousness which endureth for ever,* but *wealth and riches* also *shall be in his house,* with which his posterity shall be *blessed.* What is so laid out, is *bread cast upon the waters,* which will be *found again after many days;* it is good seed sown in good soil, which will come up again with a great increase; it is put out to the best interest, and upon the best security, for it is *lent to the Lord,* and shall certainly be repaid more than a thousand fold. This is another thing for which we have reason to *rise up and call our parents blessed;* for they were

[a] Pro. 14. 1.

[b] Isa. 58. 10. [c] Ps. 112. 2, 3, 9.

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were *rich in good works*, as you very well know, yet without noise or ostentation. The *loins of the poor blessed them*, and therefore *we* should, in concurrence with the *blessing of him that was ready to perish.*

And let us in like manner recommend ourselves to those we shall leave behind, as Dorcas, who was celebrated for the [a] *alms-deeds which she did*, not which she put others upon doing, or which she purposed hereafter, or which she would do by her will; no, but which she *did* herself out of her own estate, making her own hands her executors. *To do good and to communicate*, let us never *forget*, for *with such sacrifices* both *God* and man are *well pleased.*

5. Those that are *virtuous*, shall have their Children *rise up and call them blessed*, especially those that *excel in virtue*, as it follows here; (v. 29.) *Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.* Those we call *virtuous*, that are sober and temperate, just and righteous, in their conversation; conscientious in all they say and do, in all they design and endeavour; fair and honest in all their dealings; that have no blot cleaving to their hands or to their hearts; that have been exemplary for that integrity *and uprightness*, which become christians, and will preserve them; and that study in every thing to conform to the laws of natural religion, which are not repealed, but confirmed and improved, by our christianity. Devotion toward God, without justice and sobriety, meekness and compassion, toward men, comes far short of that universal righteousness which is requisite to our acceptance with God. Hands lifted up will not reach Heaven, unless they be pure hands, and lifted up without wrath and contention.

Virtue may be taken more strictly for vigour, boldness, and resolution, in that which is good; [b] courage and spirit in doing our duty, in facing difficulties, giving reproofs, bearing reproaches, improving opportunities, and pressing forward toward perfection. The virtuous are those that are lively and cheerful in religion, that *sing in its ways*, and are *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;* and in this sense, *she* was a virtuous woman whom we have now lost.

Now where there is virtue, there is praise; there is that which ought to be praised, that for which the children must rise up and call the parents *blessed*, especially those who excelled in virtue, as our's did. With respect to those who have only made a profession of religion, who have rested in the shows and formalities of devotion, while their lives and conversations have been disagreeable, little reason will either their children or their friends have to *call them blessed*, for the name of God and his doctrine are evil spoken of through them; but with respect to those who beautify their profession by that which is *lovely* and of *good report*, who thereby bring honour to their families, and set them a good example, their children, who shall be blessed for their sakes, must *rise up and call them blessed.*

6. Those that are *pious* and *religious* toward God, are entitled to this honour; (v. 30.) *A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.* Moral Virtue is a blessed thing, but it will not make us blessed without serious godliness. As righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true religion, so religion toward God is an essential branch of universal righteousness. It is the *fear of God* that crowns the character of this virtuous woman, without which, all the rest was of small account. Those that hereby *honour God, he will honour*, and will have us to honour.

Those that keep up a holy awe and reverence of God upon their minds, that set him always before them, and have their eyes ever toward him, that have a regard to his authority over them, and, with an eye to that, submit themselves both to his precepts and to his providence, that make conscience of their duty to him, and are afraid of offending him, that devote themselves to his praise, and make it the business of their lives to glorify him, as the greatest and best of beings, and evidence it in all the instances of a steady, uniform, and undissembled, devotion.

Those that make conscience of prayer in secret, and in their families, make a business of it, and take a pleasure in it; that delight in the holy word of God, and make it their meditation day and night; that converse much with it, and converse with others out of it; that call the sabbath of the Lord *Holy* and *Honourable*, and honour God on that day; that call his Courts amiable, and desire to *dwell in his house*, where they may be *still praising him;* and thus do the work of heaven, while they are here on earth; that live a life of communion with God, conformity to him, and complacency in him; that have such a holy dread of God and of his wrath, as drives them to Christ and his mediation, without which there is no standing before the Just and Holy God; those that in their whole conversation exemplify the fear of God dwelling and ruling in their hearts.

Those that not only by such a good example as this, but by their prudent and pious instructions, *teach* their children also [c] *the fear of the Lord*, train them up in the ways of *Pure Religion*, under the conduct of the principles of Catholic Christianity, not biassed to a party, nor soured with animosity and uncharitable prejudices, and in subjection to that *Kingdom of God* which is *not meat and drink*, but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:* they that do thus, as they are *accepted of God*, so they shall be *approved of men*, and their children in a particular manner have reason to rise up and call them *blessed;* and such, you know, the parents were, whom we are this day calling so.

And let this engage all that are parents to do likewise. Live in the Fear of God, be in that fear every day, and all the day long. Bring up your children in that fear, look upon true devotion to be true wisdom, and do all you can to preserve the entail of it in your families, that your children may be praising God for you on earth, when you are gone to heaven, and you and they may be for ever calling one another *blessed.*

II. What is the duty of children, that they may discharge

[a] Acts 9. 36. [b] Phil. 4. 8. [c] Ps. 34. 11.

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charge this debt, which they owe to the memory of good parents? How must we perform this service to those who have recommended themselves by those characters? I shall open this in six things.

1. We ought always to *maintain a grateful remembrance*, and take all occasions to *make an honourable mention* of our godly parents. We cannot keep them from the grave, but we may keep them from the *land of forgetfulness*; let their memories live with us when they are dead, live while we live, and be transmitted to those we leave behind; let them always be dear and precious to us, and, being dead, let them be like Abel, yet *spoken of*. Some think Laban's [a] Teraphim were the effigies of his ancestors, which therefore he would by no means part with; let the remembrance of them be preserved in our minds, and then we have the best pictures of them, and such as we cannot be robbed of. This is part of the duty required by the fifth commandment, (which is the first commandment with promise,) *Honour thy father and thy mother*; honour their memories when they are gone.

This we ought to do, in gratitude for all their kindness to us, both as parents, and as godly parents; their kindness to our bodies and our souls.

(1.) As *Parents*, they took care of our natural life, and preserved that lamp from being extinguished when it was first lighted, and a little thing would have blown it out. *Why did we not die from the womb, why did we not give up the Ghost when we came out of the belly?* It was because the *Knees prevented us*, and the *Breasts that we should suck*. That tender, that *earnest care*, which the God of Nature put into the hearts of our parents concerning us, when we were in the helpless state of infancy, the pains they took with us when we were unable to do any thing for ourselves, and perhaps froward with those that did any thing about us, are what we can never make a sufficient return for, either to them while they live, or to their memory when they are gone. The great favours God bestowed upon his people [b] Israel, are represented by the compassionate relief given to an infant, which intimates that that is a kindness never to be forgotten.

(2.) As *Godly Parents*; upon this account, much more, we ought to do honour to their names, and their memory should be doubly precious to us; remembering that in the sense in which St Paul writes it to Philemon, we [c] *owe unto them even our souls also*, under God. What should we have been, who were *born like the wild Ass's Colt*, who brought into the world with us so much sin, and folly, and corruption, if we had not had good parents, who took early care, to the utmost of their power, to form us to that which is good? What should we have been, if we had not been catechized, and instructed in the principles of religion, which we sucked in with our milk; if we had not been restrained from sin, and if the springing up of the root of bitterness had not been checked betimes; and if we had not been directed and quickened in the way of our duty, and told plainly, *This is the Way, walk in it?* Notwithstanding all the advantages of our education, it is bad enough with us, and we have reason to complain of our ignorance and mistakes, our defects in our duty, and our proneness to sin. But how much worse would it have been with us, if we had never had those advantages? Perhaps we should never have learned to pray, if our good parents had not taught us when we were young, and trained us up to it; should never have been acquainted with the word of God, if they had not made us acquainted with it, and taken care that from *our childhood we should know the Holy Scriptures*, as Timothy did, who, being so conversant with the Scriptures when he was a child, when he *became a man*, a *man of God*, was by that means thoroughly furnished for every good word and work; and if we by the same means be not so in some measure, it is our own fault, they did their part.

Blessed were they of the Lord, that took pity on us in our folly, and taught us the good knowledge of the Lord, of the Lord Jesus, and led us into an acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and him crucified; shewed us the difference between good and evil, that we might *abhor that which is evil*, and *cleave to that which is good*; reasoned with us many a time about our souls and another world; set before us *life and death*, the *blessing and the curse*; followed us with precept upon precept, and line upon line; dealt with us as *reasonable creatures*, shewing us what a rational thing religion is, and so *drawing us with the cords of a man*; but dealt with us according to the capacities of our childhood, teaching us the things of God as we were able to bear them, with tenderness and a gentle conduct, and so *drawing us with the bonds of love*; this is what we ought always to retain the remembrance of, not only for our own benefit, but for their honour.

Blessed were they of the Lord, who followed the good instructions they gave us, with constant and earnest prayers to God for us night and day. Having presented us to Christ in our Baptism, pursuant thereunto, they often presented us to him in their addresses to the Throne of Grace, and pleaded our Baptism. A good stock of Prayers they laid up for us, which we hope are upon the file in heaven, and that we, and our's after us, shall reap the benefit of them; for it is true of prayer, (as we say of winter,) that it never rots in the skies. Such parents as these ought not to be forgotten, but to be daily remembered and spoken of with respect, who daily remembered us, and whose prayers like Cornelius's, came up before God for a memorial.

2. We ought to *give God thanks for them*, and that is the best way of calling them *blessed*; blessing God for them, and for the benefit we had by them. They were themselves, and were to us, what the free grace of God made them, and no more; and therefore that grace must have all the glory. Whatever is blessed to us, we must bless God for, for he it is that blesses it, and so makes it a blessing; HE is the author and fountain of all that which is worthy to be praised; and therefore in him, as the centre, all the lines of praise must meet. All is *of* him, and therefore all must be *to* him;

[a] Heb. 11. 4. [b] Ezek. 16. [c] Phil. 19.

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him; we are not to pray to God for the dead, but we are to praise God for them.

Let us then who had godly parents, look far back in our thanksgivings, and bless God.

(1.) For *his Grace in them*, which carried them on with comfort, and enabled them to finish their course with joy. Now that we have *seen the end of their conversation*, and with what a holy security and serenity of mind they put off the body, and removed to the world of spirits, we have reason to give glory to him who was the *author and finisher of their faith*, who led them on in their way, and bare them as *upon Eagles' Wings*, till he had brought them safely and comfortably to their journey's end, to that blessed state where they receive the end of their faith and hope, even the salvation of their souls.

We have reason to bless God for her that is now removed, who bade farewell to the world so very cheerfully, saying that she had enough of it, and longed to be with Christ; would not have her sickness called an *affliction*, but a *welcome messenger* to fetch her home; and said, a little before she died, that she hoped she knew in some measure by experience, what it is for a believer to *have Eternal Life abiding in him*, having little doubt of her future happiness: for this, she blessed God, and so should we.

(2.) We must bless God *for our benefit by that Grace*. Though our parents could not give us *Grace*, any more than they could give us *Being*, yet God was pleased to make use of them as instruments in his hand in the beginning, and carrying on, of that good work. God enabled them to teach us, and pray for us; he made them guides to us, and faithful monitors, and made their words to be to us *as goads and nails*. Now [a]*Thanks be to God, who put that earnest care into their hearts* for us, even *to travail in birth again*, till they hoped they saw *Christ formed in us*. Has there been in the hearts of our Parents, Ministers or Friends, an earnest care for the welfare, the eternal welfare of our souls? Blessed be God that *put it into their heart*, and made it such a blessing to us.

David thanked God for sending Abigail to meet him, and with her wisdom to stop him from going on in a sinful way. Surely we have much more reason then to thank God for our parents, who directed us into the good and right way. *Blessed be God that sent them*, and *blessed be their advice*, and *blessed be their memory*.

3. We must *own the goodness of that way of religion* and serious godliness, which they chose, and wherein they walked even to the end, till they finished their course. We *call them blessed*, in calling *that* blessed which they so highly valued, and valued themselves by; in calling Religion's Ways, *Ways of Wisdom*; and those ways of wisdom, *Ways of Pleasantness*. It is of great importance to us, in the government of ourselves, to consider whom we call *blessed*, whom we think well of, as in the best and most desirable condition, whose [b] *Sayings we approve*, and with whom we wish to take our lot: even *Balaam* desired to die with the righteous, and have *his End* with them; but we must think it desirable to *live* with the righteous, and have *our way* with them. The fundamental error of a carnal world, is, that they *call the proud happy, whom God resists*, (Mal. 3. 15.) and *bless the covetous, whom God abhors*, Ps. 10. 4. They think that worldly people, who have abundance of the wealth, and mirth, and gaiety, of this world, are the only happy people. Now it is necessary that this mistake be rectified, as the Psalmist rectifies it, (Ps. 144. 6.) where he owns it to be the sentiment of the most, *Happy are the people that are in such a case*, that live at ease, and grow rich; but pronounces it his sentiment that rather, *Happy are the people whose God is the Lord*. There is then hope of young people, that they will do well, when they call their godly parents *blessed*, and reckon, that though they made no great figure in the world, were not dignified with pompous titles, did not raise estates, nor obtain a name like the *names of the great ones* that are in the earth, yet they were *truly honourable, truly happy*.

(1.) We must reckon that they were *truly honourable*, and value ourselves more upon it that we are a seed of *saints*, than if we were a seed of *nobles*. This will quicken us to pursue honour in the same way in which *they obtained a good report*. Though there were those perhaps of the fools in Israel, that might reproach and despise them, and say all manner of evil against them for Christ's sake; yet we must reckon it was their honour, and honour enough, that they were accepted of God, respected and valued by all wise and good men, and perhaps made manifest also in the consciences of those too that were bad; even the reproach of Christ was their praise, their riches—[c]*greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*. It is an *honour* to be *dishonoured* for Christ, much more to be loved and esteemed for his sake.[d] They that live and die in Christ, live and die in honour. Do we believe this? Let us then but have the same honour our godly parents had, a name for that which is good with those that are good, the honour of doing good in a low and narrow sphere, and we covet not to *make a fair shew in the flesh*.

(2.) We must reckon that they were *truly happy*; happy in the enjoyment of themselves, and of what God had given them in the world; happy in the quiet and repose of their own minds, and happy in the prospects of better things in the better country. We have reason to say, that the ways of God and godliness, in which our good parents walked, were good ways, ways of pleasantness and peace; that the yoke of Christ is easy and gentle, and very sweet. They told us many a time, and abode by it to the last, that they had found the Lord Jesus a good master, and his work good work, even its own wages, and a present great reward of obedience in obedience. Let us set to our seal that this is true, and account that true holiness is true happiness; for in heaven, where there is the *perfection* of happiness, there will be the perfection of holiness; and let us account them happier in the love and favour of God, the comforts of the spirit, the testimony of

[a] 2 Cor. 8. 16. [b] Ps. 49. 13. [c] Heb. 11. 26. [d] Acts 5. 41.

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of a good conscience, and the earnests of eternal life, than if they had had all the delights of the sons and daughters of men, and the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces. And let us put in for the same happiness, by following them, as they followed Christ.

4. We ought to be very *sensible of our loss, when such parents are removed from us.* If we call them *blessed*, we call them *blessings*, and reckon that we were greatly blessed in them while they were continued to us, and therefore that now when they are removed, the hand of the Lord is gone out against us, and he is contending with us; it concerns us therefore to accommodate ourselves to such a providence, to bear the rod and him that has appointed it, to understand the meaning of it, and answer its intention.

(1.) Wherein we have been in the least defective in our duty to our parents or other relations, when they are removed from us, that is a call to us, a loud call, to renew our repentance for it, and to pray for pardon in the blood of Christ. This is a Time to *bring to remembrance*; it is sin that provokes God to take our dear relations from us, that were comforts to us; and therefore, when we mourn for death, we must mourn for sin, for *the wages of* our *sin is* their *death.*

(2.) We ought by it to be reminded of leaving the world too, for *we are not better than our Fathers*; they are gone, and we are going, drawing after them apace. *Thou shalt be gathered to thy people*, (says God to Moses,) *as Aaron thy brother was gathered.* We must leave the world, as our parents left it; let us therefore learn of them to die, and let their removal to the grave help to make it the more familiar to us, and engage us to converse more with it, that we may get more ready for it.

(3.) Now that we have no longer our parents to pray for us, God calls us to pray so much the more for ourselves and for our children. Now that we have no longer them to instruct and advise us, we must meditate more in the Word of God, that best of counsellers, and keep a stricter guard over our own hearts and ways, that thus we may the less feel the loss of them.

5. We ought to *think much of that happy state to which our godly Parents are removed.* We must *call them blessed*, not only for what they *were*, but for what they *are*; think and speak much of the Blessedness of that world into which God has now sent for them from this world of our's. We have a great deal of reason to be confident of this very thing, that now, being absent from the body, they are at home with the Lord. *Call them Blessed* then, Blessed indeed; for they are not only at rest from all their labours, but are *entered into the Joy of their Lord.* In this sense it may be asked, *Your Fathers, where are they?* (Zech. 1. 5.) Your godly parents, ancestors, and friends that are fallen asleep in Christ, *where are they?* And what a comfort is it to think where they are; not lost, not perished, not cast, as they suspected concerning *Elijah, upon some Mountain*, or in *some Valley.* No, though we are much in the dark concerning the particulars of the state of separate souls, yet we are sure, in general, that to them to whom to *live was Christ, to die will be Gain: Where are they?* Why, they are where they are perfectly and perpetually Blessed in the immediate vision and fruition of God within the veil; infinitely more happy where they *are*, than where they *were. Where are they?* Why, they are in the mansions of light and bliss, that are in our Father's house above, in the *New Jerusalem*, in the Paradise of God, where they *hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither doth the Sun light on them, nor any heat.* They are in the best company, employed in the best work, and enjoying a complete satisfaction. *Where are they?* Why they are where there are no complaints, nothing to interrupt their communion with God, or cast a damp upon their spirits. Death has done that for them which ordinances could not do, has perfectly freed them from that body of sin and death, which was here their constant burthen, and has set them for ever out of the reach of Satan's fiery darts, which were here their terror. The spirits of the Just are there *made perfect*, beyond the perfection of *Adam* in innocency, for they are immutably confirmed in it. *Where are they?* Why, they are where they would be, in their centre, in their element. They are where they have longed to be, in that blessed state toward which, while they were here, they were still reaching forth and pressing forward. Let us then *rise up and call them Blessed*; for *Blessed*, thrice *Blessed, are the dead which die in the Lord.*

And this will be of use to us;

(1.) To comfort us in reference to them now that they are gone; for we sorrow not *as those that have no hope*; blessed be God we do not. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me*, there is no occasion for it. While our friends are here with us in this vale of tears, it is our duty, when they are in distress, *to weep for them*; for therein we *weep with them*; and it is our duty *to weep with them that weep*; but *they* need not be wept for upon their own account, who are not only *not weeping*, but have for ever *taken their leave* of weeping, and have *all tears wiped away from their eyes.* While *one member suffers*, it is fit that *all the members should suffer with it*; but if that member *be honoured*, let *all the members* think themselves *honoured with it. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to my Father.* While we are here in the dark, and at a distance, they are made nigh, and see face to face. While we are struggling with our difficulties, and groaning under our burthens, *(without are fightings, within are fears,)* they are easy and safe, and abundantly satisfied.

(2.) To encourage us in our christian course, work, and warfare, let the consideration of that happy state into which they are gone before, make us always to abound in the work of the Lord, because our labour will not only not be in vain, but will be abundantly recompensed. In due season, we shall thus reap; and therefore, *let us not be weary in well doing.* If we *sow to the Spirit*, as they did, we shall *reap Life everlasting*, as they did. Say then, " *We will go with you*; for we have heard that God *was* with you, and we believe that you

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you *are* with him; and therefore let nothing turn us from following after you."

6. We ought to *tread in the steps of their virtue and piety*, and imitate them in every thing that was praiseworthy. To commend that which was good in them, and not to copy it out into our own hearts and lives; to commend the way they walked in, and not to walk in it ourselves; is to give ourselves the lie, and *out of our own mouth shall we be judged.* Are not we under the same obligations to be religious that they were? Is it not as much our concern as it was their's? Are not we as much bound to serve God and our generation in our day, as they were in their's? May not our children expect that we should take the same care of them, that our parents did of us; set them as good examples, and pray as much for them? Let us resolve then to walk in the same spirit, in the same steps, and, in the strength of divine grace, to *follow them who are now, through faith and patience, inheriting the Promises,* and endeavour *not to come behind in any gift,* in any grace, in any duty.

We are concerned thus to follow them:

(1.) In pursuance of the good education they gave us; they laid a good foundation by the lessons they taught us, the counsels they followed us with, and the good exercise they trained us up in. Let us therefore, while we live, be building upon that foundation, till the *Top-Stone* be, at length, *brought forth with shouting.* We have been led into green pastures by still waters; let us then, by our holy strength and serviceableness, praise our keeping, and commend our education by living up to it, and giving the like to our children; and thus *call them blessed,* to whom we owe so great an advantage.

(2.) In compliance with the good example they set us, and in conformity to that, by which the instructions they gave us, were both *explained* and *enforced,* and we were both directed and encouraged in the way of our duty. It is the praise of all the godly kings of Judah, that they *walked in the way of* David *their Father, and turned not aside.*

(3.) In kindness to the world we now live in, and the generation in which our lot is cast. There is a great gap made by the removal of good people; let us endeavour to fill it up, by doing good in the place where God has cast our lot, as they did that are gone; that it may be said, while we survive, "They are not gone, but they still live in these."

(4.) In expectation of the bliss of the world they now live in. Their serious piety was found unto praise, and honour, and glory, in this world, and will be much more so, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore, having an eye to the same *Joy set before us,* run with patience the same *race set before us.* Let us proceed with holy vigour and resolution, and persevere with an unshaken constancy: we serve the same Master, have a promise of the same spirit, and a prospect of the same recompense; let every one of us therefore, (Heb. 6. 11.) *shew the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the End.*

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THE

PLEASANTNESS

OF A

RELIGIOUS LIFE,

DISPLAYED, PROVED, AND RECOMMENDED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF EVERY ONE, PARTICULARLY OF THE YOUNG.

To the Reader.

THAT distinction which the learned Dr. Henry More insists so much upon, in his explanation of the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, between the *Animal* Life and the *Divine* Life, is certainly of great use to lead us into the understanding of that mystery. What was the fall and apostacy of man, and what is still his sin and misery, but the soul's revolt from the *Divine* Life, and giving up itself wholly to the *Animal* Life? And what was the design of our Redeemer, but to recover us to the Divine and Spiritual Life again, by the influences of his grace? And to this, his gospel has a direct tendency; his religion is all spiritual and divine, while all other religions savour of the Animal Life. "Christianity" (says he) "is that period of the wisdom and providence of God, wherein the Animal Life is remarkably insulted, and triumphed over, by the Divine:" Bk. 2. Ch. 7. *And so far, and no farther, are we Christians indeed, than as this revolution is brought about in our souls.*

The conflict is between these two. Nothing draws more forcibly than *Pleasure;* in order therefore to the advancing of the interests of the Divine Life in myself and others, I have here endeavoured, as God has enabled me, to make it evident, that the *Pleasures* of the *Divine Life* are unspeakably better, and more deserving, than those of the *Animal Life.* Were people convinced of this, we should gain our point.

The substance of this was preached last year in six sermons, in the ordinary course of my ministry, among many other *Reasons why we should be Religious.* I was then solicited to make it public, and now take this opportunity to prepare it for the press, when, through the good hand of my God upon me, I have finished my *Fifth Volume of Expositions,* before I go about the *Sixth.* And herein, I confess, I indulge an inclination of my own; for this doctrine of the *Pleasantness of Religion* is what I have been long delighted with, and taken all occasions to mention. Yet I would not thus far have gratified either my friends' request, or my own inclination, if I had not thought that, by the blessing of God, it might be of some service to the common interest of Christ's kingdom, and the common salvation of precious souls.

May 31, 1714. —M. H.

Prov. 3. 17.

Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.

TRUE *Religion* and *Godliness* are often, in Scripture, and particularly in this book of the Proverbs, represented, and recommended to us, under the name and character of *Wisdom;* (Prov. 1. 2, 7, 20; 2. 2, 10; 3. 13; Ps. 111. 10.) because it is the highest improvement of the *human nature,* and the best and surest guide of *human life.* It was one of the first, and most ancient, discoveries of God's mind to the children of men, to the inquisitive part of them, that are in search for wisdom, and would have it at any rate. Then when God made a *Weight for the winds,* and a *Decree for the rain,* when he brought all the other creatures under the established rule and law of their creation, according to their respective capacities, then he *declared this to man,* a reasonable creature, as the law of his creation, (Job 28. 25—28.) *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil,* the evil of sin, *is understanding.*

The *great men* of the world, that engross its wealth and honours, are pretenders to Wisdom, and think none do so well for themselves as they do; but though their neighbours applaud them, and their *posterity* that reap the fruit of their worldly wisdom, approve their sayings, yet *this their way is their folly,* (Ps. 49. 13.) and so it will appear, when God himself shall call those *Fools,* who said to their souls, *Take your ease,* in *barns* full of corn, and *bags* full of money, Luk. 12. 20. Jer. 17. 11.

The *learned Men* of the world were *well-wishers* to Wisdom, and modestly called themselves φιλόσοφοι,—*Lovers of Wisdom;* many wise principles we have from them, and wise precepts; and yet their philosophy failed them in that in which man's great duty and interest consist, acquainting himself with his Maker, and keeping up communion with him: herein they that *professed themselves to be wise, became fools;* (Rom. 1. 22.) and *the world, by Wisdom, knew not God,* 1 Cor. 1. 21.

But *true Christians* are, without doubt, the truly *wise Men,* to whom Christ is *made of God, Wisdom,* (1 Cor. 1. 30.) *in* whom are hid, not *from* them, but *for* them, all the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* Col. 2. 3. They understand themselves best, and on which side their

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their interest lies, that give up themselves to the conduct of Christ, and his Word and Spirit; that consult his oracles, and govern themselves by them, which are indeed the truest oracles of reason, Pro. 9. 10. Men never begin to be *wise*, till they begin to be *religious*; and they then leave off to be *wise*, when they leave off to do *good*, Ps. 36. 3.

Now, to *recommend* to us the study and practice of this *true* Wisdom, to *bring us* into a willing subjection to her authority, and *keep us* to a conscientious observance of her dictates, the Great God is here, by Solomon, reasoning with us, from those topics, which in other cases are usually cogent and commanding enough. It is wonderful condescension, that he who has an indisputable authority over us, thus vouchsafes to *reason with us*; to *draw* with the *cords of a man*, and the *bands of love*; (Hos. 11. 4.) when he might make use only of the *cords of a God*, and the *bands of the law*, (Ps. 2. 3.) to *invite* us to that by *precious promises* which he enjoins upon us by his precepts, and those *not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3.

Interest is the great *Governess* of the world; which when men are once convinced of, they will be *swayed* by more than by any thing else; every one is for what he can get, and therefore applies himself to that which he thinks he can get by. The common inquiry is, *Who will shew us any good?* We would all be happy, would all be easy.

Now it is here demonstrated by eternal Truth itself, that it is our interest to be religious; and therefore *Religion* deserves to be called *Wisdom*, because it teaches us to do well for ourselves. And it is certain, that the way to be *happy*, that is, perfectly *holy* hereafter, is to be *holy*, that is, truly *happy* now. It is laid down for a principle here, *Happy is the man that finds wisdom*, (v. 13.) that finds the principles and habits of it planted in his own soul by divine grace; that, having diligently sought, has, at length, found, that *Pearl of great price*: the man that getteth understanding, reckons himself therein a true gainer. The man—*qui profert intelligentiam—that draws out understanding*, so the original Word signifies; that *produces* it, and *brings it forth*; and so the Chaldee reads it.—Happy is the man, that, having a good principle in him, makes use of it both for his own, and others' benefit; that, having laid up, lays out.

It is necessary to our being happy, that we have right Notions of happiness; the nature of it, wherein it consists, what are the ingredients of it, and what the ways that lead to it: for many keep themselves miserable by thinking themselves happy, when really they are not; and we have reason to suspect their mistake concerning themselves, because they mistake so grossly concerning others: they call the *Proud happy*, (Mal. 3. 15.) they *bless the covetous, whom the Lord abhors*. Ps. 10. 3. It concerns us therefore to consider, whence we take our measures of happiness, and what rules we go by in judging of it; that we may not covet our lot with those with whom we should dread to have our lot; that we may not say, as the Psalmist was tempted to say, when he looked upon the outward prosperity of worldly people, *Happy is the people that is in such a case*; but as he was determined to say, when he looked upon the true felicity of godly people, *Happy*, thrice happy, for ever happy, *is that people, whose God is the Lord*; (Ps. 144. 15.) and as God here says, whose judgment, we are sure, is according to truth, *Happy is the man that finds wisdom*.

The happiness of those that are religious, is here proved,

I. From the *true profit* that is to be got by religion; *Godliness is profitable to all things*; (1 Tim. 4. 8.) it is of universal advantage. Though we may be losers *for* our religion, yet we shall not only not be losers *by* it, but we shall be unspeakable gainers, in the end. They that trade with wisdom's talents, will find *the merchandize of it better than the merchandize of silver*, and the *gain thereof than fine gold*, and that it is *more precious than rubies*. As long since as Job's time it was agreed, that the advantages of religion were such, that, as they could not be purchased, so they could not be *valued, with the Gold of Ophir, the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The topaz of Ethiopia could not equal them*, Job 28. 16, 19. *Length of days is* in Wisdom's *right hand*, even life for evermore; length of days, and no shortening of them; *and in her left hand riches and honour*, (v. 16.) *the unsearchable riches of Christ*, and the *honour that comes from God*, which are true riches, and true honours, because durable, because eternal, and for ever out of the danger of poverty and disgrace.

In all labour there is profit, more or less, of one kind or other, but no profit like that in the labour of religion. They who make a business of it will find great advantage by it; its present incomes are valuable, and a comfortable, honourable, maintenance for a soul; but its future recompenses infinitely more so, above what we are able either to speak or think.

II. From the *transcendent pleasure* that is to be found in it. Here profit and pleasure meet, which complete the happiness; and *Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci*—

Where pleasure and advantage meet,
They make the cheerful scene complete.

Those that pursue the gains of the world in wealth and riches, must be willing to deny themselves in their pleasures; and those that will indulge themselves in their pleasures, must be content not to get money, but to spend it. As they that are covetous, know they must not be voluptuous; so they that are voluptuous, leave no room to be covetous; but it is not so in the profits and pleasures of religion. Here a Man may both *get* and *save*, the spiritual riches of divine grace, and yet, at the same time, bathe in a full stream of divine consolations, and be a holy epicure in spiritual delights, while he *lays up treasures in heaven*; the soul may even then dwell at ease, when it is labouring most diligently for the *meat* that endures to *eternal life*.

This is that which the text speaks of; and both the *profit* and *pleasure* of religion are put together in the next words, *She is a tree of life*, (v. 18.) both enriching and delighting *to them that lay hold upon her*. What gain or comfort like that of life?

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1. We are here assured, that her *ways are ways of pleasantness*; not only *pleasant ways*, but, in the abstract, *ways of pleasantness*, as if pleasantness were confined to those ways, and not to be found any where else: and the pleasantness arises not from any foreign circumstance, but from the innate goodness of the ways themselves. Or it notes the superlative pleasantness of religion; it is as pleasant as *pleasantness* itself. *They are ways of pleasantness*, נֹעַם; it is the Word from which *Naomi* had her Name in the Day of her Prosperity, which afterward she disclaimed; (Ruth 1. 20.) *Call me not Naomi*, pleasant; but *Marah*, bitter. Think you hear Wisdom saying, on the contrary, "Call me not *Marah*, bitter, as some have miscalled me, but call me *Naomi*, pleasant." The vulgar *Latin* reads it, *Viæ Pulchræ—beautiful ways*, ways of sweetness, so the Chaldee.

Wisdom's ways are so; that is, the ways which she has directed us to walk in, the ways of her commandments; they are such, that if we *keep close to*, and *go on in* them, we shall certainly find true pleasure and satisfaction. Wisdom says, "*This is the way, walk in it*; and you shall not only find *life* at the end, but *pleasure* in the way." That which is the only right way to happiness, we must resolve to travel, and to proceed, and persevere in, whether it be fair or foul, pleasant or unpleasant; but it is a great encouragement to a traveller, to know that his way is not only the right way, but a pleasant way: and such the way to heaven is.

God had told us by Solomon, (*Ch.* 2. 3, 4.) that we must *cry after knowledge*, must *give our voice to understanding*, that we must *seek* it, and *search* for it, must spare no cost or pains to get it. He had told us, that this wisdom would restrain us from the way both of the *evil man*, and of the *strange woman*; (*Ch.* 2. 12, 16.) that it would keep us from all the forbidden pleasures of sense. Now lest these *restraints* from pleasure, and *constraints* to piety and labour, should discourage any from the ways of religion, he here assures us, not only that our pains will be abundantly recompensed with the profits of religion, but that the pleasures we *forego*, will be abundantly balanced with the pleasures we shall enjoy.

2. It is added, *All her paths are peace.* Peace is sometimes put for all good; here some take it for the good of safety and protection. Many ways are *pleasant*; they are clean, and look smooth, but they are *dangerous*, either not sound at bottom, or beset with thieves: but the ways of wisdom have in them a *holy security*, as well as a *holy serenity*; and they that walk in them, have God himself for their *shield* as well as their *sun*, and are not only joyful in the hope of good, but are, or may be, quiet also from the fear of evil.

But we may take it for the good of pleasure and delight; and so it imports the same as the former part of the verse. As there is *pleasantness* in wisdom's ways, so there is *peace* in all her *paths*.

(1.) There is not only peace *in the end* of religion, but peace *in the way*. There is not only peace provided as a bed, for good men to lie down in at night, when their work is done, and their warfare is accomplished; (They shall then *enter into peace, rest in their beds*, Isa. 57. 2. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*, Ps. 37. 37. it is everlasting Peace;) But there is also peace provided as a shade, for good men to work in all day, that they may not only do their work, but do it with delight: For even the *work of righteousness*, as well as its reward, *shall be peace*, (Isa. 32. 17.) and the immediate *effect of righteousness*, as well as its issue at last, *quietness and assurance for ever.*

It is possible, that war may be the way to peace; *Sic quærimus Pacem—thus we pursue peace*, is the best motto to be engraven on weapons of war; but it is the glory of those who are truly religious, that they not only seek peace, but enjoy it: the peace of *God* rules their hearts, and by that means *keeps* them; and even while they are travellers, they have peace, though they are not yet at home.

It is the misery of the carnal, irreligious, world, that *The way of peace they have not known* (Rom. 3. 17.) for they are *like the troubled sea; there is no peace, says my God, to the wicked*, Isa. 57. 20, 21. How can peace be spoken to them that are not the *sons of peace*, (Luke 10. 5, 6.) to them that have not grace for the word of peace to fasten upon? They may cry peace to themselves, but there is no true peace either in their way, or in their end: To such, I say, (2 Kings 9. 18.) *What hast thou to do with peace? Turn thee behind me*; while in God's name I speak peace to all that are in covenant with the God of peace, to all the faithful subjects of the *Prince of peace*; they have experimentally known the way of peace, and to them I say, "*Go on, and prosper*; go on in peace, for the *God of Love and Peace* is and will be *with you.*"

(2.) There is not only this peace in the way of religion in general, but in the particular *paths* of that way; view it in the several acts and instances of it, in the exercise of every grace, in the performance of every duty, and you will find, that what is said of the body of christianity, is true of every part of it; it is *peace.*

The *ways* of religion are *tracked* as path-ways are; (Cant. 1. 8.) We *go forth by the footsteps of the flock.* It is the *good old way* that all have walked in, that are gone to heaven before us, and this contributes something to the peace of it; "Walk in the *old way*, and you shall *find rest to your souls*," Jer. 6. 16. We go on in our way with so much the more assurance, when we see those going before us, who *through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises*; let us but keep the path, and we shall not miss our way.

The Chaldee reads it, *Itinera ejus pacifica—her journies are peace.* The paths of wisdom are not like walks in a garden, which we make use of for diversion only, and an amusement; but like tracks in a great road, which we press forward in with care and pains, as a traveller in his journey, *plus ultra—further still*, till we come to our journey's end. We must remember, that in the ways of religion we are upon our journey, and it is a journey of business, business of life and death, and therefore we must not trifle, or lose time; but must lift up our feet, as Jacob did, (Gen. 29. 1.) *Then* Jacob

went

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went on his way; in the margin it is, *he lift up his feet:* and we must *lift up our Hearts,* as Jehoshaphat did, *in the ways of the Lord,* (2 Chro. 17. 6.) and not take up short of the end of our faith and hope, not take up short of home: and though the journey is long, and requires all this care and application, yet it is pleasant, it is peace notwithstanding.

In the way of religion and godliness, taken generally, there are different paths, according to the different sentiments of wise and good men in the less weighty matters of the law; but, blessed be God, every *different path,* is not a *by-path;* and if it be not, but kept within the same hedges of divine truths and laws, as to the essentials of religion, it may be, it shall be, a way of peace; for both he that *eateth,* and he that *eateth not, give God thanks,* (Rom. 14. 6.) and have comfort in it. If we have clear views, we shall perceive that *The kingdom of God,* the way of wisdom, *is not meat and drink,* and we shall find it to be, *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,* Rom. 14. 17.

(3.) There is this peace in *all* the paths of wisdom, in all the instances of *pure* and *undefiled religion;* look into them *all,* make trial of them *all,* and you will find there are none to be excepted, none to be quarrelled with: they are all uniform, and of a piece: the same golden thread of peace and pleasure runs through the whole web of serious godliness.

We cannot say so of this world, that *all* its paths are peace, however some of them may pretend to give the mind a little satisfaction: its pleasures have their allays; that which one thing sweetens, another comes presently, and imbitters. But as there is a universal rectitude in the principles of religion, (Ps. 119. 128.) *I have esteemed all thy precepts concerning all things to be right;* and, (Pro. 8. 8.) *All the words of my mouth are in righteousness,* (says wisdom) *and there is nothing froward or perverse in them;* so there is a universal peace and pleasure in the practice of religion. All our paths, if such as they should be, will be such as we could wish.

The doctrine, therefore, contained in these words, is,
That *true piety has true pleasure in it.* Or thus;
The *ways of religion are pleasant and peaceful ways.*

CHAP. I.

The Explication of the Doctrine.

IT is a plain truth which we have here laid down, and there is little in it that needs explication: it were well for us, if we would but as readily subscribe to the certainty of it, as we apprehend the sense and meaning of it. Nor will any complain, that it is hard to be understood, but those who know no other pleasures than those of sense, and relish no other, and therefore resolve not to give credit to it. Those who think, How can this be, that there should be pleasure in piety? will be ready to ask, what is the meaning of this doctrine? and to call it a *hard saying.*

You know what *pleasure* is; I hope, you know, in some degree, what the pleasure of the *mind* is, a pleasure which the soul has the sensation of. And do you not know, in some degree, what *piety* is, a due regard to a God above us, and having the eyes of the soul ever up unto him? Then you know what I mean when I say, that there is an abundance of real pleasure and satisfaction, in the ways of religion and godliness.

But to help you a little in the understanding of it, and to prevent mistakes, observe,

I. That I speak of *true piety,* and of that, *as far as it goes.*

1. *Hypocrites are very much strangers to the delights and pleasures of religion;* nay, they are *altogether* so, for it is *joy* which those *strangers* do not *intermeddle with.* Counterfeit piety can never bring in true pleasure. He that acts a part upon a stage, though it be the same part of one that is ever so pleasant, though he may humour the pleasantness well, does not experience it. The pleasures of God's house lie not in the outer courts, but within the vail. None know what the *Peace of God* means, but those that are under the dominion and operation of his grace; nor can any that *Deny the power of godliness,* expect to share in the pleasures of it. *When wisdom enters into thine heart,* takes possession of that, and becomes a living, active, principle there; then, and not till then, it is *pleasant unto thy soul,* Pro. 2. 10. They that aim at no more than the credit of their religion before men, justly fall short of the comfort of it in themselves.

Hypocrites have other things that they delight in, the satisfactions of the world, the gratifications of sense, which put their mouths out of taste for spiritual pleasures, so that they have *no pleasure in them.* They that have their hearts upon their marketings, are weary of the *New Moons* and the *Sabbaths,* Amos 8. 5. With good reason, therefore, does Job ask, *Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty?* (ch. 27. 10.) No, his soul takes its ease in the creature, and returns not to the creator as its *rest* and *home.*

Some transitory pleasure a hypocrite may have in religion, from a *land-flood* of sensible affections, who yet has not the least taste of the *River of God's Pleasures.* There were those who *delighted to know God's ways;* (Isa. 58. 2.) they met with some agreeable notions in them, that surprised them, and pleased their fancies, but they did not delight to walk in them. The stony ground *received the word with joy,* and yet received no lasting benefit by it, Luke 8. 13. Herod *heard John gladly,* (Mark 6. 20.) He found something very agreeable in his sermons, and which natural conscience could not but embrace, and yet could not bear to be reproved for his Herodias. A florid preacher, such as Ezekiel was, may be to them as *A very lovely song of one that can play well on an Instrument,* (Ezek. 33. 32.) and yet, at the same time, *the word of the Lord,* if it touch their consciences, and shew them their transgressions, is to them *a reproach,* Jer. 6. 10.

They whose hearts are not right with God in their religion, cannot have the pleasure of *communion with God;* for it is the soul only that converses *with God,* and

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and that he communicates himself to; *bodily exercise profiteth little*, (1 Tim. 4. 8.) and therefore pleases little. The service of God is a burthen, and a task to an unsanctified, unrenewed, heart; it is out of its element when it is brought into that air: and therefore, instead of snuffing it up, and saying, Behold, what a pleasure it is! It *snuffs at it*, and says, *Behold, what a weariness it is!* Mal. 1. 13.

Nor can they take any pleasure in communing with their own consciences, or in their reflections; for *they* are ready, upon all occasions, to give them uneasiness, by charging them with that which is disagreeable to their profession, and gives the lie to it. And though they cry *Peace, Peace*, to themselves, they have that within them, that tells them the God of heaven does not speak *peace* to them; and this casts a damp upon all their pleasure, that their religion itself gives them pain, God himself is a terror to them, and the Gospel itself condemns them for their insincerity. In time of trouble and distress, none are so much *afraid*, as the *sinners in Zion*, (Isa. 33. 14.) the secret sinners there; and fearfulness is the greatest Surprise of all to the Hypocrites, (Amos 6. 1.) that were at *ease in Zion*, and thought its strong holds would be their security.

Therefore it is that Hypocrites cast off religion, and discharge themselves of the profession of it, after they have a while disguised themselves with it, because it did not sit easy; and they are weary of it. Tradesmen that take no pleasure in their business, will not stick to it long; no more will those that take no pleasure in their religion; nor will any thing carry us through the outward difficulties of it, but the inward delights of it; if those be wanting, the *tree* is not *watered*, and therefore even *its leaf* will soon *wither*, Ps. 1. 3. The hypocrite will not *always call upon God*, will not long do it, because he *will not delight himself in the Almighty*, Job 27. 10. This ought not to be a stumbling-block to us. Thus hypocrites *in* religion prove apostates *from* it; and the reason is, because they never found it pleasant; they never found it pleasant, because they were never sincere in it, which was *their* fault, and not the fault of the religion they professed.

Let us therefore take heed, and beware of hypocrisy, (Luke 12. 1.) if ever we hope to find *pleasure* in religion. Counterfeit piety has some other end in view, some other end to serve, than that which is the spring of *true delight*. They who rest in that, *hew them out cisterns* (Jer. 2. 13.) that can hold but little water, and that *dead*; nay, *broken cisterns* that *can hold no water*; and how can they expect the pleasure which *they* have, who cleave to, and continually draw from, the *Fountain of life* and *living waters*? No, as their principles are, such are their pleasures; as their aims are, such are their joys; they appeal to the world, and to the world they shall go. But let not the credit of religion suffer for the sake of those who are only pretenders to it, and so indeed enemies to it.

2. It is possible that true christians may, through their own *fault* and *folly*, want very much of the pleasure of religion; and therefore, I say, true piety, *as far as it goes*, is very *pleasant*; as far as it has its due influence upon us, and is rightly understood, and lived up to.

We abide by it, That *Wisdom's Ways* are always pleasant, and yet must own, that Wisdom's Children are sometimes unpleasant, and therein come short of *justifying* Wisdom in this matter as they ought to do, (Luke 7. 35.) and rather give advantage to her accusers, and prejudice to her cause. Either they miss these ways, and turn aside out of them, and so lose the pleasure that is to be found in them; or (which is a common case) they refuse to take the comfort which they might have in these ways. They hamper themselves with needless perplexities, make the yoke heavy which Christ has made easy, and that frightful which he designed should be encouraging; they indulge themselves, and then, as Jonah when he was angry, justify themselves in causeless griefs and fears, and think they do well to put themselves into an agony, to be very heavy and sore amazed, and their souls *exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death*, as Christ's was; whereas Christ put himself into such an agony, to make us easy.

But let not true piety suffer in its reputation because of this; for though it be called a religious melancholy, it is not so, for it is contrary to the very nature and design of religion, while it shelters itself under the colour of it, and pretends to take rise from it. It is rather to be called δεισιδαιμονία—*a superstitious melancholy*, arising from such a slavish fear of God as the heathens were driven by to their Dæmons and barbarous sacrifices; which is a great injury to the honour of his goodness, as well as a great injury to themselves.

If the professors of religion look for that in the world, which is to be had in God only, and that is *perfect happiness*; or, if they look for that in themselves, which is to be had in Christ only, and that is a *perfect righteousness*; or if they look for that on earth, which is to be had in heaven only, and that is *perfect holiness*; and then fret, and grieve, and go mourning, from day to day, because they are disappointed in their expectations, they may thank themselves, *Why seek they the living among the dead?* Luke 24. 5.

Let but Religion, *true* and *pure* religion, in all the laws and instances of it, command and prevail, and these *tears* will soon be *wiped away*. Let but God's servants take their work before them, allow each principle of their religion its due weight, and each practice of it its due place and proportion, and let them not dash one Precept of the Gospel, any more than one Table of the Law, in pieces against the other. Let them look upon it to be as much their duty to rejoice in Christ Jesus, as to mourn for sin; nay, and more, for *this* is in order to *that*: and then we shall not fear, that their sorrows will in the least shake the truth of our doctrine, for, as far as the religion is carried, it will carry this character along with it, and further it cannot be expected.

II. In true *piety*, I say, there is a *pleasure*; there is that which we may find comfort *in*, and fetch satisfaction *from* There is a *Bonum jucundum—a pleasant good*, as well as *utile—a useful one*. That is pleasant, which is agreeable, which the soul rejoices in, or, at least reposes in;

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in; or which it relishes, pleases itself with, and desires the continuance and repetition of. Let a man's faculties be in their due frame and temper, not vitiated, corrupted, or depraved, and there is that in the exercise of religion which highly suits them, and satisfies them. And this pleasure is such as is not allayed with any thing to cast a damp upon it.

1. The Ways of Religion are *right* and *pleasant*; they are pleasant without the allay of injury and iniquity. Sin pretends to have its pleasures, but they are the *perverting of that which is right*, (Job 33. 27.) they are *stolen waters*, (Pro. 9. 17.) unjust, though pleasant; but the pleasures of godliness are as agreeable to the rectitude of our nature as they are gratifying to the pure and undebauched desires of it. It is the way in which we *should go*; and the way, in which, if we were not wretchedly degenerated, we *would go* of choice.

They are *right*, for they are marked out to us by our *rightful* Lord, who, having given us the being of rational creatures, has authority to give us a law suited to our being; and he has done it, both by natural conscience, and by the written word: he has said, *This is the way, walk in it*, Isa. 30. 21. It is not only permitted and allowed us, but charged and commanded us, to walk in it; he has sent us, as messengers from him, to travel this road upon his errand.

They are *right*, for they lead directly to our *great end*, have a tendency to our welfare here and for ever. They are the only right way to that which is the felicity of our being, which we shall certainly miss and come short of, if we do not walk in this way.

But that is not all, they are also *pleasant; Behold, how good and how pleasant!* Ps. 133. 1. It is the happiness of those that fear God, that he not only *teaches them in the Way that he shall chuse*, (and we may be sure that is the right way,) but also that *their Souls shall dwell at ease*, Ps. 25. 12, 13. Justly may they dwell at ease, who have infinite wisdom itself to chuse their way, and guide them in it. That may be *right, which is* not *pleasant*, and that *pleasant*, which is not *right*; but religion is both: therefore in the next verse it is compared to the *Tree of Life*. The Tree of Knowledge was indeed *pleasant to the eyes*, and a *tree to be desired*, but it was *forbidden*, (Gen. 3. 6.) and therefore religion is called a *Tree of Life*, which was not only pleasant, but was allowed till sin entered.

2. They are *easy* and *pleasant*; pleasant without the allay of toil and difficulty, any more than what arises from the corruption of our own nature: that indeed makes such opposition, that we have need of arguments, (and, blessed be God, we have good arguments,) to prove the practice of religion *easy*: but it is more than *this*, it is *pleasant*.

Much less is said than is intended, when we are told that *his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. They are not only not grievous and galling, but they are gracious and pleasing. His yoke is *easy*, Mat. 11. 30. The word there used, χρηστὸς, signifies more than so, it is *sweet* and *gentle*; not only easy as a yoke is to the neck, when it is so well fitted as not to hurt it, but easy as a pillow is to the head when the head is weary and sleepy. It is not only tolerable, but very comfortable. There is not only no matter of complaint in the ways of God, nothing to hurt us, but there is abundant matter of joy and rejoicing. It is not only work which is not weariness, but work which is its own wages; such a *Tree of Life*, as will not only screen us from the storm and tempest, and feed us with necessary food, but we may sit down under the shadow of it with great delight, and the fruit of it will be *Sweet unto our taste*, Cant. 2. 3.

3. They are *gainful* and *pleasant*, and have not the allay of expense and loss. That may be profitable, which yet may be unpleasant, and that pleasant, which afterward may prove very unprofitable and prejudicial. What *Fruit* have sinners from those things in which yet they said they had pleasure? Rom. 6. 21. But religion brings both pleasure with it, and profit after it. The pleasures of religion do not cost us dear; there is no loss by them when the account comes to be balanced.

The gain of this world is usually fetched in by toil and uneasy labour, which are grievous to flesh and blood. The servants of this world are drudges to it; they *rise up early, sit up late*, and *eat the bread of sorrows*, (Ps. 127. 2.) in pursuit of its wealth. They *labour, and bereave their souls of good*; (Ecc. 4. 8.) but the servants of God have a pleasure even in the work they are to get *by*, and which they shall be recompensed *for*.

Beside the tendency that there is in the practice of serious godliness to our happiness in the other life, there is much in it that conduces to our comfort in this life. David observes it to the honour of religion, (Ps. 19. 11.) that not only *after* keeping, but *in* keeping, God's commandments, *there is a great reward*; a present great reward of obedience in obedience. A *good man is satisfied from himself*, (Pro. 14. 14.) that is, from that which Divine Grace has wrought in him: and the saints are said to *Sing in the ways of the Lord*, (Ps. 138. 5.) as those that find them pleasant ways.

The more closely we adhere to the rules of religion, the more intimate our converse is with divine things, and the more we live with an eye to Christ and another world, the more comfort we are likely to have in our own bosoms. *Great peace* have they that *love God's Law*, (Ps. 119. 165.) and the more they love it, the greater their peace is; nay, it is promised to the Church, that *All her children shall be taught of the Lord*, (and those whom he teaches, are well-taught, and taught to do well,) and then *great shall be the peace of her children*, (Isa. 54. 13.) it shall be entailed upon them; *Peace like a River, in omne volubilis ævum—rolling on from age to age*.

III. I call it a *true* pleasure. As there is *Science, falsely so called*, (1 Tim. 6. 20.) so there is *Pleasure* falsely so called. One of the Ancients distinguishes between Ἡδονὰς ἀληθεῖς, and Ἡδονὰς ψευδεῖς, (*Damascen. Orthod. Fid. l.* 2.) *Pleasures that have some* Truth *in them, and Pleasures that deceive us with a* Lie *in their right hand*. Some have said that the School of Epicurus, which is commonly branded and condemned for making pleasure man's *chief good*, did not mean sensual pleasure, but the pleasure of the mind. And we should be willing

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willing enough to admit it, were not the other principles of his philosophy so atheistical and irreligious. But this we are sure of, that it is a *true* pleasure which religion secures to us; a pleasure that deserves the name, and answers it to the full.

It is a *true* pleasure, for,

1. It is *real*, and *not counterfeit*. Carnal worldlings pretend a great satisfaction in the enjoyments of the world, and the gratifications of sense; *Soul, take thine ease*, says one, Luke 12. 19. *I have found me out substance*, says another, (Hos. 12. 8.) even *the life of my hand; I have seen*, says a third, *the fire*, Isa. 44. 16. *The wicked boasts of his heart's desire;* but Solomon assures us, not only that the *End of that mirth is heaviness*, but that even in *Laughter the heart is sorrowful*, Pro. 14. 13. Both those that make a God of their belly, and those that make a God of their money, find such a constant pain and uneasiness attending their spiritual idolatries, that their pleasure is but from the teeth outward. Discontent at present disappointments, and fear of worse ungoverned passions (which seldom are made less turbulent by the gratifications of the appetite) and above all, conscience of guilt, and dread of divine wrath, these give them the lie, when they boast of their pleasures, which, with such allays, are not to be boasted of; they would not be thought to be disappointed in that which they have chosen for their happiness, and therefore they seem to be pleased, they seem to be pleasant, when really their heart, if it knows its own wickedness, cannot but *know its own bitterness*, Pro. 14. 10.

And many of the good things of this world, of which we said, *These same shall comfort us*, prove vexations to us; and we are disappointed in that, wherein we most promised ourselves satisfaction. *If we say our bed shall comfort us*, perhaps it is not a bed to rest on, but a bed to toss on, as it was to poor Job, when *wearisome nights were appointed to him*. Nay, such strangers are we to real pleasure in the things of this life, and so often do we deceive ourselves with that which is counterfeit, that we wish to live to those days of life which we are told will be *evil days*, and those years of which we are assured that we shall say, *We have no pleasure in them*, Ecc. 12. 1.

But the pleasures of religion are solid, substantial, pleasures, and not painted; gold, and not gilded over: these sons of pleasure *inherit substance*, (Pro. 8. 21.) it is that *which is*, the firm foundation, the strong superstructure, the *consolations of God*, which are not *few*, nor *small*, (Job 15. 14.) while a vain and foolish world *cause their eyes to fly upon that which is not*, Pro. 23. 5. Worldly people pretend to the joy they have not; but godly people conceal the joy they have, as he did, that had found the treasure hid in the field. They have, like their master, *Meat to eat, which the world knows not of*, John 4. 32.

2. It is *rational*, and not *brutish*. It is the pleasure of the soul, not of sense; it is the peculiar pleasure of a man, not that which we have in common with the inferior creatures. The pleasures of religion are not those of the mere animal life, which arise from the gratifications of the senses of the body, and its appetites; no, they affect the soul, that part of us by which we are allied to the world of spirits, that noble part of us, and therefore are to be called the true pleasures of a man.

The brute creatures have the same pleasures of sense that we have, and perhaps, in some of them, the senses are more exquisite, and consequently they have them in a much higher degree; nor are their pleasures liable to the correctives of reason and conscience as our's are. Who live such merry lives as the Leviathan, who *plays in the deep*, or the birds that *sing among the branches?* Ps. 104. 12, 26.

But what are these to a man, who being *taught more than the beasts of the earth, and made wiser than the fowls of heaven*, (Job 35. 11.) and, being dignified above the beasts, not so much by the powers of reason, as by a capacity for religion, is certainly designed for enjoyments of a more excellent nature, for spiritual and heavenly delights. When God made man, he left him not to the enjoyments of the wide world, with the other creatures, but enclosed him a Paradise,—a garden of pleasure, (so Eden signifies,) where he should have delights proper for him; signified indeed by the pleasures of a garden, pleasant trees, and their fruits, but really the delights of a soul, that was a ray of divine light, and a spark of divine fire, newly breathed into him from above, and on which God's image and likeness were imprinted. And we never recover our felicity, which we lost by our first parents' indulging the appetite of the body, till we come to the *due relish* of those pleasures which man has in common with angels, and a *due contempt* of those which he has in common with the brutes.

The pleasures of Wisdom's Ways may at second-hand affect the body, and be an advantage to that; hence it is said, (Pro. 3. 8.) to be *health to the navel*, and *marrow to the bones;* but its residence is in the *hidden man of the heart*, (1 Pet. 3. 4.) and its comforts *delight the soul in the multitude of its thoughts*, Ps. 94. 19. It is pleasant to the soul, and makes it like a watered garden. These are pleasures which a man, by the assistance of divine grace, may reason himself *into*, and not, (as it is with sensual pleasures,) reason himself *out of*.

There is no pleasure separate from that of religion, which pretends to be an intellectual pleasure, but that of *learning*, and that of *honour;* but as to the pleasure of a proud man in his dignities, and the respects paid him, as Herod, in the acclamations of the crowd, it does but affect the fancy; it is *vain-glory*, it is not *glory;* it is but the folly of him that receives the honour, fed by the folly of them that give it; so that it does not deserve to be called a rational pleasure; it is a lust of the mind that is gratified by it, and that is as much an instance of our degeneracy, as any of the *lusts of the flesh* are.

And as to the pleasure of a scholar, abstracted from religion, it is indeed rational and intellectual; but it is only the pleasure of the mind in knowing truth, and not its enjoying good. Solomon who had as much of this

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this pleasure as ever any man had, and as nice a taste of it, yet has assured us from his own experience, that in *much wisdom* of this kind is *much grief*, and *he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow*, Eccl. 1. 18.

But the pleasures which a holy soul has in knowing God, and in communion with him, are not only of a spiritual nature, but they are satisfying, they are filling to the soul, and make a happiness adequate to its best affections.

3. It is durable, and not flashy and transitory: that is true pleasure, and deserves the name, which will continue with us as a *tree of life*, and not wither as the *green herb*; which will be not as the light of a *candle*, which is soon burnt out, but as that of the *Sun*, which is a faithful witness in heaven. We reckon that most *valuable*, which is most *durable*.

The pleasures of sense are fading and perishing; as *the world passeth away*, (1 Joh. 2. 17.) so do *the lusts of it*: that which at first pleases and satisfies, after a while palls and surfeits. *As the crackling of thorns under a pot*, (Ecc. 7. 6.) which make a great blaze, and a great noise for a little while, but soon end in soot and ashes; such is the *laughter of the fool*; the *end of his mirth is heaviness*. Belshazzar's jollity is soon turned into the utmost consternation; *The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear to me*, (Isa. 21. 4.) The pleasures of sin are said to be but *for a season*, (Heb. 11. 25.) for the *end of that mirth is heaviness*. As they have no *consistence*, so they have no *continuance*.

But the pleasures of religion will abide, they wither not in winter, nor tarnish with time, nor does age wrinkle their beauty; frosts nip them not, nor do storms blast them; they continue through the greatest opposition of events, and despise that time and *chance*, which *happens to all things under the sun*, (Ecc. 9. 11.) Believers, when they are sorrowful, they are but *as* sorrowful, for they are *always rejoicing*, (2 Cor. 6. 10. and 2. 14.) *thanks be to God, who always causeth us to triumph*. If an immortal soul make an eternal God its chief joy, what should hinder but that it should *rejoice evermore*, (1. Thess. 5. 16.) for as the treasure, so the pleasure is laid up there, where *neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal*. The joy which Christ gives to those that are his, is joy which *no man taketh from them*, (Joh. 16. 22.) for it is their heart that rejoices. They are the beginning of everlasting pleasures, the earnest and foretaste of them; so that they are in effect, pleasures for evermore.

So then, the great truth which I desire my heart and yours may be fully convinced of, is this; That a holy, heavenly life spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is, without doubt, the most pleasant and comfortable life any man can live in this world.

CHAP. II.

The Pleasure of being Religious, proved from the Nature of true Religion, and many particular Instances of it.

THE doctrine needs no further explication, nor can have any better than our own experience of it; but the chief part of this undertaking is to prove the truth of it: And O! that God, by me would set it before you in a true light, so that you may be all convinced of it, and embrace it as a faithful saying, and well worthy of all acceptation, that a godly life is a pleasant life; and that we may be wrought upon to live such a life.

Pleasure is a tempting thing: what yields delight cannot but attract desire; it is next to necessity, so strongly does it urge. Surely, if we were but fully persuaded of this, that religion has pleasure on its side, we should be wrought upon by the allurement of it to be religious. It is certainly so, let us not be in doubt of it. Here is a bait that has no hook under it, a pleasure courting you which has no pain attending it, no bitterness at the latter end of it; a pleasure which God himself invites you to, and which will make you happy, truly and eternally happy: and shall not this work upon you?

But we may entertain ourselves, and our hearers, long enough with discourses of the pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways; but they will not profit, unless they be *mixed with faith*. O! that we would all mix faith with this truth! that we would yield to the evidence of it.

To make way for the proof it, I would only desire two things.

1. That you would *lay aside prejudice*, and give a fair and impartial hearing to this cause, and do not prejudge it. He that *answers* any *matter* before he *hears* it, hears it out, it is *folly* and *shame* to him; (Pro. 8. 13, 14.) especially if it be a matter of great importance and concern to himself; a matter of life and death. Be willing, therefore, to believe, that it is possible there *may*, and then I doubt not but to make out, that it is certain there *is* true pleasure in true religion.

You have got a notion, it may be, and are confirmed in it by the common cry of the multitude, that religion is a sour melancholy thing, that it is to bid farewell to all pleasure and delight, and to spend your days in grief, and your years in sighing: and if we offer any thing to the contrary, that it is a pleasant thing, and the best entertainment that can be to the mind, you are ready to say, as Ezekiel's hearers did of him, *Doth he not speak parables?* (Ezek. 20. 49.) does he not speak paradoxes? You startle at it, and start from it as a hard saying, like Nathaniel, when he said, *can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* (John 1. 46.) So you are ready to say, can there be any pleasure in religion? Believe it, Sirs, there can be, there cannot but be pleasure in it.

Do not measure religion by the follies of some that profess it, but do not live up to their profession, nor adorn

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adorn it: let them bear their own burthen, or clear themselves as they can; but you are to judge of things, not persons, and therefore ought not to be prejudiced against religion for their sakes. Nor should you measure by the ill opinions which its adversaries have of it, or the ill name which they endeavour to put it into, who neither know it, nor love it, and therefore care not what unjust things they say to justify themselves in the contempt of it, and to hinder others from embracing it, but think freely of this matter.

2. That you would admit this as a principle, and abide by it,—that *The soul is the man:* this is the *Postulatum* that I lay down, in order to the proof of the doctrine; and I hope it will be readily granted me, that man is principally to be considered as an intellectual, immortal being, endued with spiritual powers and capacities, allied to the world of spirits, and accountable to the Father of spirits; that there is a spirit in man, that has sensations and dispositions of its own, active and receptive faculties distinct from those of the body: and that this is the part of us, which we are, and ought to be most concerned about; because it is really well, or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our souls.

Believe, that in man's present state, the soul and the body have separate and contesting interests; the body thinks it is its interest to have its appetites gratified, and to be indulged in its pleasures; while the soul knows it is its interest to have the appetites of the body subdued and mortified, that spiritual pleasures may be the better relished; and we are here upon our trial, which of these two we will side with.

Be wise, therefore, be resolute, and shew yourselves men that are actuated and governed by reason, and are affected with things as reason represents them to you: not reason, as it is in the mere natural man, clouded, and plunged, and lost in sense; but reason elevated and guided by divine revelation to us, and divine grace in us. Walk by faith, and not by sense; let the God that made you, and knows you, and wishes you well, and from whom your judgment must proceed, determine your sentiments in this matter, and the work is done.

Now I shall, in the first place, endeavour to prove this doctrine, by shewing you *what religion is,* wherein it *consists,* and what those things are which constitute serious godliness; and then you shall yourselves judge, whether it be not in its own nature pleasant. If you understand religion aright, you will find, that it has an innate sweetness in it, inseparable from it. Let it but speak for itself, and it will recommend itself. The very exhibition of this beauty in its own features and proportions, is enough to bring us all in love with it.

You shall see the pleasures of religion in twelve instances of it.

1. To be religious is *to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent,* (John 17. 3.) And is not that pleasant? This is the first thing we have to do, to get our understandings rightly informed, concerning both the *object,* and the medium of our religious regards, to seek and to receive this light from heaven, to have it diffused through our souls as the morning light in the air, and to be *turned* to the impressions of it, *as the clay to the seal,* (Job 38. 14.) and this is a pleasure to the soul that understands itself, and its own true interest. *Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun,* (Ecc. 11. 7.) it *rejoiceth the heart,* (Pro. 15. 30.) Hence, light is often put for joy and comfort; but no light is comparable to that of *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,* 2 Cor. 4. 6.

This is finding the knowledge we had lost, and must for ever have despaired of finding, if God had not made it known to us by his Spirit. It is finding the knowledge that we are undone *without,* and happy, for ever in; for what is heaven but this knowledge in perfection? It is finding the knowledge which the soul would covet and rest in, if it had but recovered itself from the delirium, which by the fall it is thrown into. They that *sat in darkness,* when they begin to be religious, begin to *see a great light,* Mat. 4. 16. And it is a pleasing surprise to them; it is coming into a new world; such a pleasure as none could know so well, as he that had his sight given him, though he was *born blind,* John 9. 25. *Blessed are your eyes,* (says Christ to those whom he had brought into an acquaintance with himself,) *for they see. Apply thy heart to my knowledge,* saith Solomon, Pro. 22. 17. 18. *for it is a pleasant thing if thou keep it within thee.* Thou wilt *eat Honey, because it is good,* Pro. 24. 13. 14. *and the honey-comb, which is sweet to the taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be to thy soul.* Could a learned man, that had hit upon a demonstration in *mathematics,* cry out in a transport of joy, *ἵυρηκα, ἵυρηκα,—I have found,—I have found;* and may not they much more boast of the discovery, that have found the knowledge of the Most High?

There is no pleasure in any learning like that of learning Christ, and the things that *belong to our everlasting peace;* for that which is known is not small and trivial, is not doubtful and uncertain, is not foreign to us, and which we are not concerned in; which are things that may much diminish the pleasure of any knowledge: but it is great and sure, and of the last importance to us, and the knowledge of it gives us satisfaction. Here we may rest our souls. To know the perfections of the divine nature, the unsearchable riches of divine grace, to be led into the mystery of our redemption and reconciliation by Christ; this is food, such knowledge as this is a feast to the soul: it is *meat indeed,* and *drink indeed;* it is the knowledge of that *which the Angels desire to look into,* 1 Pet. 1. 12. If the knowledge of the law of God was so sweet to David, *sweeter than honey to his taste,* Ps. 19. 10. 119. 103. how much more should the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ be so to us? When God gives this *wisdom* and *knowledge,* with it he *gives joy* to him that is *good in his sight,* Ecc. 2. 26.

I wonder what pleasure or satisfaction those can have in themselves, that are ignorant of God, and Christ, and another world, though they are told there is such

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such a knowledge to be had, and there are those that have it, and it is their continual entertainment. But thus do men stand in their own light, when they *love darkness rather than light.*

II. To be religious, is to *return to God, and repose in him as the rest of our souls.* And is not that pleasant? It is not only for our understandings to embrace the knowledge of him, but our affections to fasten upon the enjoyment of him: it is to love God as our *chief good,* and to rest in that love; to *love him with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and might,* who is well worthy of all that love, and infinitely more; amiable in himself, gracious to us; who will accept our love, and return it; who has promised to *love those that love him,* Pro. 8. 17. The love of God reigning in the soul (and that is true religion) is as much a satisfaction to the soul, as the love of the world is a vexation to it, when it comes to be reflected upon, and is found to be so ill bestowed.

How pleasant must it needs be, so far to recover ourselves, as to quit the world for a portion and happiness as utterly insufficient to be so, and to depend upon him to be so, who has enough in him to answer our utmost expectations? When we have in vain sought for satisfaction where it is not to be had, to seek it and find it where it is? To come from doating upon *lying vanities,* and *spending our money for that which is not bread* (Isa. 55. 2.) to live, and live plentifully upon a God that is enough, a God all-sufficient, and in him to enjoy *our own mercies?* Did ever any thing speak a mind more easy and better pleased than that of David, *return unto thy rest, O my soul?* (Ps. 116. 7.) to God as thy rest, for in him I am where I would be, I have what I would have: or that, (Ps. 16. 2, 5, 6.) *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup?* And then, *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage?* Or that, (Ps. 73. 25.) *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee; for when flesh and heart fail, thou art the strength* and joy *of my heart, and my portion for ever?*

Religion consists not in raptures and transports; yet without doubt, holy souls that are at home in God, that have *made the Most High their habitation,* (Ps. 91. 9.) whose desires are toward him, whose delights are in him, who are in him as their centre and element, *dwell at ease.* None can imagine the pleasure that a believer has in his covenant-relation to God, and interest in him, and the assurance of his love. Have I taken *thy testimonies* to be *my heritage for ever?* (Ps. 119. 111.) surely they are the *rejoicing of my heart;* I cannot be better provided for. When King Asa brought his people to renew their covenant with God, it is said *they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice and with shoutings, and with trumpets,* (2 Chr. 15. 14, 15.) *And all* Judah *rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart.* When we come to make it our own act and deed, to *join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant,* and are upright with him in it, we cannot but be pleased with what we have done; it is a marriage covenant, it is made with joy: (Cant. 2. 16.) *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

III. To be religious, is to *come to God as a father, in and by Jesus Christ as a mediator.* And is not this pleasant? We have not only the pleasure of knowing and loving God, but the pleasure of drawing nigh to him, and having by faith a humble freedom and intimacy with him; (Ps. 65. 4.) *Blessed are they that dwell in his courts,* they shall be *satisfied with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple.* Religion is described by coming *to* God; and what can be more agreeable to a soul that comes *from* him?

It is to come to God as a child to his father, to his father's house, to his father's arms, and to cry, *Abba, Father.* To come as a petitioner to his prince, is a *privilege;* but to come as a child to his father, is a *pleasure:* and this pleasure have all the saints, that have received the *Spirit of Adoption.* They can look up to the God that made them, as one that loves them, and has a tender compassion for them, *as a father has for his children,* (Ps. 103. 13.) and delights to do them good, *taking pleasure in their prosperity;* as one whom though they have offended, yet is reconciled to them, owns them as his children, and encourages them to call him father. When he afflicts them, they know it is in love, and for their benefit, and that still it is *their father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom,* Luke 12. 32. When Ephraim bemoaned himself *as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke,* God bemoaned him *as a dear son, as a pleasant child,* Jer. 31. 18. 20. And if even prodigals when penitents, become pleasant children to God, surely they have no reason to be unpleasant to themselves.

But this is not all, it is not only to come to God as a *father,* who *himself loves us,* (John 16. 27.) but it is to come to him *in the name of Jesus Christ,* who is our *advocate with the Father;* that by these *two immutable things* we might have *strong consolation,* that we have not only a God to go to, but an advocate to introduce us to him, and to speak for us. Believing in Christ is sometimes expressed by rejoicing in him; for it is a complacency of soul in the methods which infinite wisdom has taken, of bringing God and Man together by a Mediator. *We are the circumcision that rejoice in Christ Jesus,* (Phil. 3. 3.) not only rely upon him, but triumph in him. Paul is not only not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but he *glories in it,* Gal. 6. 14. And when the Eunuch is brought to *believe in Christ with all his heart,* he *goes on his way rejoicing,* highly pleased with what he has done.

What a pleasure, what a satisfaction is it, to lodge the great concerns of our souls and eternity (which surely, we cannot but have some careful thoughts about) in such a skilful faithful hand as that of our Lord Jesus? And this we do by faith. To *cast the burthen* upon him who is *able to save to the uttermost,* and as willing as he is able, and thus to make ourselves easy? How is blessed Paul elevated at the thought of this? *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again,* Rom. 8. 34. And with what pleasure does he reflect upon the confidence he

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had put in Jesus Christ? (2 Tim. 1. 12.) *I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.* They that know what it is to be in pain for sin, and in care to obtain the favour of God, cannot but know what a pleasure it is to believe in Christ as the propitiation for our sins, and our intercessor with God.

How can we live a more pleasant life, than to *live by the faith of the Son of God?* (Gal. 2. 20.) to be continually depending on him, and deriving from him, and referring all to him; and as we have received him, so to *walk in him?* It is in *believing*, that we are *filled with joy and peace*, Rom. 15. 13.

IV. To be religious, is *to enjoy God in all our creature-comforts;* and is not that pleasant? It is to take the common supports and conveniencies of life, (be they of the richest, or be they of the meanest,) as the products of his providential care concerning us, and the gifts of his bounty to us, and in them to *taste and see that the Lord is good*, (Ps. 34. 8.) good to all, good to us. It is to look above second causes to the first, through the creature to the Creator, and to say concerning every thing, that is agreeable and serviceable to us, "This I asked, and this I have from the hand of my heavenly Father." What a noble taste and relish does this put into all the blessings with which we are daily loaded, our health and ease, our rest and sleep, our food and raiment, all the satisfaction we have in our relations, peace in our dwellings, success in our callings? the sweetness of these is more than doubled, it is highly raised, when by our religion we are taught and enabled to see them all coming to us from the goodness of God, as our great benefactor, and thus to enjoy them *richly*, (1 Tim. 6. 17.) while those who look no further than the creature, enjoy them very *poorly*, and only as the inferior creatures do.

Carnal, irreligious people, though they take a greater liberty in the use of the delights of sense than good people dare take, and therein think they have the advantage of them, yet, I am confident they have not half the true delight in them that good people have; not only because all excesses are a force upon nature, and surfeits are as painful as hunger and thirst, but because, (though they do not thus abuse God's good creatures) they deprive themselves of the comfort of receiving them from their Father's hand, and are not affected to him as obedient children. *They knew not that I gave them corn, and wine, and oil,* Hos. 2. 8. They make use of the creature, but (Isa. 22. 11.) *They have not looked unto the Maker thereof, nor had respect to him that fashioned it long ago*, as good people do, and so they come short of the pleasure which good people have.

Is it not pleasant to taste covenant-love in common mercies? Very pleasant to see the hand of our heavenly Father spreading our table, filling our cup, making our houses safe, and our beds easy? This they do, that by faith have their eyes ever towards the Lord, that by prayer fetch in his blessing upon all their enjoyments, and by praise give the glory of them to that *Mercy* of his which *endureth for ever*. And when thus a continual regard is had to that Mercy, an abundant sweetness is thereby infused into all the comforts of this life; for as the wrath and curse of God is the wormwood and the gall, (Lam. 3. 19.) in all the *afflictions* and *miseries* of this life; so his loving kindness is the honey and oil in all the comforts and enjoyments of this life: that is it which is *better than life*, (Ps. 63. 3.) and which is abundantly satisfying; which *puts gladness into the heart beyond the Joy of Harvest*, Ps. 4. 7. Then the *nations* are *glad, and sing for joy*, when not only *the earth yields her increase*, but with it God, even *their own God, gives them his blessing*, Ps. 67. 4. 6. And when the Church is brought to such a sense of God's Grace, as to cry out, *How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!* (Zech. 9. 17.) it follows, that then *Corn shall make the young men cheerful;* intimating that we have no joy of our enjoyments, no true joy of them, till we are led by these streams to the fountain. *To the pure, all things are pure*, (Tit. 1. 15.) and the more pure they are, the more pleasant they are.

V. To be religious, is to *cast all our cares upon God, and to commit all our ways and works to him, with an assurance that he will care for us.* And is not this pleasant? It is a very sensible pleasure to be eased of some pressing burthen which we are ready to sink under; and care is such a burthen: it is a heaviness in the heart of man, which makes it to stoop. Now true religion enables us to *acknowledge God in all our ways*, (Pro. 3. 6.) and then depend upon him to *direct our steps*, and follow his directions, not leaning to our own understanding. It is to refer ourselves, and the disposal of every thing that concerns us in this world, to God, and to his will and wisdom, with an entire acquiescence in his award and arbitration; *Here I am, let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his eyes*, 2 Sam. 15. 26.

To be truly godly, is to have our wills melted into the will of God in every thing, and to say *Amen* to it, not only as a prayer, but as a covenant; *Father in Heaven, thy will be done; not as I will, but as thou wilt.* It is to be fully reconciled to all the disposals of the divine providence, and methods of divine grace, both concerning others and ourselves: to be satisfied that all is well that God does, and will appear so at last, when the mystery of God shall be finished. And how does the mind enjoy itself that is come to this! How easy is it! It is not only freed from racking anxieties, but filled with pleasing prospects: fears are hereby silenced, and hopes kept up and elevated. Nothing can come amiss to those, who have thus been taught by the principles of their religion to make the best of that which is, because it is the will of God; which is making a virtue of necessity.

What uncomfortable lives do they live, that are continually fretting at that which cannot be helped, quarrelling with the disposals of Providence, when they cannot alter them; and thus by contracting guilt as well as by indulging grief, doubling every burthen? But how pleasantly do they travel through the wilderness of this world, who constantly *follow the Pillar of Cloud and Fire*, and accommodate themselves to their lot, whatever

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whatever it is? That, like Paul, through Christ strengthening them, have learned *in every estate to be content, know how to want, and how to abound?* Phil. 4. 11, 12, 13.

Religion brings the mind to the condition, whatever it is, and so makes it easy, because, the condition, though it be not in every thing to our mind, it is according to God's mind, who, in all occurrences *performeth the thing that is appointed for us,* (Job 23. 14.) and will make all *work for good to them that love him.* When the Psalmist had directed us to *delight ourselves always in the Lord,* (Ps. 37. 4. 5.) that is, to make our religion a constant pleasure to ourselves, he directs us in order thereunto, to *commit our way unto the Lord,* to *trust also in him* that he will *bring it to pass,* so that we shall have *the desire of our hearts.* And when St. Paul had encouraged us to be *careful for nothing,* but *in every thing* to *make our requests known to God,* he assures us that if we do so, *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds,* Phil. 4. 6. 7.

VI. To be religious, is to *rejoice in the Lord alway,* Phil. 3. 1. and 4. 4. And is not that pleasant? It is not only one of the privileges of our religion that we may rejoice, but it is made one of the duties of it. We are defective in our religion, if we do not live a life of complacency in God, in his Being, his Attributes, and Relations to us. It should be a constant pleasure to us, to think that there is a God; that he is such a one as the scripture has revealed him to be, a Being infinitely wise and powerful, holy, just and good; that this God governs the world, and gives law to all the creatures; that he is our owner and ruler; that in his hand our breath is, in his hand our times, our hearts, and all our ways are. Thus certainly it is, and thus it must be, and happy they that can please themselves with these thoughts; as those must needs be a constant terror to themselves, who could wish it were otherwise.

They who thus delight in God have always something, and something very commanding too, to delight in; a fountain of joy that can never be either exhausted or stopped up, and to which they may always have access. How few are there that *live many days,* and *rejoice in them all!* Eccl. 11. 8. Such a thing is supposed indeed, but it is never found true in any, but those that make God their joy, the gladness of their joy, as the Psalmist expresses it, (Ps. 43. 4.) their *exceeding joy:* and in him it is intended the joy should terminate, when we are bid to *rejoice evermore,* 1 Thess. 5. 16.

The conversion of the nations to Christ, and his holy religion, is often prophesied of in the Old Testament, under the notion of their being brought into a state of *holy joy;* (Ps. 96. 11. and 97. 1. and 100. 1.) *Let the Earth rejoice that the Lord reigns,* and *let the multitude of Isles be glad thereof; make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands.* The Gospel is *glad tidings of great joy to all people.* Rom. 15. 10. When Samaria received the Gospel, *there was great joy in that city,* Acts 8. 8. so essential is joy to religion.

And the conversation of those that are joined to the Lord, when it is as it should be, is cheerful and joyful: They are called upon to *walk in the Light of the Lord,* (Isa. 2. 5.) and to *sing in the ways of the Lord,* (Ps. 138. 5.) and to *serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the abundance of all things,* (Deut. 28. 47.) yea, and in the want of all things too, (Hab. 3. 17.) *Though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine.* Has God now accepted *thee,* and thy works in Jesus Christ, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart;* Eccl. 9. 7. It is the will of God that his people should be a cheerful people, that his Israel should *rejoice in every good thing which the Lord their God giveth them,* (Deut. 26. 11.) so, that it is their own fault if they have not a continual feast, and be not made to rejoice with the out-goings of every morning and every evening; for the compassions of that God, in whom they rejoice, are not only constant, but new and fresh daily.

VII. To be religious, is to *make a business of praising God:* And is not that pleasant? It is indeed very unpleasant, and contrary to our inclination, to be obliged continually to praise one that is not worthy of praise; but what can be more pleasant, than to praise him to whom *all* praise is due, and *ours* particularly? to whom we and all the creatures lie under all possible obligations; who is worthy of, and yet exalted far above all blessing and praise; from whom all things are, and therefore to whom all things ought to be?

There is little pleasure in praising one, whom none praise that are wise and good, but only the *fools in* Israel; but in praising God we concur with the blessed Angels in heaven, and all the saints, and do it in concert with them, who the more they know him, the more they praise him. *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, and all his Hosts;* and therefore with what pleasure can I cast in my mite into such a treasury, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul!*

There is little pleasure in praising one, who will not regard our praises, nor take notice of our expressions of esteem and affection: But when we *offer to God the sacrifice of praise continually,* (according to the obligation which our religion lays upon us) that is, *the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name,* (Heb. 13. 15.) we offer it to one that takes notice of it, accepts it, is well pleased with it, smells *a savour of rest* from it, (Gen. 8. 21.) and will not fail to meet those with his mercies, who follow him with their praises: for he has said, that they who *offer praise, glorify him;* such a favourable construction does he put upon it, and such a high stamp upon coarse metal.

Now what is it that we have to do in religion but to *praise God?* We are taken into covenant with God, that we should be to him *for a name, and for a praise,* (Jer. 13. 11.) are called into his *marvellous light,* that we should *shew forth the praises of him that called us,* (1 Pet. 2. 9.) And how can we be more comfortably employed? They are therefore, *blessed that dwell in God's House,* for *they will be still praising him,* Ps. 84. 4. And *it is a good thing,* good in itself, and good for us; it is very pleasant *to give thanks unto the Lord,* and to *shew forth his praises,* (Ps. 135. 3. and 92. 1.) for we cannot

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cannot do ourselves a greater honour, or fetch in a greater satisfaction, than by *giving unto the Lord the glory due unto his name:* it is not only a heaven upon earth, but it is a pledge and earnest of a heaven in heaven too; for if we be here *every day blessing God,* (Ps. 145. 2.) we shall be *praising him for ever and ever;* for thus all that shall go to heaven hereafter, begin their heaven now. Compare the hellish pleasure which some take in profaning the name of God, and the heavenly pleasure which others take in glorifying it, and tell me which is preferable.

VIII. To be religious, is *to have all our inordinate appetites corrected and regulated:* and is not that pleasant? To be eased from pain is a sensible pleasure, and to be eased from that which is the disease and disorder of the mind, is a mental pleasure. Those certainly live a most unpleasant, uncomfortable life, that are slaves to their appetites, and indulge themselves in the gratifications of sense, though ever so criminal; that lay the reins in the neck of their lusts, and withhold not their hearts from any joy. The drunkards and unclean persons, though they are said to give themselves up to their pleasures, yet really, they estrange themselves from that which is true pleasure, and subject themselves to a continual pain and uneasiness.

The carnal appetite is often overcharged, and that is a burthen to the body, and its distemper. When enough is as good as a feast, I wonder what pleasure it can be to take more than enough; and the appetite, the more it is indulged, the more humoursome and troublesome it grows; it is *surfeited,* but not *satisfied;* it does but grow more impetuous, and more imperious. It is true of the body, what Solomon says of a servant, (Pro. 29. 21.) *He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son,* nay his master, *at the length.* If we suffer the body to get dominion over the soul, so that the interests of the soul must be damaged to gratify the inclinations of the body, it will be a tyrant (as a usurper generally is,) and will rule with rigour: And as God said to the people, (1 Sam. 8. 18. when by Samuel he had shewed them *the Manner of the King* that they chose, when they rejected his government,) *You will cry out in that day because of your King which ye have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear;* so it is with those that bring themselves into disorders, diseases, and terrors by the indulgence of their lusts; who can pity them? they are well enough served for *setting such a King over them. Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow?* (Pro. 23. 29, 30.) None so much as they that *tarry long at the wine,* though they think themselves to have the monopoly of pleasure. The truth is, they that live in these pleasures are *dead while they live,* (1 Tim. 5. 6.) and while they fancy themselves to take the greatest liberty, really find themselves in the greatest slavery; for they are *led captive by Satan at his will,* and of *whom a Man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage,* 2 Pet. 2. 19.

And if the carnal appetite has not gained such a complete possession, as quite to extinguish all the remains of reason and conscience; those noble powers, since they are not permitted to give *law,* will give *disturbance;* and there are few that have so full an enjoyment of the forbidden pleasures of sense, but that they sometimes feel the checks of reason, and the terrors of conscience, which mar their mirth, as the hand-writing on the wall did Belshazzar's, and make their lives uncomfortable to them, and justly so, which makes them the more so.

Now to be religious, is to have the exorbitant power of those lusts and appetites broken, and since they will not be satisfied, to have them mortified, and brought into a quiet submission to the commanding faculties of the soul, according to the direction of the divine law; and thus the peace is preserved, by supporting good order and government in the soul.

Those certainly live the most easy, healthful, pleasant lives, that are most sober, temperate, and chaste; that allow not themselves to eat of any forbidden tree, though *pleasant to the eye;* that live regularly, and are the masters, not the servants, of *their own bellies,* (1 Cor. 9. 27.) that *keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection* to religion and right reason; and by laying the axe to the root, and breaking vicious habits, dispositions, and desires, in the strength of divine grace, have made the refraining from vicious acts very easy and pleasant: Rom. 8. 13. *If through the Spirit* we *mortify the deeds of the body,* we live, we live pleasantly.

IX. To be religious, is *to have all our unruly passions likewise governed and subdued:* And is not that pleasant? Much of our torment arises from our intemperate heats, discontent at the providence of God, fretfulness at every cross occurrence, fear of every imaginary evil, envy at those that are in a better state than ourselves, malice against those that have injured us, and an angry resentment of every, the least provocation. These are thorns and briars in the soul; these spoil all our enjoyments, both of ourselves, and of our friends, and of our God too; these make mens' lives unpleasant, and them a terror to themselves, and to all about them.

But when by the grace of God these *roots of bitterness* are plucked up, which bear so much *gall and wormwood,* and we have learned of our Master to be *meek and lowly in heart,* (Mat. 11. 29.) we find *rest to our souls,* we enter into the *pleasant land.* There is scarcely any of the graces of a christian, that have more of a present tranquillity and satisfaction, both inherent in them, and annexed to them, than this of meekness. *The meek shall eat, and be satisfied,* (Ps. 22. 26.) they shall *inherit the earth,* (Mat. 5. 5.) they shall *delight themselves in theabundance of peace,* (Ps. 37. 11.) and they shall *increase their joy in the Lord,* (Isa. 29. 19.) which nothing diminishes more than ungoverned passion; for that grieves the Spirit of grace the Comforter, and provokes him to withdraw, Eph. 4. 30 31.

How pleasant it is for a man to be master of his own thoughts, to have a calmness and serenity in his own mind, as those have, who have *rule over their own spirits,* and thereby are *kept in Peace; Peace,* that will break an angry man's heart, but that will not break a meek man's sleep.

X. To

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X. To be religious, is to *dwell in love to all our brethren*, and *to do all the good we can in this world.* And is not that pleasant? Love is the *fulfilling of the law*; it is the second great commandment, to *love our Neighbour as ourselves*, Rom. 13. 10. All our duty, is summed up in one word, which as it is a short word, so it is a sweet word, *Love.* Behold *how good and how pleasant it is to live in holy love!* Ps. 133. 1. It is not only pleasing to God, and amiable in the eyes of all good men, but it will be very comfortable to ourselves; for they that *dwell in love, dwell in God, and God in them*, 1 John 4. 16.

Religion teaches us to be kind to our relations, and to please them well in all things, neither to give, nor resent provocations, to bear with their infirmities, to be courteous and obliging to all with whom we converse; to keep our temper, and the possession and enjoyment of our own souls, whatever affronts are given us: And can any thing contribute more to our living pleasantly?

By love we enjoy our friends, and have communion with them in all their comforts, and so add to our own; rejoicing with them that do rejoice, 1 Thess. 3. 9. By love we recommend ourselves to their love, and what more delightful than to love, and be beloved? Love is the very element of a pure and sanctified mind, the sweet air it breathes in, the cement of the best society, which contributes so much to the pleasure of human life. The sheep of Christ, united in flocks by the bond of holy love, lie down together in the *green pastures* by the *still waters*, where there is not only plenty, but pleasure. The Apostle (exhorting his friends to *be of good comfort*, [2 Cor. 13. 11.] and to go on cheerfully in their christian course,) exhorts them, in order to that, to *be of one mind, and to live in peace*, and then *the God of love and peace will be with them.*

And what pleasure comparable to that of doing good? It is some participation of the pleasure of the Eternal Mind, who delights to shew mercy, and to do good: Nay, besides the *divinity* of this pleasure, there is a *humanity* in it; the nature of man, if it be not debauched and vitiated, cannot but take pleasure in making any body safe and easy. It was a pleasure to Job, to think that he had *caused the widow's heart to sing for joy*, had been *eyes to the blind, feet to the lame*, and *a father to the poor*, and that they had been *warmed with the fleece of his sheep*, Job. 29. 13, 15, 16. and 31. 20. The pleasure that a good man has in doing good, confirms that saying of our Saviour's, that *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 35.

XI. To be religious, is to *live a life of communion with God.* And is not that pleasant? Good christians being taken into friendship, have *Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, (1 John 1. 3.) and make it their business to keep up that holy converse and correspondence. Herein consists the life of religion, to converse with God, to receive his communications of mercy and grace to us, and to return pious and devout affections to him; and can any life be more comfortable? Is there any conversation that can possibly be so pleasant as this to a soul that knows itself, and its own powers and interests?

In reading and meditating upon the word of God, we hear God speaking with a great deal of condescension to us, and concern for us, speaking *freely* to us, as a man does to his friend, and about our own business, speaking *comfortably* to us in compassion to our distressful case; and what can be more pleasant to those who have a value for the favour of God, and care about the interests of their own souls? Ps. 141. 6. *When their judges are overthrown in stony-places, they shall hear my words, for they are sweet:* the words of God will be very sweet to those who see themselves overthrown by sin, and so they will be to all that love God. With what an air of pleasure does the spouse say, *It is the voice of my beloved*, and he speaks *to me*? Cant. 2. 8, 10.

In prayer and praise we speak to God, and we have liberty of speech, have leave to *utter all our words before the Lord*, as Jepthah did his in Mizpeh, Judg. 11. 11. We speak to one whose ear is open, is bowed to our prayers, nay, to whom the *prayer of the upright* is a *delight*, (Pro. 15. 8.) which cannot but make it a very great delight to them to pray. It is not only an *ease* to a burthened spirit to unbosom itself to such a friend as God is, but a pleasure to a soul that knows its own extraction, to have such a *boldness*, (as all believers have,) to *enter into the holiest.*

Nay, we may as truly have communion with God in providences as in ordinances, and in the duties of common conversation, as in religious exercises; and thus, that pleasure may become a continual feast to our souls. What can be more pleasant, than to have a God to go to, whom we may *acknowledge in all our ways*, and whom our *eyes are ever towards*; (Ps. 25. 15.) to see all our comforts coming to us from his hand, and all our crosses too; to refer ourselves, and all events, that are concerning us, to his disposal, with an assurance that he will order all for the best? What a pleasure is it to behold the beauty of the Lord in all his works, and to taste the goodness of the Lord in all his gifts, in all our expectations to see every man's judgment proceeding from him; to make God our hope, and God our fear, and God our joy, and God our life, and God our all? This is to live a life of communion with God.

XII. To be religious, is to *keep up a constant expectation of the Glory to be revealed:* it is to set eternal life before us as the mark we aim at, and the prize we run for, and to *seek the things that are above*, Col. 3. 1. And is not this pleasant? It is our duty to think much of heaven, to place our happiness in its joys, and thitherward to direct our aims and pursuits; and what subject, what object can be more pleasing! We have need, sometimes, to frighten ourselves from sin, with the terrors of *eternal death*; but it is much more a part of our religion, to encourage ourselves in our duty, with the hopes of that *eternal life* which God hath given us, that *Life which is in his Son*, 1 John 5. 11.

What is christianity, but *having our conversation in Heaven*, (Phil. 3. 20.) trading with the *New Jerusalem*, and keeping up a constant correspondence with that *better country, that is, the heavenly*, as the country we belong

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belong to, and are in expectation of; to which we remit our best effects and best affections; where our head and home is, and where we hope and long to be?

Then we are as we should be, when our minds are in a heavenly frame and temper; then we do as we should do, when we are employed in the heavenly work, as we are capable of doing it in this lower world, and is not our religion then a heaven upon earth? If there be a fulness of joy and pleasure in that glory and happiness, which is *Grace* and *Holiness* perfected; there cannot but be an abundance of joy and pleasure in that *Grace* and *Holiness*, which is *Glory* and *Happiness* begun. If there will be such a complete satisfaction in vision and fruition, there cannot but be a great deal in faith and hope, so well founded as that of the saints is. Hence we are said, *believing to rejoice with joy unspeakable*, (1 Pet. 1. 8.) and to be *filled with joy and peace in believing*, Rom. 15. 13.

It is the character of all God's people, that they are born *from* heaven, and bound *for* heaven, and have laid up their treasure *in* heaven; and they that know how great, how rich, how glorious, and how well secured that happiness is to all believers, cannot but own, that if that be their character, it cannot but be their unspeakable comfort and delight.

Now sum up the whole, and then tell me, whether religion be not a pleasant thing indeed, when even the *duties* of it themselves are so much the delights of it: And whether we do not serve a good master, who has thus made our work its own wages, and has graciously provided *two* heavens for those, that never deserved *one*.

CHAP. III.

The Pleasantness of Religion proved, from the Provision that is made for the Comfort of those who are Religious, and the Privileges they are entitled to.

WE have already found by *inquiry*, (O! that we could all say we had found by experience!) that the very principles and practices of religion themselves have a great deal of pleasantness in them, and the one half of it has not been told us; and yet the comfort that attends religion, and follows after it, cannot but exceed that which is inherent in it, and comes with it. If the *work of righteousness* be *peace*, much more is the *effect of righteousness* so. Isa. 32. 17. If the precepts of religion have such an air of sweetness in them, what then have the comforts of it? Behold, *happy is the people*, even in this world, *whose God is the Lord*.

We must conclude, that they who walk in the ways of *Holy Wisdom*, have, or may have, true *peace* and *pleasure*; for God has both taken care for their comfort, and given them cause to be comforted: so that if they do not live easily and pleasantly, it is their own fault.

I. The God whom they serve, has, in general, taken care *for* their comfort, and has done enough to convince them, that it is his will they should be comforted; that he not only gives them leave to be cheerful, but would have them to be so: for what could have been done more to the satisfaction of his family, than he has done in it?

1. There is a *Purchase made* of peace and pleasure for them, so that they come to it fairly, and by a good title. He that purchased them a *peculiar people* to himself, took care that they should be a pleasant people, that their comforts might be a credit to his cause, and the joy of his servants in his work might be a reputation to his family. We have not only *Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, (Rom. 5. 1, 2, 3.) but peace in our own consciences too; not only peace *above*, but peace *within*; and nothing less will pacify an offended conscience, than that which satisfied an offended God. Yet this is not all, we have not only inward peace, but we *rejoice in the hope of the glory of God*, and triumph *over*, nay, we triumph *in Tribulation*.

Think what a vast expence (if I may so say) God was at, of blood and treasure, to lay up for us, and secure to us, not only a future bliss, but present pleasure, and the felicities not only of our home, but of our way. Christ had *trouble*, that we might have *peace; pain*, that we might have *pleasure; sorrow*, that we might have *joy*. He wore the crown of thorns, that he might crown us with roses, and a lasting joy might be upon our heads. He put on the *Spirit of Heaviness*, that we might be arrayed with the *Garments of Praise*. The garden was the place of his agony, that it might be to us a *Garden of Eden*, and there it was that he covenanted with his prosecutors for the disciples, (upon his surrendering himself,) saying in effect to all agonies, as he did to them, *If ye seek me, let these go their way*, (John 18. 8.) If I be resigned to trouble, let them *depart in peace*.

This was that which made *Wisdom's* ways *pleasantness*, the *everlasting righteousness* which Christ, by dying, wrought out, and brought in. This is the foundation of the treaty of peace, and consequently the fountain of all those consolations which believers are happy in. Then it is, that *all the seed of* Israel *glory*, when they can each of them say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; (Isa. 45. 24, 25.) and then Israel shall dwell safely, in a holy security, when they have learned to call Christ by this name, *The Lord our Righteousness*, Jer. 23. 6. If Christ had not gone to the Father, as our High Priest, with the blood of sprinkling in his hand, we could never have rejoiced, but must have been always trembling.

Christ is *our peace*, (Eph. 2. 14, 17.) not only as he *made peace* for us with God, but as he *preached* to them *that were afar off, and to them that were nigh*, and has engaged that his people, whenever they may have trouble in the world, shall have *peace in him*; (John 16. 33.) upon the assurance of which, they may *be of good cheer*, whatever happens. It is observable, that in the close of that ordinance which Christ instituted in *the night wherein he was betrayed*, (to be a memorial of his sufferings,) he both sung a hymn of joy, and preached a sermon of comfort; to intimate, that, that which he designed in dying for us, was to give us *everlasting consolation, and good hope through Grace*, (2 Thess. 2. 16.) and that we should aim at in all our commemorations of his death.

Peace and comfort are bought and paid for; if any of those who were designed to have the benefit of this purchase,

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purchase, deprive themselves of it, let them bear the blame, but let him have the praise who intended them the kindness; and who will take care, that though his kindness be deferred, it shall not be defeated; for though his disciples may be sorrowful for a time, *their sorrow shall be turned into joy*, John 16. 20.

2. There are *promises made* to believers of *peace* and *pleasure*. The benefits Christ bought for them are conveyed to them, and settled upon them in the covenant of grace; which is *well-ordered in all things*, (2 Sam. 23. 5.) for the comfort and satisfaction of those, who have made that covenant *all their salvation, and all their desire*. There it is that *light is sown for the righteous*, and it will come up again in due time; the promises of that covenant are the *wells of salvation*, out of which they *draw water with joy*; the *breasts of consolation*, out of which, by faith, they *suck and are satisfied*, Isa. 12. 3. and 66. 11.

The promises of the Old Testament, that point at Gospel-Times, speak mostly of this as the blessing reserved for those times, that there should be great joy and rejoicing; (Isa. 35. 1. and 60. 1.) *The desart shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; Arise, shine, for the light is come*. The design of the gospel was to make religion a more pleasant thing than it had been, by freeing it, both from the burthensome services which the Jews were under, and from the superstitious fears which the Heathen kept themselves, and one another in awe with; by enlarging the privileges of God's people, and making them easier to come at.

Every particular believer is interested in the promises made to the Church, and may put them in suit, and fetch in the comfort contained in them, as every citizen has the benefit of the Charter, even the meanest. What a pleasure may one take in applying such a promise as that, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee?* Or that, *All things shall work for good to them that love God?* These, and such as these, *guide our feet in the ways of peace*; and as they are a firm foundation on which to build our hopes, so they are a full fountain from which to draw our joys. By the *exceeding great and precious promises*, we *partake of a divine nature*, (2 Pet. 1. 4.) in this instance of it as much as any, a comfortable enjoyment of ourselves, and by all the other promises that promise is fulfilled: Isa. 65. 13, 14. *My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart:* and the encouragement given to all the Church's faithful friends, is made good, *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her*; Isa. 66. 10.

3. There is *provision made for the application* of that which is *purchased* and *promised* to the saints. What will it avail that there is wine in the vessel, if it be not drawn out? That there is a cordial made up, if it be not administered? Care is therefore taken, that the people of God be assisted, in making use of the comforts treasured up for them in the everlasting covenant.

A religious life, one may well expect, should be a very comfortable life; for infinite Wisdom has devised all the means that could be to make it so; *What could have been done more for God's vineyard*, (Isa. 5. 4.) to make it flourishing as well as fruitful, than what he has *done in it?* There is not only an overflowing fulness of oil in the *Good Olive*, but *Golden Pipes*, (as in the prophet's vision, Zech. 4. 12.) for the conveyance of that oil to the lamps, to keep them burning. When God would himself furnish a Paradise for a beloved creature, there was nothing wanting that might contribute to the comfort of it; in it was planted *every tree that was pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, (Gen. 2. 9.) so in the Gospel there is a Paradise planted for all the faithful offspring of the second Adam: a Canaan, a land *flowing with milk and honey*, a *pleasant land*, a *rest* for all the spiritual seed of Abraham. Now, as God put Adam into Paradise, and brought Israel into Canaan, so, he has provided for the giving of possession to all believers, of all that comfort and pleasure that is laid up for them. As in the garden of Eden, innocency and pleasure were twisted together; so, in the Gospel of Christ, grace and peace, *righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, (Ps. 85. 10.) and all is done that could be wished, in order to our *entering into this rest*, this blessed *Sabbath*, (Heb. 4. 3, 9.) So that if we have not the benefit of it, we may thank ourselves; God would have comforted us, and we would not be comforted, our souls refused it.

Four things are done with this view, that those who live a godly life, may live a comfortable and pleasant life: and it is a pity they should receive the grace of God herein in vain.

(1.) The *Blessed Spirit* is sent to be the *Comforter*; he does also enlighten, convince, and sanctify, but he has his name from this part of his office, (John 14. 16.) he is, ὁ παράκλητος, *the Comforter*. As the *Son of God* was sent to be the *Consolation* of *Israel*, (Luke 2. 25.) to provide matter for comfort; so the *Spirit of God* was sent to be the comforter to apply the consolation which the Lord Jesus has provided. Christ came to make peace, and the Spirit to speak peace, and to *make us to hear joy and gladness*, even such as will cause *broken bones* themselves to *rejoice*, Ps. 51. 8. Christ having wrought out the salvation for us, the work of the Spirit is to give us the comfort of it; hence the joy of the saints is said to be the *Joy of the Holy Ghost*, (1 Thess. 1. 6.) because, it is his office to administer such comforts, as tend to the filling of us with joy.

God by his Spirit *moving on the face of the waters*, made the world according to the word of his power; and by his Spirit moving on the souls of his people; even when they are a perfect Chaos, he *creates the fruit of the lips, Peace*, (Isa. 57. 19.) the product of the word of his promise; and if he did not create it, it would never be: and we must not only attend to the word of God speaking to us, but submit to the Spirit of God working upon us with the word.

The Spirit, as a Comforter, was given not only for the relief of the saints in the suffering ages of the Church, but to continue with the Church *alway to the end*, for the comfort of believers, in reference to their constant sorrows both temporal and spiritual; and what a favour

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is this to the Church, no less needful, no less advantageous than the sending of the Son of God to save us, and for which, therefore, we should be no less thankful. Let this article never be left out of our songs of praise, but let us always give thanks to him, who not only sent his *Son* to *make satisfaction for us,* for *his mercy endureth for ever,* but sent his *Spirit to give satisfaction for us,* for *his mercy endureth for ever;* sent his Spirit not only to work in us the disposition of children towards him, but also to witness to our adoption, and *seal us to the day of redemption.*

The Spirit is given to be our Teacher, and to *lead us into all truth,* and as such he is a Comforter; for by rectifying our mistakes, and setting things in a true light, he silences our doubts and fears, and sets things in a pleasant light. The Spirit is our Remembrancer, to put us in mind of that which we do know, and as such he is a Comforter; for, like the disciples, we distrust Christ in every exigence, because we *forget the miracles of the loaves,* Mat. 16. 9. The Spirit is our Sanctifier; by him sin is mortified, and grace wrought and strengthened, and as such he is our Comforter; for nothing tends so much to make us easy, as that which tends to make us holy. The Spirit is our Guide, and we are said to be *led by the Spirit,* and as such he is our Comforter; for under his conduct we cannot but be led into *Ways of Pleasantness,* to the *green Pastures,* and *still Waters.*

(2.) The *Scriptures* are written, *that our joy may be full;* (1 John 1. 4.) that we may have that joy which alone is filling, and has that in it which will fill up the vacancies of other joys, and make up their deficiencies; and that we may be full of that joy, may have more and more of it, may be wholly taken up with it, and may come, at length, to the full perfection of it in the kingdom of glory: *these things are written to you,* not only that you may *receive the word with joy,* at first, when it is a new thing to you, but that your *joy may be full,* and constant. The word of God is the chief conveyance, by which comfort is communicated from Christ, the fountain of life, to all the saints. That book, which the *Lamb,* that was *slain,* took out of the *right hand of him that sat on the throne,* is that which we are by faith to feed upon and digest, and to fill our souls with; and we shall find that it will, like Ezekiel's roll, (Ezek. 3. 3.) *be in our mouths as honey for sweetness,* and the opening of its seals will put a *new song into our mouth,* Rev. 5. 9.

Scripture light is pleasant, much more sweet, more pleasant, than for the *Eyes to behold the sun;* the manner of its conveyance is such, as makes it abundantly more so, for God speaks to us after the manner of men, in our own language. The comforts which the Scripture speaks to us, are the *sure mercies of David,* such as we may depend upon, and it is continually speaking: The Scriptures we may have always with us, and whenever we will, we may have recourse to them; so that we need not be to seek for cordials at any time! The *word is nigh thee,* (Rom. 10. 8.) in thy house, and in thy hand, and it is thine own fault if it be not in *thy mouth,* and in thy heart. Nor is it a spring shut up, *nor a fountain sealed;* those that compare spiritual things with spiritual, will find the Scripture its own interpreter; and spiritual pleasure to flow from it as easily, as plentifully, to all that have spiritual senses exercised, as the honey from the comb.

The Saints have found pleasure in the word of God, and all those who have given up themselves to be led and ruled by it. It was such a comfort to David in his distress, that if he had not had that for his *delight,* he would have *perished in his affliction,* (Ps. 119. 92.) nay, he had the joy of God's word to be his continual entertainment, (Ps. 119. 54.) *Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage:*—"*Thy words were found,* (says Jeremiah,) *and I did eat them,* feast upon them with as much pleasure, as ever any hungry man did upon his necessary food, or epicure upon his dainties: I perfectly regaled myself with them; and *thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;*" (Jer. 15. 16.) and we not only come short of their experiences, but frustrate God's gracious intentions, if we do not find pleasure in the word of God; for *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope,* Rom. 15. 4.

(3.) *Holy Ordinances* were *instituted* for the furtherance of our comfort, and to make our religion pleasant unto us. The conversation of friends with each other, is reckoned one of the greatest delights of this world; now ordinances are instituted for the keeping up of our communion with God, which is the greatest delight of the soul that is allied to the other world. God appointed to the Jewish Church a great many feasts in the year (and but one fast, and that but for one day) for this end, that they might *rejoice before the Lord their God,* they and their families, Deut. 16. 11.

Prayer is an ordinance of God, appointed for the fetching in of that peace and pleasure which is provided for us. It is intended to be not only the ease of our *hearts,* by casting our burthen upon God, as it was to Hannah, (1 Sam. 1. 18.) who, when she had prayed, *went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad;* but to be the joy of our hearts, by putting the promises in suit, and improving our acquaintance with heaven, *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,* John 16. 24. There is a throne of grace erected for us to come to; a Mediator of grace appointed, in whose name to come; the Spirit of grace given to help our infirmities, and an answer of peace promised to every prayer of faith: and all this, that we might fetch in, not only sanctifying, but comforting grace *in every time of need,* Heb. 4. 16. God's house, in which wisdom's children dwell, is called *A house of prayer,* and thither God brings them, on purpose to *make them joyful,* Isa. 56. 7.

Singing of psalms is a gospel-ordinance, that is designed to contribute to the pleasantness of our religion; not only to express, but to excite, and to increase our holy joy. In singing to the Lord, we make a *joyful noise to the rock of our salvation,* Ps. 95. 1. When the Apostle had warned all christians to take heed of drunkenness, *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,* lest

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lest they should think, that thereby he restrained them from any mirth, that would do them good, he directs them instead of the song of the drunkard, when the heart is merry with wine, to entertain themselves with the songs of angels, (Eph. 5. 18, 19.) *Speaking to yourselves* (when you are disposed to please yourselves) *in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.* There is no substance in this ordinance, but the word and prayer put together, but the circumstance of the voice and tune being a natural means of affecting our hearts, both with the one and with the other, God, in condescension to our state, has been pleased to make a particular ordinance of it, to shew how much it is his will, that we should be cheerful: (Jam. 5. 13.) *Is any merry, let him sing Psalms.* Is any vainly merry? let him suppress the vanity, and turn the mirth into a right channel; he need not banish, nor abjure the mirth, but let it be holy, heavenly mirth, and in that mirth, let him sing psalms. Nay, *Is any afflicted*, and merry in his affliction, let him shew it by *singing psalms*, as Paul and Silas did, *in the Stocks*, Acts 16. 25.

The Lords-Day is appointed to be a pleasant day, a day of holy rest, nay, and a day too of holy joy; a thanksgiving day: (Ps. 118. 24.) *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice, and be glad in it.* The psalm and song for the Sabbath-Day begins thus, *It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord*, Ps. 92. 1. So far were the primitive christians carried in this notion, that the Lord's-Day was designed for holy triumph and exultation, that they thought it improper to kneel in any act of worship on that day.

The Lord's-Supper is a spiritual feast; and a *feast* (Solomon says, Ecc. 10. 19.) was *made for laughter*, and so was this for holy joy. We celebrate the memorials of his death, that we may rejoice in the victories that he obtained, and the purchases he made by his death; and may apply to ourselves the privileges and comforts, which by the covenant of grace are made *ours*. *There* we cannot but be *glad*, and *rejoice in him, where* we *remember his love more than wine*, Cant. 1. 4.

(4.) The ministry is appointed for the comfort of the saints, and their guides in the ways of wisdom are instructed, by all means possible, to make them *ways of Pleasantness*, and to encourage them to go on pleasantly in those ways. The priests of old were *ordained for men*, (Heb. 5. 1, 2.) and were therefore *taken from among men*, that they might have compassion upon the mourners. And the Prophets had this particularly in their commission, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem*, Isa. 40. 1.

Gospel-Ministers, in a special manner, are appointed to be the helpers of the joy of the Lord's people; to be Barnabas's, *Sons of Consolation*; to *strengthen the weak hands*, and *feeble knees*, and to say to them who are of a *fearful heart, Be strong*, Isa. 35. 3, 4. The tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts being amiable, the care of all that serve in those tabernacles, must be to make them appear so; that they who compass the altars of God, may find him, *their exceeding joy.*

Thus has God taken care for the comfort of his people, so that he is not to be blamed if they be not comforted: But that is not all.

II. There are many particular benefits and privileges which they are entitled to, who walk in the ways of religion, that contribute very much to the pleasantness of those ways. By the blood of Christ those benefits and privileges are procured for them, which speaks them highly valuable, and by the covenant of grace they are secured to them, which speaks them unalienable.

1. Those who walk in Wisdom's Ways are *discharged from the debts of sin*, and that is *pleasant*. They are privileged from arrests, (Rom. 8. 33.) *Who shall lay any thing to their charge?* while *it is God that justifies* them, and will stand by his own act, against hell and earth: and *he is* always *near that justifies them*, Isa. 50. 8. And so is their advocate that pleads for them, nearer than their accuser, though he stand at their right hand to resist them, and is able to cast him out, and all his accusations.

Surely, they put a force upon themselves, that are merry and pleasant under the guilt of sin, for if conscience be awake, it cannot but have a *fearful looking for of wrath*; but if sin be done away, the burthen is removed, the wound is healed, and all is well: "*Son be of good cheer*, (Mat. 9. 2.) though sick of a palsy, yet be cheerful, for *thy sins are forgiven thee*; and therefore, not only they shall not hurt thee, but God is reconciled to thee, and will do thee good; thou mayest enjoy the comforts of this life, and fear no snare in them; mayest bear the crosses of this life, and feel no sting in them; and mayest look forward to another life without terror or amazement."

The pain which true penitents experience in their reflections upon their sins, makes the pleasure and satisfaction they have in the assurance of the pardon of them doubly sweet; as the sorrow of a woman in travail is not an allay, but rather a foil to the *joy*, that a *child is born into the world*. No pain is more acute than that of broken bones, to which the sorrows of a penitent sinner are compared; but when they are well set, and well knit again, they are not only made easy, but they are made to rejoice, to which the comforts of a pardoned sinner are compared. *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*, Ps. 51. 8. All our bones, when kept, that not one of them was broken, must say, Lord, who is like unto thee? But there is a more sensible joy for one displaced bone reduced, than for the multitude of the bones that were never hurt; for one lost sheep brought home, than for ninety and nine that went not astray. Such is the pleasure which they have, that know their sins are pardoned.

When God's Prophets must speak comfortably to Jerusalem, they must tell her that her *Iniquity is pardoned*, Isa. 40. 2. Such a pleasure there is in the sense of the forgiveness of sins, that it enables us to make a light matter of temporal afflictions, particularly that of sickness, (Isa. 33. 24.) *The inhabitants shall not say, I am sick, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven*

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their iniquity. And to make a great matter of temporal mercies, when they are thus sweetened and secured, particularly that of recovery from sickness; (Isa. 38. 17.) *Thou hast in love to my soul,* cured my body, and *delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.* If our sins be pardoned, and we know it, we may go out, and come in, in peace, nothing can come amiss to us; we may lie down, and rise up with pleasure, for all is clear between us and heaven: thus *Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven.*

2. They have *the Spirit of God witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God,* Rom. 8. 16. and that is pleasant. Adoption accompanies justification, and if we have an assurance of the *forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of God's grace,* (Eph. 1. 5, 7.) we have an assurance of this further comfort, that we were *predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.* The same evidence, the same testimony that is given of our being pardoned, serves as an evidence and testimony of our being preferred, our being thus preferred. Can the children of princes and great men please themselves with the thoughts of the honours and expectations that attend that relationship? And may not the children of God think with pleasure on the *adoption* they have *received,* (Gal. 4. 6.) the *Spirit of Adoption,* and that Spirit is witness to their adoption? And the pleasure must be the greater, and make the stronger impression of joy, when they remember, that they were by nature not only *strangers* and *foreigners,* but *children of wrath,* and yet are thus highly favoured.

The comfort of relations is none of the least of the delights of this life; but what comfort of relations is comparable to this, of being related to God, as our Father; and to Christ, as our elder Brother; and to all the saints and angels too, as belonging to the same family; which we are happily brought into relation to? The pleasure of claiming and owning this relation, is plainly intimated in our being taught to cry, *Abba, Father,* (Rom. 8. 15.) why should it be thus doubled, and in two Languages? but to intimate to us, the unaccountable pleasure and satisfaction, with which good christians call God *Father;* it is the string they harp upon, *Abba, Father.*

With what pleasure does David's own Spirit witness to this? *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord;* (Ps. 16. 2.) And it is more to me that God is mine, than if all the world were mine: but when with our spirits the *Spirit of God* witnesses this too, saying to thy soul, "Yea, *he is thy God,* and he owns thee as one of his family; witness what he has wrought both *in thee,* and *for thee,* by my hand:" what joy does this fill the soul with, *joy unspeakable;* especially considering that as the Prophet speaks, in the place, in the same heart and conscience, where it was said (and by the Spirit, too, when he convinced as a Spirit of Bondage) *ye are not my People,* even *there it shall be said unto them,* by the Spirit, when he comforts as a Spirit of Adoption,) *Ye are the sons of the living God,* Hos. 1. 10.

3. They have *access with boldness to the throne of grace,* and that is *pleasant.* Prayer not only fetches in peace and pleasure, but it is itself a great privilege, and not only an honour, but a comfort; one of the greatest comforts of our lives, that we have a God to go to at all times, so that we need not fear coming unseasonably, or coming too often: and in all places, though as Jonah in the *fish's belly,* or as David in the *depths,* or *in the ends of the earth,* Ps. 130. 1. and 61. 2.

It is a pleasure to one that is full of care and grief to unbosom himself; (and we are welcome to *pour out our complaint* before God, and to *shew before him our trouble,* (Ps. 142. 2.) and to one that wants, or fears wanting, to petition one that is able, and willing to supply the wants. And we have great encouragement to *make our requests known to God;* we have *access with Confidence,* (Eph. 3. 12.) not *access with Difficulty,* (as we have to great men,) nor access with uncertainty of acceptance, as the Ninevites, *Who can tell if God will return* to us? But we have access with assurance, *whatsoever we ask* in faith, according to his will, *we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him,* 1 John 5. 15.

It is a pleasure to talk to one that we love, and that we know loves us, and though far above us, yet takes notice of what we say, and is tenderly concerned for us: what a pleasure is it then to speak to God? to have not only a liberty of access, but a liberty of speech, παῤῥησία, freedom to utter all our mind, humbly, and in faith; *Boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,* Heb. 10. 19, 20. (and not with fear and trembling, as the High Priest under the Law, *entered into the holiest,*) and boldness to *pour out our hearts* before God, (Ps. 62. 8.) as one (though he knows our case better than we ourselves,) who will give us the satisfaction of knowing it from us, according to our own shewing. Beggars that have good benefactors, live as pleasantly as any other people; it is the case of God's people, they are beggars, but they are beggars to a bountiful benefactor, that is *rich in mercy to all that call upon him:* Blessed are they that *wait daily at the posts of wisdom's doors,* Pro. 8. 34. If the prayer of the upright be God's delight, it cannot but be theirs, Cant. 2. 14.

4. They have *a sanctified use of all their creature-comforts,* and that is *pleasant. The Lord knows the way of the righteous,* and takes cognizance of all their concerns; (Ps. 37. 23.) *The Steps,* yea, and the stops too, *of a good man are ordered by the Lord;* both his successes when he goes forward, and his disappointments when he goes backward; he blesses the work of their hands, and his blessing *makes rich, and adds no sorrow with it,* Pro. 10. 22. More is implied than is expressed, it adds joy with it, infuses a comfort into it.

What God's people have, be it little or much, they have it from the love of God, and with his blessing, and then *behold all things are clean* and sweet *to them;* they come *from* the hand of a Father, *by* the hand of a Mediator, not in the channel of common providence, but by the golden pipes of the promises of the covenant. Even the *unbelieving husband,* though not sanctified himself, yet is *sanctified to the believing wife,* (1 Cor. 7. 14.) and so is the comfort of other relations; for to those

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those who please God, every thing is pleasing, or should be so, and is made so by his favour. And hence it is, (Ps. 37. 16.) that *a little that a righteous man has*, having a heart to be content with it, and the divine skill of enjoying God in it, is better to him than the riches of many wicked were to them; and that *a dinner of herbs where love is*, and the *fear of the Lord*, is better, and yields abundantly more satisfaction, than *a stalled Ox*, and *hatred* and *trouble therewith*, Pro. 15. 16, 17.

5. They have the *Testimony of their own consciences for them in all conditions*, and that is *pleasant*. A good conscience is not only a brazen wall, but a continual feast; and all the melody of Solomon's instruments of musick of all sorts, were not to be compared with that of the bird in the bosom, when it sings sweet. If Paul has a *conscience void of offence*, though he be *as sorrowful, yet he is always rejoicing*; nay, and even when he is *pressed above measure* (2 Cor. 1. 8, 12.) and has *received a sentence of death within himself, his rejoicing is this*, even *the testimony of his conscience* concerning his integrity.

As nothing is more painful and unpleasant, than to be smitten and reproached by our own hearts, to have our consciences fly in our faces, and give us our own; so, there is nothing more comfortable, than to be upon good grounds reconciled to ourselves; to *prove our own work*, (Gal. 6. 4.) by the touchstone of God's word, and to find it right, for then have we *rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another*: For *if our hearts condemn us not*, (1 John 3. 21.) *then have we confidence towards God*; may *lift up our face without spot* unto him, and comfortably appeal to his omniscience: *Thou, O Lord, knowest me, thou hast seen me, and tried my heart towards thee*, Jer. 12. 3.

This will not only make us easy under the censures and reproaches of men, as it did Job, *My heart shall not reproach me*, though you do; and Paul, *It is a very small thing with me to be judged of man's judgment*: but it will be a continual delight to us, to have our own hearts say, *Well done*. For the voice of an enlightened, well-informed conscience, is the voice of God, it is his deputy in the soul. The *thoughts* of the sober heathen *between themselves* when they did not *accuse*, yet the utmost they could do was but to *excuse*, which is making the best of bad; but they who have their *hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience* by the blood of Christ, (Rom. 2. 15.) are not only *excused*, but encouraged and commended, for their *praise is not of men, but of God*.

It is easy to imagine the holy, humble pleasure that a good man has, in the just reflection upon the successful resistance of a strong and threatening temptation; the seasonable suppressing and crossing of an unruly appetite or passion, and a check given to the tongue, when it was about to *speak unadvisedly*. What a pleasure is it to look back upon any good word spoken, or any good work done, in the strength of God's grace, to his glory, and any way to the advantage of our brethren, either for soul or body! With what a sweet satisfaction may a good man lie down in the close of the Lord's-day, if God has enabled him, in some good measure, to do the work of the day in the day, according as the duty of the day requires? We may then *eat our bread with joy*, and *drink our wine with a merry heart*, when we have some good ground to hope, that *God now accepteth our works* through Jesus Christ, Ecc. 9. 7.

6. They have the *earnests and foretastes of eternal life and glory*, and that is pleasant indeed. They have it not only secured to them, but dwelling in them, in the first-fruits of it, such as they are capable of in their present imperfect state, (1 John 5. 13.) *These things are written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know*, not only that you *shall have*, but *that you have eternal life*; you are *sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise*, (Eph. 1. 13, 14.) marked for God, which is the *earnest of our inheritance*, not only a ratification of the grant, but part of the full payment.

Canaan, when we come to it, will be a land flowing with milk and honey; *In God's presence*, there is *a fulness of joy* and *pleasures for evermore*, Ps. 16. 11. But lest we should think it long ere we come to it, the God whom we serve has been pleased to send to us, as he did to Israel, some clusters of the grapes of that good land to meet us in the wilderness; which if they were sent us in excuse of the full enjoyment, and we were to be put off with them, that would put a bitterness into them: but being sent us in earnest of the full enjoyment, that puts a sweetness into them, and makes them pleasant indeed.

A day in God's courts, and hour at his table in communion with him, is very pleasant, better than *a thousand days*, than ten thousand hours, in any of the enjoyments of sense; but this very much increases the pleasantness of it, that it is the pledge of a blessed eternity, which we hope to spend *within the vail*, in the vision and fruition of God. Sabbaths are sweet, as they are earnests of the everlasting sabbatism, or *keeping of a sabbath* (as the Apostle calls it, Heb. 4. 9.) which *remains for the people of God*.———Gospel feasts are therefore sweet, because earnests of the everlasting feast, to which we shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. The joys of the Holy Ghost are sweet, as they are earnests of that joy of our Lord, into which all Christ's good and faithful servants shall enter. Praising God is sweet, as it is an earnest of that blessed state, in which we shall not rest day or night from praising God. The communion of saints is sweet, as it is an earnest of the pleasure we hope to have in the *general assembly, and church of the first-born*, Heb. 12. 23.

They that travel in Wisdom's Ways, though sometimes they find themselves walking in the low and darksome *valley of the shadow of death*, where they can see but a little way before them, yet at other times they are led with Moses to the top of mount Pisgah, and thence have a pleasant prospect of the land of promise, and the glories of that good land, not with such a damp upon the pleasure of it as Moses had, Deut. 34. 4. *Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither*; but such an addition to the pleasure

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pleasure of it as Abraham had, when God said to him, (Gen. 13. 15.) *All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it.* Take the pleasure of the prospect, as a pledge of the possession shortly.

CHAP. IV.

The Doctrine further proved by Experience.

HAVING found Religion in its own nature *pleasant*, and the comforts and privileges so, with which it is attended; we shall next try to make this truth more evident, by appealing to such as may be thought competent witnesses in such a case. I confess, if we appeal to the *natural man*, the mere *animal* (as the Word signifies, 1 Cor. 2. 14.) that looks no further than the things of sense, and judges by no other rule than sense, and *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, for they are *foolishness to him*; such a one will be so far from consenting to this truth, and concurring with it, that he will contradict and oppose it: our appeal must be to those, that have some spiritual senses exercised, for otherwise *the brutish man knows not, neither doth the fool understand this*, Ps. 92. 6.

We must therefore be allowed to appeal to convinced sinners, and comforted saints; wicked people whom the spirit has roused out of a sinful security, and godly people, whom the spirit has put to rest in a holy serenity, are the most competent witnesses to give evidence in this case; and to their experience we appeal.

I. Ask those that have tried the ways of sin and wickedness, of vice and profaneness, and begin to pause a little, and to consider, whether the way they are in be right; and let us hear what is their experience concerning those ways: and our appeal to them is in the words of the Apostle, *What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed?* (Rom. 6. 21.) Not only what fruit *will ye have* at last, when the end of these things is death; or, (as Job 21. 21.) *What pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?* But what fruit, what pleasure had ye then, when you were in the enjoyment of the best of it?

Those that have been running to an excess of riot, that have laid the reins in the neck of their lusts, have rejoiced with the *young man in his youth*, and *walked in the way of their hearts, and the sight of their eyes*, have taken a boundless liberty in the gratifications of sense, and have made it their business to extract out of this world, whatever may pass under the name of pleasure: ask them now when they begin to reflect, (which they could not find in their hearts to do while they were going on in their pursuit) what they think of those pleasures which pretend to vie with those of religion? and they will tell you,

1. That *the pleasure of sin was painful and unsatisfying in the enjoyment*, and which then they had no reason to boast of. It was a sordid pleasure, and beneath the dignity of a man, and which could not be had, but by yielding up the throne in the soul to the inferior faculties of sense, and allowing them the dominion over reason and conscience, which ought to command and give law. It was the gratifying of an appetite which was the disease of the soul, and which would not be satisfied, but, like the daughters of the horse-leech, still cry, *Give, Give.*

What poor pleasure has the covetous man in the wealth of the world? It is the *Lust of the eye* that is thereby humoured, for *what good has the owner thereof, save the beholding thereof with his eyes?* And what a poor satisfaction is that? And yet even that is no satisfaction neither, for *he that loveth silver*, will find, that the more he has, the more he would have, so that he *shall not be satisfied with silver*; nay, it fastens upon the mind a burthen of care and perplexity, so that *the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep*, Ecc. 5. 10, 11, 12.

Drunkenness passes for a pleasant sin, but it is a brutish pleasure, for it puts a force upon the powers of nature, disturbs the exercise of reason, and puts men out of the possession and enjoyment of their own souls; and so far is it from yielding any true satisfaction, that the gratifying of this base appetite is but bringing oil to a flame: *When I awake, I will seek it yet again*, is the language of the drunkard, Pro. 23. 35.

Contention and revenge pretend to be pleasant sins too, *Est vindicta bonum vitâ jucundius ipsâ,—vengeance is a gratification more delightful than life itself*, but it is so far from being so, that it is, of all other sins, the most vexatious: it kindles a fire in the soul, puts it into a hurry and disorder; where they are, there is *confusion* and *every evil work*. The lusts, whence not only *wars* and *fightings* come, (Jam. 4. 1.) but other sins are said to *war in the members*; they not only *war against the soul*, (1 Pet. 2. 11.) and threaten the destruction of its true interests, but they war in the soul, and give disturbance to its present peace, and fill it with continual alarms.

They that have made themselves slaves to their lusts, will own, that it was the greatest drudgery in the world, and therefore is represented in the parable of the prodigal, by a young gentleman hiring himself to one that *sent him into his field to feed swine*, (Luke 15. 16.) where he was made a fellow-commoner with them, and *would fain have filled his belly with the husks* that they did eat; such a disgrace, such a dissatisfaction is there in the pleasures of sin: besides the diversity of masters which sinners are at the beck of, and their disagreement among themselves; for they that are *disobedient* to that God who is *One*, are *deceived*, serving *divers lusts and pleasures*, and therein *led captive* by Satan, their sworn enemy *at his will*, Tit. 3. 3.

2. That the *pleasure of sin was very bitter, and tormenting in the reflection.* We will allow that there is a pleasure in sin *for a season*, (Heb. 11. 25.) but that season is soon over, and is succeeded by another season that is the reverse of it; the sweetness is soon gone, and leaves the bitterness behind in the bottom of the cup: the wine is red, and *gives its colour*, its flavour very agreeable,

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agreeable, but at the last it *bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder,* Pro. 23. 32. Sin is that *strange Woman,* whose flatteries are charming, but *her end bitter as wormwood,* Pro. 5. 3, 4.

When conscience is awake, and tells the sinner he is *verily guilty;* when his sins are set in order before him in their true colour, and he sees himself defiled and deformed by them; when *his own wickedness* begins to *correct him,* and his *backslidings* to *reprove him,* and his own heart makes him *loath himself for his abominations,* (Jer. 2. 19.) where is the pleasure of his sin then? As the thief is ashamed when he is discovered to the world, so are the drunkards, the unclean, when discovered to themselves; and say, *Where shall I cause my shame to go?* there is no remedy, but I must *lie down in it.* If the pleasure of any sin would last, surely that of ill-got gain would, because there is something to shew for it; and yet though that wickedness be *sweet* in the sinner's *mouth,* though he *hide it under his tongue,* yet *in his bowels it is turned* into the *gall of Asps,* Job 20. 12. &c. He hath *swallowed down riches,* but shall be forced to *vomit them up again.*

Solomon had skimmed the cream of sensual delights, and pronounced not only *Vanity* and *Vexation* concerning them all, even the best, but concerning those of them that were *sinful,* the forbidden pleasures into which he was betrayed, that the reflection upon them filled him with horror and amazement: *I applied my Heart,* (says he,) *to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness;* so he now calls the irregularities into which he had fallen: he cannot speak bad enough of them, for *I find more bitter than death, the Woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands,* Ecc. 7. 26.

And is such pleasure as this worthy to come in competition with the pleasures of religion, or to be named the same day with them? What senseless creatures are the sensual, that will not be persuaded to quit the pleasures of brutes, when they shall have in exchange the delights of angels?

II. Ask those that have *tried the ways of Wisdom,* what is their experience concerning those ways? *Call now if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the saints will you turn?* Job 5. 1. Turn you to which you will, and they will agree to this, that *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and her paths peace.* However about some things they may differ in their sentiments, in this, they are all of a mind, that God is a good master, and his service not only perfect freedom, but perfect pleasure.

And it is a debt which aged and experienced christians owe both to their master, and to their fellow-servants, both to Christ and christians, to bear their testimony to this truth; and the more explicitly and solemnly they do it, the better: let them tell others *what God has done for their souls,* and how they have *tasted that he is gracious,* (Ps. 66. 16.) let them own to the honour of God and religion, that (1. Kin. 8. 56.) there *has not failed one word of God's good promise,* by which he designed to make his servants pleasant; that what is said of the pleasantness of religion, is really so: let them *set to their seal that it is true.* Let it have their *Probatum est—we have found it so.*

The ways of religion and godliness, are the good *old ways,* (Jer. 6. 16.) Now if you would have an account of the way you have to go, you must inquire of those that have travelled it, not those who have only occasionally *stept* into it, but those whose business had led them to *frequent* it. Ask the ancient travellers, whether they have found *Rest to their souls* in this way, and there are few you shall enquire of, but will be ready to own these four things from experience.

1. That they have found *the rules and dictates of religion very agreeable both to right reason, and to their true interest,* and therefore pleasant. They have found the *word nigh them,* and accommodated to them, and not at such a mighty distance as they were made to believe. They have found *all God's precepts concerning all things* to be *right,* and reasonable, and highly equitable; and when they did but shew themselves men, they could not but consent, and subscribe *to the Law, that it was good,* (Rom. 7. 16.) and there is a wonderful propriety in this. For the laws of humility and meekness, sobriety and temperance, contentment and patience, love and charity, are agreeable to ourselves when we are in our right mind: they are the rectitude of our nature, the advancement of our powers and faculties, the composure of our minds, and the comfort of our lives, and carry their own *letters of commendation* along with them. If a man understood himself, and his own interest, he would comport with these rules, and govern himself by them, though there were no authority over him to oblige him to it. All that have thoroughly tried them, will say they are so far from being chains of imprisonment to a man, and as fetters to his feet, that they are as chains of ornament to him, and as the girdle to his loins.

Ask experienced christians, and they will tell you what abundance of comfort and satisfaction they have had in keeping sober, when they have been in temptation to excess; in doing justly, when they might have gained by dishonesty as others do, and no body know it; in forgiving an injury, when it was in the power of their hand to revenge it; in giving alms to the poor, when perhaps they straightened themselves by it; in submitting to an affliction, when the circumstances of it were very aggravating; and in bridling their passion under great provocations. With what comfort does Nehemiah reflect upon it, that though his predecessors in the government had abused their power, yet *so did not I,* (says he, Neh. 5. 15.) *because of the fear of God?* And with what pleasure does Samuel make his appeal, (1 Sam. 12. 3.) *Whose Ox have I taken, or whom have I defrauded?* And Paul his; *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.* If you would have a register of experiences to this purpose, read the 119th Ps. which is a collection of David's testimonies to the sweetness and goodness of God's law, the equity and excellency of it, and the abundant satisfaction that is to be found in a constant conscientious conformity to it.

2. That they have found *the exercises of devotion to be*

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be very pleasant and comfortable, and if there be an heaven upon earth, it is in communion with God in his ordinances; in hearing from him, in speaking to him, in receiving the tokens of his favour and communications of his grace, and returning pious affections to him, pouring out the heart before him, lifting up the soul to him.

All good christians will subscribe to David's experience; (Ps. 73. 28.) *It is good for me to draw near to God;* the nearer the better; and it will be best of all, when I come to be nearest of all, within the vail, and will join with him in saying, *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul!* (Ps. 116. 7.) to God as to thy rest, and repose in him. I have found that satisfaction in communion with God, which I would not exchange for all the delights of the sons of men, and the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces.

What a pleasure did those pious Jews in Hezekiah's time find in the solemnities of the Passover, who, when they had kept seven days according to the law in attending on God's ordinances, *took counsel together to keep other seven days,* and they *kept other seven days with gladness,* 2 Chro. 30. 23. And if Christ's hearers had not found an abundant sweetness and satisfaction in attending on him, they would never have continued their attendance three days in a desart place, as we find they did, Mat. 15. 32. No wonder then that his own disciples, when they were spectators of his Transfiguration, and auditors of his discourse with Moses and Elias in the holy mount, said, *Master, it is good for us to be here;* here let us *make tabernacles,* Mat. 17. 4.

I appeal to all, that know what it is to commune with God in an ordinance, to worship him *in the spirit,* whether they have not found abundant satisfaction in it? They will say with the spouse, (Cant. 2. 3.) *I sat down under his shadow with delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste:* and with the noble Marquis of Vico, "*Let their money perish with them, that esteem all the wealth and pleasure of this world worth one Hour's communion with God in Jesus Christ.*" They will own that they never had that true delight and satisfaction in any of the employments or enjoyments of this world, which they have had in the service of God, and in the believing relishes of that *Loving-Kindness* of his, which is *better than life,* Ps. 63. 3. These have put gladness into their hearts, more than the joy of harvest, or their's that divide the spoil. If in their preparations for solemn ordinances they have *gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed,* yet they have *come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them,* Ps. 126. 5. 6.

3. That they have found *the Pleasure of Religion sufficient to overcome the pains and trouble of sense,* and to *take out the sting of them,* and *take off the terror of them.* This is a plain evidence of the excellency of spiritual pleasures, that religious convictions will soon conquer sensual delights, and quite extinguish them. So that they became as *songs to a heavy heart,* for a *wounded spirit who can bear?* But it has often been found, that the pains of sense have not been able to extinguish spiritual delights, but have been conquered and quite over-balanced by them. Joy in spirit has been to many a powerful allay to trouble in the flesh.

The pleasure that holy souls have in God, as it needs not to be supported by the delights of sense, so it fears not being suppressed by the grievances of sense. They can rejoice in the Lord, and joy in him as the God of their salvation, even then, when the *fig-tree doth not blossom,* and *there is no fruit in the vine,* (Hab. 3. 17, 18.) for even then, when in the world they have tribulation, Christ has provided that in him they should have satisfaction.

For this we may appeal to the Martyrs, and other sufferers for the name of Christ; how have their spiritual joys made their bonds for Christ easy, and made their prisons their "*delectable orchards,*" as one of the Martyrs called his. Animated by these comforts, they have not only taken patiently, but *taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they have in Heaven a better, and a more enduring substance,* Heb. 10. 34. Ask Paul, and he will tell you, (2 Cor. 7. 4, 5.) that even then, when he was *troubled on every side,* when *without were fightings, and within were fears,* yet he was *filled with comfort,* and was *exceeding joyful in all his tribulation;* and that as his sufferings for Christ increased, his consolation in Christ increased proportionably, 2 Cor. 1. 5. And though he expects no other but to finish his course with blood, yet he doubts not but to *finish his course with joy.*

Nay, we may appeal to the sick-beds and death-beds of many good christians for the proof of this; when wearisome nights have been appointed to them, yet God's *statutes have been their songs,* their *songs in the night,* Ps. 119. 54. "*I have pain,*" says one, "but I bless God *I have peace;*" "weak and dying," said another, "but *sat Lucis intus,*" *light and comfort enough within.* The delights of sense forsake us, when we most need them to be a comfort to us; when a man is *chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, he abhorreth bread and dainty meat,* and cannot relish it, Job 33. 19, 20. But then the bread of life and spiritual dainties have the sweetest relish of all. Many of God's people have found it so: *This is my comfort in mine affliction,* that thy *word hath quickened me,* Ps. 119. 50. This has *made all their bed in their sickness,* and made it easy.

The *Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways* has sometimes been remarkably attested by the joys and triumphs of dying christians, in reflecting upon that divine grace which has carried them comfortably through this world, and is then carrying them more comfortably out of it to a better. "*What is that light which I see?*" said an eminent divine upon his death-bed: "*It is the sun-shine,*" said one that was by: "*No,*" replied he, "*it is my Saviour's shine: O the joys! O the comforts that I feel! Whether in the body, or out of the body I cannot tell; but I see and feel things that are unutterable, and full of glory. O let it be preached at my funeral, and tell it when I am dead and gone, that God deals familiarly with man. I am as full of comfort as my heart can hold.*" Mr. Joseph Allein's life, and Mr. John Janeway's, have remarkable instances of this.

4. They

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4. They have found, that *the closer they have kept to Religion's Ways, and the better progress they have made in those ways, the more pleasure they have found in them.* By this it appears, that the pleasure takes its excellency from the religion; that the *more* religion prevails, the *greater* the pleasure is. What disquiet and discomfort Wisdom's children have, is owing, not to *Wisdom's ways*, those are pleasant, but to their deviations from those ways, or their slothfulness and trifling in these ways; those indeed are unpleasant, and sooner or later will be found so.

If good people are sometimes drooping, and in sorrow, it is not because they are good, but because they are not so good as they should be; they do not live up to their profession and principles, but are too much in love with the body, and hanker too much after the world: though they do not turn back to Sodom, they look back towards it, and are too mindful of the country *from which they came out;* and this makes them uneasy, this forfeits their comforts, and grieves their comforter, and disturbs their peace, which would have been firm to them, if they had been firm to their engagements. But if we turn aside out of the ways of God, we are not to think it strange, if the consolations of God do not follow us.

But *if we cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart,* then we find the *joy of the Lord our strength.* Have we not found those duties most pleasant, in which we have taken most pains and most care? and that we have had the most comfortable sabbath-visits made to our souls when we have been most *in the Spirit on the Lord's-Day?* Rev. 1. 10.

And the longer we continue, and the more we mend our pace in these ways, the more pleasure we find in them. This is the excellency of spiritual pleasures, and recommends them greatly, that they increase with use, so far are they from withering, or going to decay: the difficulties which may at first be found in the ways of religion wear off by degrees, and the work of it grows more easy, and the joys of it more sweet.

Ask those that have back-slidden from the ways of God, have left their first love, and begin to bethink themselves, and to remember whence they are fallen, whether they had not a great deal more comfort when they kept close to God, than they have had since they turned aside from him; and they will say with that adultress, when she found the way of her apostacy hedged up with thorns, *I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now;* Hos. 2. 7. There is nothing got by departing from God, and nothing lost by being faithful to him.

CHAP. V.

The Doctrine illustrated by the Similitude used in the Text, of a pleasant Way or Journey.

THE practice of religion is often, in Scripture, spoken of as a *Way*, and our walking in that *Way:* it is the Way of God's Commandments, it is a *High-way*, the King's High-way, the King of Kings' High-way; and those that are religious, are *travelling* in that way. The schoolmen commonly call christians in this world, *Viatores—travellers;* when they come to heaven, they are *Comprehensores—they have then attained,* are at home: here they are in their journey, there at their journey's end. Now if Heaven be the *journey's end,* the *Prize of our high calling,* and we be sure if we *so run* as we ought, that *we shall obtain,* it is enough to engage and encourage us in our way, though it be ever so unpleasant; but we are told *ex abundanti,—very fully,* that we have also a pleasant road.

Now there are *twelve things* which help to make a *journey pleasant,* and there is something like to each of them which may be found in the *Way of Wisdom,* by those that walk in that way.

I. It helps to make a journey pleasant to *go upon a good errand.* He that is brought up a prisoner in the hands of the ministers of justice, whatever conveniencies he may be accommodated with, cannot have a pleasant journey, but a melancholy one: and that is the case of a wicked man; he is going on in this world toward destruction: the way he is in, though wide and broad, leads directly to it; and while he persists in it, every step he takes is so much nearer hell, and therefore he cannot have a pleasant journey; it is absurd and indecent to pretend to make it so: though the way may seem right to a man, yet there can be no true pleasure in it, while the end thereof is the ways of death, and the *steps take hold on hell,* Pro. 5. 5.

But he that goes into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, whatever difficulties may attend his journey, yet the errand he goes on is enough to make it pleasant: and on this errand they go that travel wisdom's ways; they look for a kingdom which cannot be moved, and are pressing forward in the hopes of it. Abraham went out of his own country, *not knowing whither he went,* (Heb. 11. 8.) but those that set out and hold on in the way of religion, know whither it will bring them, that it leads to life, eternal life; and therefore *in the way of righteousness is life,* (Pro. 12. 28.) because there is such a life at the end of it.

Good people go upon a good errand, for they go on God's errand as well as their own; they are serving and glorifying him, contributing something to his honour, and the advancement of the interests of his kingdom among men; and this makes it pleasant; and that which puts so great a reputation upon the duties of religion, as that by them God is served and glorified, cannot but put so much the more satisfaction into them. With what pleasure does Paul appeal to God, as the God whom *he served with his spirit in the Gospel of his Son?* Rom. 1. 9.

II. It helps to make a journey pleasant, to have strength and ability for it. He that is weak, sickly, and lame, can find no pleasure in the pleasantest walks: how should he, when he takes every step in pain? A strong man rejoices to run a race, but he that is feeble trembles to set one foot before another. Now this makes the ways of religion pleasant, that they who walk in those ways, are not only cured of their natural weakness, but are filled with spiritual strength; they travel

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travel not in their own might, but in the *greatness of his strength*, who is *mighty to save*, Isa. 63. 1.

Were they to proceed in their own strength, they would have little pleasure in the journey, every little difficulty would foil them, and they would tire presently; but they go forth, and go on in the strength of the Lord God, (Ps. 71. 16.) and upon every occasion, according to his promise, he renews that strength to them, and they *mount up with wings like eagles*, they go on with cheerfulness and alacrity, they *run*, and are not *weary*; they *walk*, and do *not faint*; Isa. 40. 31. God, with his comforts, enlarges their hearts, and then they not only go, but *run the way of his commandments*, Ps. 119. 32.

That which to the old nature is impracticable and unpleasant, and which therefore is declined, or undertaken with reluctancy, to the new nature is easy and pleasant: and this new nature is given to all the saints, which puts a new life and vigour into them, strengthens them with all might in the inner man, (Col. 1. 11.) unto all diligence in doing-work, patience in suffering-work, and perseverance in both; and so all is made pleasant. They are *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, (Eph. 6. 10.) and this not only keeps the spirit willing, even when the flesh is weak, but makes even the *lame man* to *leap as an hart*, and the *tongue of the dumb to sing*, Isa. 35. 6. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*, Phil. 4. 13.

III. It helps to make a journey pleasant to have day-light: it is very uncomfortable travelling in the night, in the black and dark night; *He that walketh in darkness*, (says our Saviour,) *knows not whither he goes*, (John 12. 35.) right or wrong, and that is uncomfortable: and in another place, *If a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him*, John 11. 10. And this is often spoken of as the miserable case of wicked people, *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness*, Ps. 82. 5. They are in continual danger, and so much the more, if they be not in continual fear.

But Wisdom's children are all children of the light, and of the day. They were darkness, but are Light in the Lord, and walk as children of the light. *Truly the light is sweet*, even to one that sits still, but much more so to one that is on a journey; and doubly sweet to those who set out in the dark, as we all did. But this great light is risen upon us, not only to please our eyes, but to *guide our feet* into the *way of peace*, Luke 1. 79. And they are indeed paths of peace when we are guided into them, and guided in them by the light of the Gospel of Christ. And all that walk in the light of gospel-conduct, cannot fail to walk in the light of *gospel-comforts*.

And it adds to the pleasure of having day-light in our travels, if we are in no danger of losing it, and of being benighted: and this is the case of those that walk in the light of the Lord; for the Sun of Righteousness that is risen upon them, with healing under his wings, shall *no more go down*, but shall be *their everlasting light*, Isa. 60. 20.

IV. It helps to make a journey pleasant, to have a good guide, whose knowledge and faithfulness one can confide in. A traveller, though he has day-light, yet may miss his way, and lose himself, if he have not one to shew him his way, and go before him, especially if his way lie, as ours does, through a wilderness, where there are so many by-paths; and though he should not be guilty of any fatal mistake, yet he is in continual doubt and fear, which makes his journey uncomfortable.

But this is both the safety and the satisfaction of all true christians, that they have not only the *Gospel of Christ* for their *light*, as a discovering and directing light, but the Spirit of Christ for their guide: it is promised, that he shall *lead them into all truth*, (John 16. 13.) shall *guide them with his eye*, Ps. 32. 8. Hence they are said to *walk after the Spirit*, and to be *led by the Spirit*, (Rom. 8. 1, 14.) as God's Israel of old were led through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud and fire, and the Lord was in it.

This is that which makes the way of Religion such a High-way, as that the *Way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein*, (Isa. 35. 8.) there are fools, indeed, wicked ones, who walk after the flesh, that miss their way, and wander endlessly; *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city*, (Ecc. 10. 15.) but those fools that shall not err therein, are weak ones, the foolish things of the world, who, under a sense of their own folly are so wise, as to give up themselves entirely to the conduct of the Spirit, both by conscience and the written word: and if they have done this in sincerity, they know whom they have depended upon to *guide them by his counsel*, and *afterwards* to *receive them to his glory*, Ps. 73. 24. Those may go on their journey pleasantly, who are promised, that whenever they are in doubt, or in danger of mistaking, or being misled, they shall hear a voice, saying, *This is the way, walk in it*; Isa. 30. 21.

V. It helps to make a journey pleasant to be under a good guard, or convoy, that one may travel safely. Our way lies through an enemy's country, and they are active, subtle enemies; the road is infested with robbers, that lie in wait to spoil, and to destroy; we travel by the Lions dens, and the mountains of the Leopards; and our danger is the greater, that it arises, not from flesh and blood, but spiritual wickednesses; Satan, by the world (1 Pet. 5. 8.) and the flesh, way-lays us, and seeks to devour us; so that we could not with any pleasure go on our way, if God himself had not taken us under his special protection.

The same Spirit that is a guide to these travellers, is their *guard* also; for whoever are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, are by him *preserved in Christ Jesus*, (Jude 1.) *blameless*; and shall be preserved to *the heavenly kingdom*, (2 Tim. 4. 18.) so as they shall not be robbed of their graces and comforts, which are evidences for, and earnest of eternal life, they are *kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation*, (1 Pet. 1. 5.) and therefore may go on cheerfully.

The promises of God are a writ of protection to all Christ's good subjects in their travels, and give them such a holy security, as lays a foundation for a constant serenity. Eternal truth itself has assured them, that no evil

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evil shall befal them, (Ps. 91. 10.) nothing really and destructively evil, no evil but what God will bring good to them out of; God himself has engaged to be their keeper, and to preserve their going out and coming in, from henceforth and for ever, which looks as far forwards as eternity itself; and by such promises as these, and that grace which is conveyed through them to all active believers, God carries them as upon eagles wings to bring them to himself, Deut. 32. 11.

Good Angels are appointed for a guard to all that walk in Wisdom's Ways, to bear them in their arms, where they go, and to pitch their tents round about them where they rest, (Ps. 34. 7.) and so to keep them in all their ways. How easy may they be that are thus guarded, and how well pleased under all events! as Jacob was, who *went on his way, and the angels of God met him,* Gen. 32. 1.

VI. It helps to make a journey pleasant, to have the way tracked by those that have gone before in the same road, and on the same errand. Untrodden paths are unpleasant ones; but in the way of religion, we are both directed and encouraged by the good examples of those that have chosen the way of truth before us, and have walked in it. We are bidden to follow them, who are now *through faith and patience* (those travelling graces of a christian) *inheriting the promises,* Heb. 6. 12.

It is pleasant to think that we are walking in the same way with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, with whom we hope shortly to sit down in the kingdom of God. How many holy, wise, good men have governed themselves by the same rules that we govern ourselves by, with the same views, have lived by the same faith that we live by, looking for the same blessed hope, and have by it *obtained a good report,* Heb. 11. 2. And we *go forth by the footsteps of the flock,* Cant. 1. 8.

Let us, therefore, to make our way easy and pleasant, take the prophets for an example, (Jam. 5. 10.) And *being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,* (that like the cloud in the wilderness that went before Israel, not only to shew them the way, but to smooth it for them,) *let us run with patience,* and cheerfulness, *the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus,* the most encouraging pattern of all, who has *left us an example, that we should follow his steps,* (Heb. 12. 1.) and what more pleasant than to follow such a leader, whose word of command is, *Follow me!*

VII. It helps to make a journey pleasant to have good company: this deceives the time, and takes off the tediousness of a journey as much as any thing, *Amicus pro Vehiculo—A friend is as good as a carriage.* It is the comfort of those who walk in Wisdom's Ways, that though there are but few walking in those ways, yet there are some, and those the wisest and best, and more excellent than their neighbours; and it will be found there are more ready to say, *We will go with you,* for *we have heard that God is with you,* Zech. 8. 23.

The communion of saints contributes much to the pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways; we have many fellow-travellers, that quicken one another, by the fellowship they have one with another, as companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, Rev. 1. 9. It was a pleasure to those who were going up to Jerusalem to worship, that their numbers increased in every town they came to, and so they *went from strength to strength,* they grew more and more numerous, *till every one of them in* Zion *appeared before God,* (Ps. 84. 7.) and so it is with God's spiritual Israel, to which we have the pleasure of seeing daily additions of such as shall be saved.

They that travel together make one another pleasant by familiar converse; and it is the will of God that his people should by that means encourage one another, and strengthen one another's hands; *They that fear the Lord shall speak often one to another,* (Mal. 3. 16.) exhort one another daily, and communicate their experiences, and it will add much to the pleasure of this, to consider the kind notice God is pleased to take of it; *He hearkens, and hears,* and *a book of remembrance is written for those that fear the Lord, and think on his Name.*

VIII. It helps to make a journey pleasant, to have the way lie through green pastures, and by the still waters, and so the Ways of Wisdom do. David speaks his experience herein, (Ps. 23. 2.) that he was led into the *green pastures,* the verdure whereof was grateful to the eye, and *by the still waters,* whose soft and gentle murmurs were music to the ear: and he was not driven through these, but made to lie down in the midst of these delights, as Israel when they encamped at Elim, where there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees, Exod. 15. 27.

Gospel-ordinances, in which we deal much in our way to heaven, are very agreeable to all the children of God, as these green pastures, and still waters; they call the Sabbath a delight, and prayer a delight, and the word of God a delight. These are *their pleasant things.* There *is a river of* comfort in gospel-ordinances, the *streams whereof make glad the city of God, the Holy Place of the tabernacles of the most High,* (Ps. 46. 4.) and along the banks of this river their road lies.

Those that turn aside from the ways of God's commandments are upbraided with the folly of it, as leaving a pleasant road for an unpleasant one. Will a man, a traveller, be such a fool as to leave my fields, which are smooth and even, for a rock that is rugged and dangerous, or for the snowy mountains of Lebanon, Jer. 18. 14. Shall the running waters be forsaken for the strange cold waters? Thus are men enemies to themselves, and the foolishness of man perverteth his way.

IX. It adds to the pleasure of a journey, to have it fair over head. Wet and stormy weather takes off very much of the pleasure of a journey; but it is pleasant travelling when the sky is clear, and the air calm and serene: and this is the happiness of those who walk in Wisdom's Ways, that all is clear between them and heaven; there are no clouds of guilt to interpose between them and the Sun of Righteousness, and to intercept his refreshing beams; no storms of wrath gathering that threaten them.

Our reconciliation to God, and acceptance with him, makes every thing pleasant; how can we be melancholy, if Heaven smile upon us? *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God,* (Rom. 5. 1, 2.) and

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peace from God, peace made for us, and peace spoken to us, and then we rejoice in tribulation. Those travellers cannot but rejoice all the day, who *walk in the light of God's countenance*, Ps. 89. 15.

X. It adds likewise to the pleasure of a journey, to be furnished with all needful accommodations for travelling. They that walk in the Way of God, have wherewithal to bear their charges, and it is promised them that they shall want no good thing, Ps. 34. 10. If they have not an abundance of the wealth of this world, which perhaps will but overload a traveller, and be an incumbrance, rather than any furtherance, yet, they have good bills; having access by prayer to the throne of grace wherever they are, and a promise that they shall receive what they ask; and access by faith to the covenant of grace, which they may draw upon, and draw from as an inexhaustible treasury. *Jehovah Jireh, The Lord will provide.*

Christ our Melchizedec brings forth bread and wine, (Gen. 14. 18.) for the refreshment of the poor travellers, that they may not faint by the way, 1 Kin. 19. 8. When Elijah had a long journey to go, he was victualled accordingly; God will give grace sufficient to his people for all their exercises, (2 Cor. 12. 9.) *Strength according to the Day; Verily they shall be fed.* And since travellers must have refreshing-places, and resting-places, Christ has provided *rest at noon,* (Cant. 1. 7.) in the heat of the day, for those that are his; and rest at night too: *Return to thy rest, O my soul.*

XI. It adds something to the pleasure of a journey to sing in the way: this takes off something of the fatigue of travelling, exhilarates the spirits; pilgrims used it; and God has put a song, *a new song into the mouths* of his people, (Ps. 40. 3.) even *praises to their God,* and comfort to themselves. He has given us cause to be cheerful, and leave to be cheerful, and hearts to be cheerful, and has made it our duty to rejoice in the Lord always.

It is promised to those, who are brought to praise God, by hearing the words of his mouth, that they shall *sing in the ways of the Lord,* (Ps. 138. 5.) and good reason, *for great is the Glory of the Lord.* How pleasantly did the released captives return to their own country, when they came with singing unto Zion! Isa. 51. 11. And much more Jehoshaphat's victorious army, when they came to Jerusalem, *with psalteries and harps to the house of the Lord; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies,* 2 Chr. 20. 28. With this the travellers may revive one another, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord.*

XII. It helps to make a journey pleasant to have a good prospect. The travellers in Wisdom's Ways may look about them with pleasure, so as no travellers ever could; for they can call all about them their own, even the *world, and life, and death, and things present, and things to come,* in this state, *all is yours, if you be Christ's,* 1 Cor. 3. 22. The whole creation is not only at peace with them, but at their service.

They can look before them with pleasure; not with anxiety and uncertainty, but with a humble assurance; not with terror, but with joy. It is pleasant in a journey, to have a prospect of the journey's end; to see that the way we are in leads directly to it, and to see that it cannot be far off; every step we take is so much nearer it, nay, and we are within a few steps of it. We have a prospect of being shortly with Christ in Paradise; yet a little while, and we shall be at home, we shall be at rest; and whatever difficulties we may meet with in our way, when we come to heaven all will be well, eternally well.

CHAP. VI.

The Doctrine vindicated.

SUFFER me a little, (says Elihu to Job, Job 36. 2.) *and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf,* something more to say in defence of this truth, against that which may seem to weaken the force of it. We all ought to concern ourselves for the vindication of godliness, and to speak what we can for it, for we know that it is every where spoken against: and there is no truth so plain, so evident, but there have been those who have objected against it; the prince of darkness will raise what mists he can to cloud a truth, that stands so directly against his interest; but great is the truth, *and will prevail.*

Now as to the truth of the pleasantness of religion.

I. It is easy to confront the reproaches of the enemies of religion, who give it an ill name. There are those who make it their business, having perverted their own ways, to pervert the right ways of the Lord, and cast an odium upon them; as Elymas the sorcerer did, with design to *turn away the deputy from the faith,* Acts 13. 8, 10. They are like the wicked spies, that *brought up an evil report,* of the promised land, (Num. 13. 32.) as a land that did eat up the inhabitants thereof; and neither could be conquered, nor was worth conquering.

The scoffers of the latter days speak ill of religion, as a task and drudgery; they dress it up in frightful, formidable colours, but very false ones, to deter others from piety, and to justify themselves in their own impiety. They suggest that Christ's yoke is heavy, and his commandments grievous, and that to be religious is to bid adieu to all pleasure and delight, and to turn tormenters to ourselves; that God is *a hard* master, *reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewed,* Mat. 25. 24.

There were those of old that thus reproached the ways of God and slandered religion, for they said, *It is vain to serve God,* (Mal. 3. 14.) there is neither credit nor comfort in it, and *what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances,* and (observe their invidious description of religion) *that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts*; as if to be religious was to walk mournfully, whereas indeed it is to walk cheerfully.

Now in answer to these calumnies we have this to say, that the matter is not so. They who say thus of religion, *speak evil of the things which they know not,* while

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while *what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves*, Jude 10. The Devil we know was a liar from the beginning, and a false accuser of God and religion, and in this particular represented God to our first parents, (Gen. 3. 5.) as having dealt hardly and unjustly with them, in prohibiting them the *Tree of knowledge;* as if he envied them the happiness and pleasure they would attain to by eating of that tree; and the same methods he still takes to alienate men's minds from the life of God, and the power of godliness. But we know, and are sure, that it is a groundless imputation, for Wisdom's Ways are *ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

II. It is easy also to set aside the misrepresentations of Religion, which are made by some that call themselves its friends, and profess kindness for it. As there are enemies of the Lord that blaspheme, (2 Sam. 12. 14.) so there are among the people of the Lord those that give them great occasion to do so, as David did. How many wounds does Religion receive in the house of her friends, false friends they are, or foolish ones, unworthy to be called Wisdom's children, for they do not justify her as they ought; but through mistake and indulgence of their own weakness, betray her cause instead of pleading it, and witnessing to it; and confirm people's prejudices against it, which they should endeavour to remove

Some that profess religion are morose and sour in their profession, peevish and ill-humoured, and make the exercises of religion a burthen, and task, and terror to themselves, and all about them, which ought to sweeten the spirit, and make it easy, and candid, and compassionate to the infirmities of the weak and feeble of the flock.

Others are melancholy and sorrowful in their profession, and go mourning from day to day under prevailing doubts and fears, and disquietudes about their spiritual state. We know some of the best of God's servants have experienced trouble of mind to a great degree.

But as to the former, it is their sin; and let them bear their own burthen, but let not religion be blamed for it: and as to the latter, though there are some very good people that are of a sorrowful spirit, yet we will abide by it, that true piety has true pleasure in it notwithstanding.

1. But God is sometimes pleased for wise and holy ends, for a time, to suspend the communication of his comforts to his people, and to hide his face from them, to try their faith, that it may be *found to praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Christ*, (1 Pet. 1. 6. 7.) and so much the more for their being awhile *in heaviness through manifold temptations.* Thus he corrects them for what has been done amiss by them, and takes this course to mortify what is amiss in them; even winter seasons contribute to the fruitfulness of the earth. Thus he brings them to a closer and more humble dependance upon Christ for all their comfort, and teaches them to live entirely upon him. And though *for a small moment* he thus *forsakes them,* (Isa. 54. 7, 8.) it is but to magnify his power so much the more in supporting them, and to make his returns the sweeter, for he will gather them with *everlasting loving-kindness.* Light is sown for them, and it will come up again.

2. This, is their affliction, God's hand must be acknowledged in it, as his righteous hand; yet there is sin in it, and that is from themselves. Good people have not the comforts they might have in their religion, and whose fault is it? They may thank themselves, they run themselves into the dark, and then shut their eyes against the light. *My wounds stink and are corrupt*, (says David, Ps. 38. 5.) The wounds of sin which I gave myself are unhealed, not bound up, or mollified with ointment. And why? Is it for want of balm in Gilead, or a physician there? No, he owns it is because of my foolishness; I did not take the right method with them. God speaks joy and gladness to them, but they turn a deaf ear to it, like Israel in Egypt, that hearkened not to Moses, for *anguish of spirit and sore bondage*, Exod. 6. 9. But let not the blame be laid upon Religion, which has provided comfort for their souls, but let them bear the blame whose souls refuse to be comforted, or who do not take the way appointed for comfort; who do not go through with their repenting and believing. David owns that the reason why he wanted comfort, and was in pain, and agitated, was because he *kept silence.* He was not so free with God as he might, and should have been; but when he said, *I will confess my transgression unto the Lord*, he was forgiven, and all was well, Ps. 32. 3, 4, 5.

Those do both God and Christ, and themselves, and others, a deal of wrong, who look upon him with whom they have to do in Religion, as one that seeks an occasion against them, and counts them for his enemies, and is extreme to mark what they think, or say, or do amiss; whereas he is quite otherwise, is slow to anger, swift to mercy, and willing to make the best of those whose hearts are upright with him, though they are compassed about with infirmity: he will not always chide; he does not delight in the death of *them that die*, but would rather they should *turn and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. Nor does he delight in the tears of them that weep, does not *afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, (Lam. 3. 33.) much less his own children, but would rather they should be upon good grounds comforted. Religion then clears itself from all blame, which some may take occasion to cast upon it, from the uncomfortable lives which some lead that are religious.

III. But it will require some more pains to reconcile this truth of the *Pleasantness of religious ways*, with (that which the word of God itself tells us of,) the difficulties with which the Ways of Religion are attended. We value not the misapprehensions of some, and the misrepresentations of others, concerning religious ways; but we are sure the word of God is of a piece with itself, and does not contradict itself. Our Master has taught us to call the way to Heaven a narrow way, ὁδὸς τεθλιμμένη,—*an afflicted way, a distressed way;* and we

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we have in scripture many things that declare it so. And it is true; but that does not contradict this doctrine, "That the Ways of Wisdom are pleasant:" for the pleasantness that is in Wisdom's Ways, is intended to be a balance, and is very much an over-balance to any thing in them which is any way distasteful or incommodious. As for the imaginary difficulties, which the sluggard dreams of, "A lion in the way," "A lion in the street," we do not regard them: but there are some real difficulties in it, as well as real comforts, for *God hath set the one over-against the other*, (Ecc. 7. 14.) that we might study to comport with both, and might sing, and sing unto God of both, Ps. 101. 1.

We will not, we dare not make the matter better than it is, but will allow there is that in religion which at first view may seem unpleasant; and yet doubt not but to shew that it is reconcileable to, and consistent with, all that pleasure which we maintain to be in Religion, and so, to take off all exceptions against this doctrine. *Amicæ Scripturarum lites; utinam et nostræ!—It were well if we could agree with one another, as well as scripture does with itself.*

There are four things which seem not well to agree with this doctrine, and yet it is certain they do.

I. It is true, that to be religious, is to live a life of repentance, and yet, religious Ways are pleasant notwithstanding. It is true, that we must mourn for sin daily, and reflect with regret upon our manifold infirmities; sin must be bitter to us, and we must even loathe and abhor ourselves for our corruptions that dwell in us, and the many actual transgressions that are committed by us. We must renew our repentance daily, and every night must make some sorrowful reflections upon the transgressions of the day. But then,

(1.) It is not walking in the Way of Wisdom that creates us this sorrow, but our trifling in that way, and our turning aside out of it. If we would keep close to these ways, and pass forward in them as we ought, there would be no occasion for repentance. If we were as we should be, we should be always praising God, and rejoicing in him; but we make other work for ourselves by our own folly, and then complain that religion is unpleasant; and whose fault is that? If we would be always loving and delighting in God, and would live a life of communion with him, we should have no occasion to repent of that; but if we leave the fountain of living waters, and turn aside to broken cisterns, or the brooks in summer, and see cause (as doubtless we shall) to repent of it, we may thank ourselves.

What there is of bitterness in repentance, is owing not to our religion, but to our defects and defaults in religion; and it proves, not that there is bitterness in the Ways of God, but in the Ways of Sin, which make a penitential sorrow necessary, for the preventing of a sorrow a thousand times worse; for sooner or later sin will have sorrow. If repentance be bitter, we must not say, this is occasioned through being godly, but through being sinful; Jer. 4. 18. *This is thy wickedness, because it is bitter.* If by sin we have made sorrow necessary, it is certainly better to mourn now, than *mourn at the last*, Pro. 5. 11. To continue impenitent, is not to put away sorrow from thy heart, but to put it off to a worse place.

(2.) Even in repentance, if it be right, there is a true pleasure, a pleasure accompanying it. Our Saviour has said of them, who thus mourn, not only that they shall be comforted, but that they *are blessed*, Mat. 5. 4. When a man is conscious to himself that he has done an ill thing, and what is unbecoming him, and may be hurtful to him, it is incident to him to repent of it. Now Religion has found a way to put a sweetness into that bitterness. Repentance, when it is not from the influence of religion, is nothing but bitterness and horror, as Judas's was; but repentance, as it is made an act of religion, as it is one of the laws of Christ, is pleasant, because it is the raising of the spirit, and the discharging of that which is noxious and offensive.

Our religion has not only taken care, that penitents be not overwhelmed with an excess of sorrow, (2 Cor. 2. 7.) and swallowed up by it; that their sorrow do not work death, as the sorrow of the world does; but it has provided, that even this bitter cup should be sweetened; and therefore we find that under the law, the sacrifices for sin were commonly attended with expressions of joy: and while the Priests were sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices to make atonement, (2 Chr. 29. 24, 25.) the Levites attended with *psalteries and harps*, for so was the commandment of the Lord by his Prophets. Even the day to afflict the soul is the day of atonement; and when we receive the atonement, we *joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, Rom. 5. 11. In giving our consent to the atonement, we take the comfort of the atonement.

In sorrowing for the death of some dear friend or relation, thus far we have found a pleasure in it, that it has given vent to our grief which our spirits were full of; so in sorrow for sin, the shedding of just tears is some satisfaction to us. If it is a pleasure to be angry, when a man thinks with Jonah, that he *does well to be angry;* much more is it a pleasure to be sorry, when a man is sure he does well to be sorry. The same word in Hebrew, נָחַם signifies both *consolari* and *pœnitere*, both to *comfort* and to *repent*, because there is comfort in true repentance.

(3.) Much more after repentance, there is a pleasure attending it, and flowing from it. It is a way of pleasantness, for it is the way to pleasantness. To them that mourn in Zion, that sorrow after a godly sort, God has appointed *Beauty for ashes*, and the *oil of joy for mourning*, Isa. 61. 3. And the more the soul is humbled under the sense of sin, the more sensible will the comfort of pardon be; it is wounded in order to be healed: the jubilee trumpet sounded in the close of the day of soul-affliction, (Lev. 25. 9.) which proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of release; and an acceptable year it is indeed, to those who find themselves tied and bound with the cords of their sin.

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True Penitents go weeping, it is true, but it is to *seek the Lord of Hosts*, (Jer. 50. 4, 5.) to seek him as *their God*, and to enter into covenant with him: and let their *hearts rejoice that seek the Lord*, (Ps. 105. 3.) for they shall find him, and find him their bountiful rewarder. They sorrow not as those that have no hope, but good hope that their iniquities are forgiven; and what joy can be greater than that of a pardon to one condemned?

2. It is true, that to be religious is to take care, and to take pains, and to labour earnestly, (Luke 13. 24.) and yet *Wisdom's Ways* are *ways of pleasantness*. It is true, we must strive to enter into this way, must be in an agony, so the word is. There is a violence which the kingdom of heaven suffers, and the *violent take it by force*, Mat. 11. 12. And when we are in that way, we must *run with patience*, Heb. 12. 1. The bread of life is to be eaten in the sweat of our face; we must be always upon our guard, and keep our hearts with all diligence. Business for God and our souls is what we are not allowed to be slothful in, but *fervent in spirit serving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11. We are *Soldiers of Jesus Christ*, and we must *endure hardness*, must *war the good warfare*, till it be accomplished, 2 Tim. 2. 2.

And yet even in this contention, there is comfort. It is work indeed, and work that requires care; and yet it will appear to be pleasant work, if we consider how we are strengthened for it, and encouraged in it.

(1.) How we are strengthened for it, and animated with strength in our souls to go on in it, and go through with it. It would be unpleasant, and would go on very heavily, if we were left to ourselves, to travel in our own strength; but if we be actuated and animated in it by a better spirit, and mightier power than our own, it is *pleasant*. If God *work in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, (Phil. 2. 13.) we shall have no reason to complain of the difficulty of our work; for God *ordains peace for us*, true peace and pleasure, by *working all our works in us*, Isa. 26. 12.

We may sing at our work, if our minds be by the Spirit of God brought to it, our hands strengthened for it, and our infirmities helped, (Rom. 8. 26.) and particularly our infirmities in prayer; that by it we may fetch in strength for every service, strength according to the day. Daniel at first found God's speaking to him a terror, he could not bear it; but when one like the appearance of a man came and touched him, (who could be no other than Christ the Mediator) and put strength into him, saying, *Peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong;* it was quite another thing with him, then nothing more pleasant, *Let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me*, Dan. 10. 17, 18, 19.

Though the way to heaven be up hill, yet, if we be carried on in it as upon eagle's wings, it will be pleasant; and those are so that wait upon the Lord, for to them it is promised that they *shall renew their strength*. That is pleasant work, though against the inclination of our corrupt natures; for the doing of which we have not only a new nature given us, inclining us to it, and making us habitually capable of application to it, but actual supplies of grace sufficient for the doing of it, promised us, (2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.) by one who knows what strength we need, and what will serve, and will neither be unkind to us, nor unfaithful to his own word. And it is observable that when God, though he eased not Paul of the thorn in the flesh, yet said that good word to him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee;* immediately it follows, *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong*. Sufficient grace will make our work pleasant, even the hardest part of it.

(2.) How we are encouraged in it. It is true, we must take pains, but the work is good work, and is to be done, and is done by all the saints from a principle of holy love, and that makes it pleasant, (1 John 5. 3.) as Jacob's service for Rachel was to him, because he loved her. It is an unspeakable comfort to industrious christians, that they are working together with God, and he with them; that their master's eye is upon them, and a witness to their sincerity; he *sees in secret*, and will *reward openly*, Mat. 6. 6. God now accepts their works, smiles upon them, and his Spirit speaks to them good words and *comfortable words*, (Zech. 1. 13.) witnessing to their adoption. And this is very encouraging to God's servants, as it was to the servants of Boaz, to have their master come to them, when they were hard at work, reaping down his own fields, and with a pleasant countenance say to them, *The Lord be with you*, Ruth 2. 4. Nay, the Spirit says more to God's labourers, *The Lord is with you*.

The prospect of the recompence of reward, is in a special manner encouraging to us in our work, and makes it pleasant, and the little difficulties we meet with in it to be as nothing. It was by having an eye to this that Moses was encouraged not only to bear the reproach of Christ, but to *esteem it greater riches than the treasures of* Egypt, Heb. 11. 26. In all labour there is profit, and if so, there is pleasure also in the prospect of that profit, and according to the degree of it. We must work, but it is to work out our salvation, a great salvation, which, when it comes, will abundantly make us amends for all our toil. We must strive, but it is to enter into life, eternal life. We must run, but it is for an incorruptible crown, the prize of our high calling. And we do not run at an uncertainty, nor fight as those that beat the air; for to him that *sows righteousness there is a sure reward*, (Pro. 11. 18.) and the assurance of that harvest will make even the seed-time pleasant.

3. It is true, that to be religious, is to deny ourselves, in many things that are pleasing to sense: and yet Wisdom's Ways are *pleasantness* notwithstanding. It is indeed necessary, that beloved lusts should be mortified and subdued, corrupt appetites crossed and displeased, which, to the natural man, is like *plucking out a right eye*, and *cutting off a right hand*, Mat. 5. 29.

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29. There are forbidden pleasures that must be abandoned, and kept at a distance from: the flesh must not be gratified, nor *provision* made to *fulfil the lusts of it*, (Rom. 13. 14.) but on the contrary, we must *keep under the body*, and *bring it into subjection*, (1 Cor. 9. 27.) we must *crucify the flesh*, must kill it, and put it to a painful Death. The first lesson we are to learn in the school of Christ, is to deny ourselves, (Mat. 16. 24.) and this must be our constant practice; we must use ourselves to deny ourselves, and thus *take up our cross daily*.

Now will not this spoil all the pleasure of a religious life? No, it will not; for the pleasures of sense, which we are to deny ourselves, are comparatively despicable, and really dangerous.

(1.) These pleasures we are to deny ourselves are comparatively despicable: how much soever they are valued and esteemed by those who live by sense, and know no better, they are looked upon with a generous contempt by those who live by faith, and are acquainted with divine and spiritual pleasures. And it is no pain to deny ourselves in these pleasures, when we know ourselves entitled to better, more rational, and noble, and agreeable, the delights of the blessed spirits above.

The garlic and onions of Egypt were doated upon by those, that knew not how to value either the manna of the wilderness, or the milk and honey of Canaan, Num. 11. 5. So the base and sordid pleasures of sense are relished by the depraved and vicious appetites of the carnal mind. But when a man has learned to put a due estimate upon spiritual pleasures, those that are sensual have lost all their sweetness, and are become the most insipid things in the world; have no pleasure in them, in comparison with that far greater pleasure which excelleth.

Is it any diminution to the pleasure of a grown man, to deny himself the toys and sports which he was fond of when a child? No, when he became a man, he put away those childish things; he is now past them, he is above them, for he is acquainted with those entertainments that are manly and more generous. Thus mean and little do the pleasures of sense appear to those that have learned to delight themselves in the Lord.

(2.) They are really dangerous, they are apt to take away the heart. If the heart be set upon them, they blind the mind, debauch the understanding and conscience, and in many quench the sparks of conviction, and of that holy fire which comes from heaven, and tends to heaven. They are in danger of drawing away the heart from God, and the more they are valued and coveted, the more dangerous they are, of piercing us through with many sorrows, and of drowning us in destruction and perdition: to deny ourselves in them, is but to avoid a rock, upon which multitudes have fatally split.

What diminution is it to the pleasure of a safe and happy way on sure ground, which will certainly bring us to our journey's end, to deny ourselves the false and pretended satisfaction, of walking in a fair but dangerous way, that leads to destruction? Is it not much pleasanter travelling on a rough pavement, than on a smooth quicksand? Where there is a known peril, there can be no true pleasure, and therefore the want of it is no loss or uneasiness.

What pleasure can a wise or considerate man take in those entertainments, in which he has continual reason to suspect a snare and a design upon him, any more than he that was at a feast could relish the dainties of it, when he was aware of a naked sword hanging directly over him by a single thread? The foolish woman, indeed, calls the *stolen waters sweet*, and *bread eaten in secret pleasant*, (Pro. 9. 17, 18.) But those find no difficulty or uneasiness in denying them, who know *that the dead are there, and her guests are already in the depths of Hell*. Therefore, however the corrupt heart may find some reluctance in refusing those forbidden pleasures, we may say of it as Abigail did, of David's denying himself the satisfaction of being revenged on Nabal; afterwards this shall be *no Grief unto us, nor Offence of Heart*, 1 Sam. 25. 31.

4. It is true, that *through much tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God*, (Acts 14. 23.) that we must not only deny ourselves the pleasures of sense, but must sometimes expose ourselves to its pains; we must take up our cross when it lies in our way, and bear it after Christ. We are told, that *All, that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution*, at least they must expect it, and get ready for it; bonds and afflictions abide them, losses in their estates, hinderances in their preferment, reproaches and contempts, banishments, deaths must be counted upon: and will not this spoil the pleasure of religion? No, it will not; for,

(1.) It is but *light affliction* at the worst, that we are called to suffer, and *but for a moment*, compared with the *far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* that is reserved for us, (2 Cor. 4. 17.) with which the *sufferings of this present time* are *not worthy to be compared*, Rom. 8. 18. All these troubles do but touch the body, the outward man, and the interests of it, they do not at all affect the soul; they break the Shell, or pluck off the Husk, but do not bruise the Kernel.

Can the brave and courageous soldier take pleasure in the toils and perils of the camp, and in jeoparding his life in the high places of the field, in the eager pursuit of honour, and in the service of his prince and country? And shall not those who have the interests of Christ's kingdom near their hearts, and are carried on by a holy ambition of the honour that comes from God, take a delight in suffering for Christ, when they know that those sufferings tend to his honour, and their own hereafter? They that are *persecuted for Righteousness-sake*, that are *reviled*, and have *all manner of evil said against them falsely*, because they belong to Christ, are bidden not only to bear it patiently, but to rejoice in it, and to be *exceeding glad*, for *great is their reward in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 11, 12. Every reproach we endure for Christ, will be a pearl in our crown shortly.

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(2.) As those *afflictions abound* for Christ, so our *consolations in Christ do much more abound*, 2 Cor. 1. 5. The more the waters increased, the higher was the Ark lifted up; the more we suffer in God's cause, the more we partake of his comforts; for he will not be wanting to those whom he calls out to any hardships more than ordinary for his name's sake. The Lord was with Joseph in the prison, when he lay there for a good conscience; and those went from the council rejoicing, that were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name; were honoured to be dishonoured for him. Acts 5. 41.

Thus the extraordinary supports and joys which they experience, who patiently suffer for righteousness-sake, add much more to the pleasantness of the Ways of Wisdom, than the sufferings themselves do, or can, derogate from it; for the sufferings are human, the consolations are divine. They suffer in the flesh, but they rejoice in the spirit; they suffer for a time, but they rejoice evermore; and *this their joy no man taketh from them.*

CHAP. VII.

The Application of the Doctrine.

CONCERNING this doctrine of the pleasantness of Religious Ways, I hope we may now say as Eliphaz does of his principle, *Lo! this, we have searched it, so it is*, (Job 5. 27.) it is uncontestably true, and therefore we may conclude as he does, *Hear it, and know thou it for thy good*; know thou it *for thyself*, so the Margin reads it, Apply it to thyself, believe it concerning thyself, not only that it is good, but that *it is good for thee to draw near to God*; (Ps. 73. 28.) then only we hear things, and know them for our good, when we hear them, and know them for ourselves.

Three inferences, by way of counsel and exhortation, we shall draw from this doctrine.

1. Let us all then be persuaded, and prevailed with, to enter into, and to walk in, these Paths of Wisdom, that are so very pleasant. This is what I principally intend in opening and proving this truth; most people would rather be courted than threatened to their duty. Much might be said to frighten you out of the ways of sin and folly, but I would hope to gain the same point another way, by alluring you into the Ways of Wisdom and holiness. This comes to invite you to a Feast which the Lord of Hosts has, in the gospel, made to all nations, (Isa. 25. 6.) and to all in the nations, and to you among the rest, for none are excluded, that do not by their unbelief exclude themselves, *a Feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined*; delights for souls, infinitely transcending the delicacies of sense; you are welcome to this feast; come, for all things are now ready; *Come, eat of Wisdom's bread, and drink of the wine that she has mingled*, Pro. 9. 5.

Is a life of religion such a sweet and comfortable life? Why then should not we be religious? If such as these be the Ways of Wisdom, why should not we be travellers in those ways? Let this recommend to us a life of sincere and serious godliness, and engage us to conform to all its rules, and give up ourselves to be ruled by them. It is not enough to have a good opinion of religion, and to give it a good word; that will but be a witness against us, if we do not set ourselves in good earnest to the practice of it, and make conscience of living up to it.

I would here, with a particular and pressing importunity, address myself to you that are young; to persuade you, now in the days of your youth, now in the present day, to make Religion your choice and your business; and I assure you, if you do so, you will find it your delight. May God, by his grace, convince you of the real comforts that are to be had in real godliness, that you may be drawn cheerfully to Christ with these Cords of a Man, and held fast to him with these Bands of Love. *My Son*, (says Solomon to his little scholar, Pro. 24. 13, 14.) *eat thou honey, because it is good; and the honey-comb, which is sweet to thy taste.* He does not forbid him the delights of sense, he may use them soberly and moderately, and with due caution; but remember that, *So shall the knowledge of Wisdom be to thy soul, when thou hast found it:* thou hast better pleasures than these to mind and pursue, spiritual and rational ones; and instead of being made indifferent to those, we should rather be led to them, and quickened in our desires after them, by these delights of sense, which God gives us to engage us to himself, and his service.

The age of youth is the age of pleasure, you think you may now be allowed to take your pleasure; O that you would take it, and seek it there, where alone it is to be had, and that, is in a strict observance of the laws of virtue and godliness. Would you live a pleasant life? Begin betimes to live a religious life, and the sooner you begin, the more pleasant it will be; it is best travelling in a morning. Would you rejoice, O young people! in your youth, and have your hearts to cheer you in the days of your youth, (Ecc. 11. 9.) do not walk in the way of your corrupt and carnal hearts, but in the way of God's commandments; for he knows what is good for you, better than you do yourselves: do not walk in the sight of your eyes, for the eyes are apt to fly upon that which is not, (Pro. 23. 5.) but live by faith, that faith which, being the *substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, will lead you to that which is; for Wisdom *makes those that love her to inherit substance*, and *fills their treasures*, (Pro. 8. 21.) and thence arises their true satisfaction.

That which I would persuade you to, is, to walk in the Way of Wisdom, to be sober-minded, to be thoughtful about your souls and your everlasting state, and get your minds well-principled, and well-affected, and well-inclined; *Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom, and, with all thy getting, get understanding*; Pro. 4. 7. That of which I would persuade you, is, the pleasantness of this way; you cannot do better for yourselves than by a religious course of life. *My Son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine*, (Pro. 23. 15, 16.) *yea, my reins shall rejoice if thy lips*, out of the abundance of thine heart, *speak right things*:

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but that is not all, not only my heart shall rejoice, but thine own shall.

I wish you would see, and seriously consider, the two rivals that are making court to you for your souls, for your best affections, Christ and Satan, and act wisely in disposing of yourselves, and make such a choice as you will afterwards reflect upon with comfort. You are now at the turning time of life; turn right now, and you are made for ever. Wisdom says, (Pro. 9. 4.) *Whoso is simple let him turn in* to me; and she will cure him of his simplicity: Folly says, *Whoso is simple let him turn in* to me; and she will take advantage of his simplicity: now let him come, whose right your hearts are, and give them him, and you shall have them again more your own.

That you may determine well between these two competitors, for the throne in your souls;

(1.) See the folly of carnal, sinful, pleasures, and abandon them; you will never be in love with the pleasures of religion till you are persuaded to fall out with forbidden pleasures. The enjoyment of the delights of sense suits best with that age, the appetite towards them is then most violent; mirth, sport, plays, dainties, are the idols of young people, they are therefore called *Youthful Lusts*. The days will come, the evil days, when they themselves will say they have *no pleasure in them*, like Barzillai, (2 Sam. 19. 35.) who, when he is old, can no more relish what he eats and what he drinks. O that reason, and wisdom, and grace, might make you as dead to them now, as time and days will make you after a while.

Will you believe one that tried the utmost of what the pleasures of sense could do towards making a man happy? He said of laughter, It *is mad*, and of mirth, *What doth it?* and that *Sorrow is better than laughter*, Ecc. 2. 2. and 7. 3. Moses knew what the pleasures of the court were, and yet chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to continue in the snare of them; (Heb. 11. 25.) and you must make the same choice: for you will never cordially embrace the pleasures of religion, till you have renounced the pleasures of sin; covenant against them, therefore, and watch against them.

If you would live, and go in the way of understanding, you must forsake the foolish, (Pro. 9. 6.) take heed of the way both of the *Evil Man*, and of the *Strange Woman;* avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away, Pro. 2. 12, 16. Look upon sinful pleasures as mean and much below you; look upon them as vile and much against you; and do not only despise them, but dread them, and hate even the garments spotted with the flesh.

(2.) Be convinced of the pleasure of Wisdom's Ways, and come and try them. You are, it may be, prejudiced against religion as a melancholy thing, but, as Philip said to Nathaniel, (John 1. 46.) *Come and see*. Believe it possible that there may be a pleasure in religion, which you have not yet thought of. When religion is looked upon at a distance, we see not that pleasure in it, which we shall certainly find when we come to be better acquainted with it. Peter Martyr, in a sermon, illustrated it by this comparison, (and it proved a means of the conversion of the Marquis of Vico;) "He that looks upon persons dancing at a distance, would think they were mad; but let him come nearer, and observe how they take every step by rule, and keep time with the music, he will not only be pleased with it, but inclined to join with them."

Come and take Christ's yoke upon you, and you will find it easy; try the pleasure there is in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and in converse with spiritual and eternal things; try the pleasure of seriousness and self-denial, and you will find it far exceeds that of vanity and self-indulgence. Try the pleasure of meditation on the word of God, of prayer and praise, and sabbath-sanctification, and you will think that you have made a happy change of the pleasure of vain and carnal mirth for these true delights.

Make this trial by these four rules:

[1.] That man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him. Our pleasures will be according to that which we pitch upon and pursue as our chief end; if we can mistake so far, as to think it is our chief end to enjoy the world and the flesh, and our chief business to serve them, the delights of the sense will relish best with us: but if the world was made for man, certainly man was made for more than the world; and if God made man, certainly he made him for himself: God then is our chief good, it is our business to serve and please him, and our happiness to be accepted of him.

And if so, and we believe so, nothing will be a greater pleasure to us, than that which we have reason to think will be pleasing to him. If we do, indeed, look upon God as our chief good, we shall make him our *chief joy*, our *exceeding joy*. If we consider that we were made capable of the pleasure of conversing with God in this world, and seeing and enjoying him in another; we cannot but think that we wretchedly disparage ourselves, when we take up with the mean and sordid pleasures of sense as our felicity, especially if we forego all spiritual and eternal pleasures for them; as certainly we do, and give up all our expectations of them, if we place our happiness in these present delights; and we are guilty of a greater absurdity than that which profane Esau was guilty of, who, *for a mess of pottage sold his birth-right*, Heb. 12. 16.

[2.] That the soul is the man, and that is best for us, that is best for our souls. Learn to think meanly of this flesh, by which we are allied to the earth and the inferior creatures; it is formed out of the dust, it is dust, and it is hastening to the dust; and then the things that gratify it, will not be esteemed of any great moment: *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them;* and therefore let us not make idols of them.

But the soul is the noble part of us, by which we are allied to heaven, and the world of spirits; those comforts therefore which delight the soul, are the comforts we should prize most, and give the preference to, for the soul's sake. Rational pleasures are the best for a man.

[3.] That the greatest joy is that which a Stranger doth

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doth not intermeddle with, Pro. 14. 10. The best pleasure is that which lies not under the eye and observation of the world, but, which a man has and hides in his own bosom, and by which he enjoys himself, and keeps not only a peaceable, but a comfortable, possession of his own soul, though he does not by laughter, or other expressions of joy, tell them the satisfaction he has. Christ had *meat to eat which the world knew not of*, (John 4. 32.) and so have christians, to whom he is the bread of life.

[4.] That all is well that ends everlastingly well. That pleasure ought to have the preference, which is of the longest continuance. The pleasures of sense are withering and fading, and leave a sting behind them to those that placed their happiness in them; but the pleasures of religion will abide with us; *in these is continuance*, (Isa. 64. 5.) they will not turn with the wind, nor change with the weather, but are meat which endures to everlasting life.

Reckon that the best pleasure which will remain with you, and stand you in stead, when you come to die: which will help to take off the terror of death, and allay its pains. The remembrance of sinful pleasures will give us killing terrors, but the remembrance of religious pleasures will give us living comforts in dying moments. They that live in Belshazzar's revels, may expect to receive the summons of death, with the same confusion that he did, when *the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another*; (Dan. 5. 6.) but they that live in Hezekiah's devotions, may receive them with the same composure that he did, when with a great deal of satisfaction he looked back upon a well-spent life: *Now, Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with an upright heart*, Isa. 37. 3.

2. Let us, that profess religion, study to make it more and more pleasant to ourselves. We see how much is done to make it so; let us not receive the Grace of God herein in vain. Let them that walk in Wisdom's Ways, taste the sweetness of them, and relish it. Christ's service is perfect freedom; let us not make a drudgery of it, nor a toil of such a pleasure. We should not only be reconciled to our duty, (as we ought to be to our greatest afflictions, and to make the best of it,) but we should rejoice in our duty, and sing at our work. If God intended that his service should be a pleasure to his servants, let them concur with him herein, and not walk contrary to him.

Now in order to the making of our religion increasingly pleasant to us, I shall give seven directions.

(1.) Let us always keep up good thoughts of God, and carefully watch against hard thoughts of him. As it is the original error of many that are loose and careless in religion, that they *think God altogether such a one as themselves*, (Ps. 50. 21.) as much a friend to sin as themselves, and as indifferent whether his work be done or no; so it is the error of many that are severe in their religion, that they think God, like themselves, a hard master; they have such thoughts of him, as Job had in an hour of temptation, when he looked upon God as seeking occasions against him, numbering his steps, and watching over his sins, and taking him for his enemy; (Job 13. 24. and 14. 16.) as if he were extreme to mark iniquities, and implacable to those who had offended, and not accepting any service that had in it the least defect or imperfection.

But the matter is not so, and we do both God and ourselves a great deal of wrong, if we imagine it to be so; what could have been done more than God has done, to convince us that he is gracious, and merciful, *slow to anger*, and ready to forgive sin when it is repented of? *I said, I will confess mine iniquity unto thee, and thou forgavest*; (Ps. 32. 5.) and he is ready to accept the services that come from an upright heart. He *will not always chide*, nor *contend for ever*. So far is he from taking advantage of us, that he makes the best of us: where the spirit is willing, he accepts that, and overlooks the weakness of the flesh. Let us deal with him accordingly; look upon God as Love, and the God of Love, and then it will be pleasant to us to hear from him, to speak to him, to converse with him, and to do him any service.

It is true, God is great, and glorious, and jealous, and to be worshipped with reverence and holy fear; but is he not our Father, a tender gracious Father? Was not God, in Christ, *reconciling the world* to himself, (2 Cor. 5. 19.) and to all his attributes and relations to us, by shewing himself willing to be reconciled to us, notwithstanding our provocations? See him, therefore, upon a Throne of Grace, and come boldly to him, and that will make your service pleasant.

(2.) Let us dwell much, by faith, upon the promises of God. What pleasant lives should we lead, if we were but more intimately acquainted with those declarations which God has made of his good will to man, and the assurances he has given of his favour, and all the blessed fruits of it, to those who serve him faithfully? The promises are many, and exceeding great and precious, suited to our case, and accommodated to every exigence; there are not only promises *to* grace, but promises *of* grace, grace sufficient; and these promises are all *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ.

What do these promises stand in our bibles for, but to be made use of? Come then, and let us apply them to ourselves, and insert our own names in them by faith; what God said to Abraham, *I am thy shield*, (Gen. 15. 1.) I am *El-shaddi*, a *God All-sufficient*; (Gen. 17. 1.) what he said to Joshua, *I will never fail thee nor forsake thee*, (Jos. 1. 5.) he says to me. What he says to all that love him, that *All things shall work for good to them*, (Rom. 8. 28.) and to all that *fear him*, that *no good thing* shall be *wanting* to them, (Ps. 34. 10.) he says to me; and why should not I take the comfort of it?

These promises, and the like, are *wells of salvation*, from which we may *draw water with joy*; and *breasts of consolation*, from which we may *suck, and be satisfied*; they will be both our *strength*, and our *song* in the *house of our pilgrimage*. So well-ordered is the covenant of grace in all things, and so sure, (2 Sam. 23. 5.) that if, having laid up our portion in it, and so made it all our salvation, we would but fetch our maintenance from it,

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and so make it all our desire and delight, we should have in it a continual feast, and should go on our way rejoicing, Ps. 119. 111.

(3.) Let us order the affairs of our religion with discretion. Many make religion unpleasant to themselves, and discouraging to others, by their imprudent management of it; making that service to be a burthen by the circumstances of it, which in itself would be a pleasure; doing things out of time, or tasking themselves above their strength, and undertaking more than they can go through with, especially at first, which is like *putting new wine into old bottles*, (Mat. 9. 17.) or like *over-driving the flocks one day*, Gen. 33. 13. If we make the yoke of Christ heavier than he has made it, we may thank ourselves that our drawing in it becomes unpleasant. Solomon cautions us, (Ecc. 7. 16.) against being *righteous overmuch*, and making ourselves *overwise*, as that by which we may destroy ourselves, and put ourselves out of conceit with our religion; there may be over doing in well-doing, and then it becomes unpleasant.

But let us take our religion as Christ has settled it, and we shall find it easy. When the ways of our religion are ways of Wisdom, then they are ways of pleasantness; for the more Wisdom the more pleasantness; and that Wisdom dwells with prudence. Wisdom will direct us to be even and regular in our religion, to take care that the duties of our general and particular calling, the business of our religion, and our necessary business in the world, do not interfere or intrench upon one another. It will direct us to time duty aright; for every thing is beautiful and pleasant in its season, (Ecc. 3. 11.) and work is then easy, when we are in frame for it.

(4.) Let us live in love, and keep up christian charity, and the spiritual communion of saints; if we would be of good comfort, we must be of one mind, (2 Cor. 13. 11.) and therefore the Apostle presses brotherly love upon us, with an argument taken from the consolations in Christ, (Phil. 2. 1.) that is, the comfort that is in Christianity. As ever you hope to have the comfort of your religion, submit to that great law of it, *Walk in Love:* for, *Behold, how good, and how pleasant, it is,* (how good in itself, and pleasant to us,) *for brethren to dwell together in unity.* The more pleasing we are to our brethren, the more pleasant we shall be to ourselves.

Nothing makes our lives more uncomfortable than strife and contention; *Woe is me that I dwell* among those that *hate peace*, Ps. 120. 5. It is bad being among those that are disposed to quarrel, and worse having in ourselves a disposition to quarrel. The resentments of contempt put upon us, are uneasy enough, and contrivances to revenge it much more so. And nothing makes our religion more uncomfortable, than strifes and contentions about that. We forfeit and lose the pleasure of it, if we entangle ourselves in perverse disputings about it.

But by holy love we enjoy our friends, which will add to the pleasure of enjoying God in this world. Love itself sweetens the soul, and revives it, and, as it is the loadstone of love, it fetches in the further pleasure and satisfaction of being beloved, and so it is a Heaven upon Earth; for what is the happiness and pleasure of Heaven, but that there love reigns in perfection? Then we have most peace in our bosoms, when we are most peaceably disposed towards our brethren.

(5.) Let us be much in the exercise of holy joy, and employ ourselves much in praise. Joy is the heart of praise, as praise is the language of joy; let us engage ourselves to these, and quicken ourselves in these. God has made these our duty, that by these all the other parts of our duty may be pleasant to us; and for that end we should abound much in them, and attend upon God with joy and praise. Let us not crowd our spiritual joys into a corner of our hearts, nor our thankful praises into a corner of our prayers, but give both scope and vent to both.

Let us live a life of delight in God, and love to think of him as we do of one whom we love and value. Let the flowing in of every stream of comfort lead us to the fountain; and in every thing that is grateful to us, let us taste that the Lord is gracious. Let the drying up of every stream of comfort drive us to the fountain; and let us rejoice the more in God for our being deprived of that which we used to rejoice in.

Let us be frequent and large in our thanksgivings; it will be pleasant to us to recount the favours of God, and thus to make some returns for them; though poor and mean, yet such as God will graciously accept. We should have more pleasure in our religion, if we had but learned in *every thing to give thanks*, (1 Thess. 5. 18.) for that takes out more than half the bitterness of our afflictions, that we can see cause even to be thankful for them; and it infuses more than a double sweetness into our enjoyments, that they furnish us with matter for that excellent heavenly work of praise; *Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant;* comfortable, as well as comely, Ps. 135. 3.

(6.) Let us act in a constant dependance upon Jesus Christ. Religion would be much more pleasant, if we did but cleave more closely to Christ in it, and do all in his name. The more precious Christ is to us, the more pleasant will every part of our work be; and therefore believing in Christ is often expressed by our rejoicing *in him*, Phil. 3. 3. We may rejoice in God, through Christ, as the Mediator between us and God; may rejoice in our communion with God, when it is kept up through Christ; may rejoice in hope of eternal life, when we see this life in the Son; *He that hath the Son of God, has life*, that is, he has comfort, 1 John 5. 11, 12.

There is that in Christ, and in his undertaking and performances for us, which is sufficient to satisfy all our doubts, to silence all our fears, and to balance all our sorrows. He was appointed to be the Consolation of Israel, and he will be so to us, when we have learnt not to look for that in ourselves, which is to be had in him only, and to make use of his mediation in every thing wherein we have to do with God. When we rejoice in the righteousness of Christ, and in his grace and

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and strength, rejoice in his satisfaction and intercession, rejoice in his dominion and universal agency and influence, and in the progress of his Gospel, and the conversion of souls to him, and please ourselves with prospects of his second coming, we have then a joy, not only which no man takes from us, but which will increase more and more; and of the *increase of* Christ's *government*, (and therefore of that peace,) *there shall be no end*, Isa. 9. 7. Our songs of joy are then most pleasant, when the burthen of them is, *None but Christ, None but Christ.*

(7.) Let us converse much with the glory that is to be revealed. They that by faith send their hearts and best affections before them to heaven, while they are here on this earth, may in return fetch thence some of those joys and pleasures that are at God's right-hand. That which goes up in vapours of holy desire, though insensible, in groanings which cannot be uttered, will come down again in dews of heavenly consolations, which will make the soul as a watered garden.

Let us look much to the end of our way, how glorious it will be, and that will help to make our way pleasant. This abundantly satisfies the saints, and is the fatness of God's house on earth, Ps. 36. 8, 9. This makes them now to *drink of the river of God's pleasures*, that *with him is the Fountain of Life*, whence all these streams come, and *in his light* they hope to *see light*, everlasting light. By frequent meditations on that rest which remains for the people of God, (Heb. 4. 3.) we now enter into that rest, and partake of the comfort of it.

Our hopes of that happiness through grace would be very much strengthened, and our evidences for it cleared up insensibly, if we did but converse more with it, and the discoveries made of it in the scripture. We may have foretastes of heavenly delights, while we are here on earth, clusters from Canaan, while we are yet in this wilderness, and there is no pleasure comparable to that which these afford. That is the sweetest joy within us, which is borrowed from the joy set before us. And we deprive ourselves very much of the comfort of our religion, in not having our eye more to that joy. We rejoice most triumphantly, and with the greatest degrees of holy glorying, when we *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, Rom. 5. 2. In this our heart is glad, and our glory rejoices, Ps. 16. 9.

3. Let us make it appear, that we have, indeed, found Wisdom's Ways to be pleasantness, and her paths peace. If we have experienced this truth, let us evidence our experience, and not only in word, but in deed, bear our testimony to the truth of it, Let us live as those who believe the sweetness of religion, not because we are told it, but because we have tasted it, 1 Joh. 1. 1.

If so be then (to borrow the Apostle's words, 1 Pet. 2. 3.) *We have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, if we have, indeed, found it a pleasant thing to be religious;

(1.) Let our Hearts be much enlarged in all religious exercises, and all instances of gospel-obedience. The more pleasant the service of God is, the more we should abound in it. When God enlarges our hearts with his consolations, he expects that we should run the way of his commandments, that we should exert ourselves in our duty with more vigour, and press forward the more earnestly toward perfection.

This should make us forward to every good work, and ready to close with all opportunities of serving God, and doing good; that which we take a pleasure in, we need not to be twice *called to*. If indeed the hearts of those rejoice that seek the Lord, (as in Ps. 105. 3.) then when God says, *Seek ye my face*, how steadily should our hearts answer at the first word, *Thy Face, Lord, will we seek*; (1's. 27. 8.) and how glad shall we be, when it is said, *Let us go to the house of the Lord!* Ps. 122. 1. This should make us forward to acts of charity, that there is a pleasure in doing good; and we shall reflect with comfort upon it, that we have done something that will turn to the honour of God and our own account.

This should make us lively in our duty; and fix the heart in hearing the word, and in prayer and praise. Those that take delight in music, how does it engage them! How do all the marks of a close application of mind appear in their countenance and carriage! And shall not we by our attending on the Lord without distraction, make it to appear, that we attend upon him with delight, and are in our element when we are in his service? Let this be my rest for ever; here let me dwell all the days of my life.

This should keep us constant and unwearied in the work and service of God. What is really our delight, we are not soon weary of. If we delight in approaching to God, we shall seek him daily, and make it our daily work to honour him. If meditation and prayer be sweet, let them be our daily exercise; and let this bind our souls with a bond to God, and the *sacrifice* as *with cords to the horns of the altar*. With this we should answer all temptations to apostasy; "Shall I quit so good a master, so good a service? Entreat me not to leave Christ, or to turn from following after him; for *it is good to be here.*" *Here let us make tabernacles*, (Mat. 17. 4.) *Whither* else *shall we go*, but to him that has *the words of eternal life.*

(2.) Let our whole conversation be cheerful, and melancholy be banished. Are the Ways of Religion pleasant? Let us be pleasant in them, both to ourselves, and to those about us. As for those who are yet in a state of sin and wrath, they have reason to be melancholy; let the sinners in Zion be afraid, be afflicted, joy is forbidden fruit to them; what have they to do with peace? *Rejoice not, O* Israel, *for joy as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God*; Hos. 9. 1.

But those, who, through grace, are called out of darkness into a marvellous light, have cause to be cheerful, and should have hearts to be so. *Arise, Shine, for thy Light is come*, (Isa. 60. 1.) Is the Sun of Righteousness risen upon us? Let us arise, look forth as the morning with the morning. That comfort which Christ directs to our souls, let us reflect back upon others. And as our light is come, so is our liberty: art

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art thou *loosed from the bands of thy neck? O Captive Daughter of* Zion, *awake, awake, put on thy strength, put on thy beautiful garment, and shake thyself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem;* Isa. 52. 1, 2.

Though vain and carnal mirth is both a great sin, and a great snare, yet there is a holy cheerfulness and pleasantness of conversation, which will not only consist very well with serious godliness, but greatly promote it in ourselves, and greatly adorn it, and recommend it to others. *A merry heart* (Solomon says,) *does good like a medicine,* (Pro. 17. 22.) and makes fat the bones; while a broken spirit does hurt like a poison, and dries the bones. Christians should endeavour to keep up a cheerful temper, and not indulge themselves in that which is saddening and disquieting to the spirit; and they should shew it in all holy conversation, that those they converse with, may see they did not renounce pleasure, when they embraced religion.

I am sure, none have so much reason to rejoice, as good people have, nor so much done for them to encourage their joy; and therefore (to allude to that of Jonadab to Amnon,) *Why art thou, being the King's Son, lean from day to day?* 2 Sam. 13. 4. Are we in Prosperity? Therefore let us be cheerful, in gratitude to the God of our mercies, who expects that we should *serve him with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of all things,* (Deut. 28. 47.) and justly takes it ill if we do not.

Tristis es, & felix? Sciat hoc Fortuna caveto,
Ingratum dicet te (Lupe) si scierit. Mart.

In the midst of prosperity are you sorrowful? Beware that Fortune hear it not; if she be informed of it (Lupus) she will call you ungrateful. Mart.

Are we in affliction? Yet let us be cheerful, that we may make it appear that our happiness is not laid up in the creature, nor our treasures on earth. If it is the privilege of christians to rejoice in tribulation, let them not throw away their privilege, but glory in it, and make use of it. Let the joy of the Lord, which has infused itself into our hearts, diffuse itself into all our converse. *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy,* (Ecc. 9. 7.) *and drink thy wine;* nay, if thou shouldest be reduced to drink mere water, drink it *with a merry heart,* if thou hast good ground to hope that in Christ Jesus, God now accepts thy works; and this joy of the Lord will be thy strength.

(3.) Let us look with contempt upon the pleasures of sense, and with abhorrence upon the pleasures of sin. The more we have tasted of the delights of heaven, the more our mouths should be put out of taste with the delights of this earth. Let not those who have been feasted with the milk and honey of Canaan, hanker after the garlic and onions of Egypt.

Let us keep at a distance from all forbidden pleasures; there is a hook under those baits, a snake under the green grass; a rock under those smooth waters, on which multitudes have split. We must so dread the drunkard's pleasure, as not to *look upon the wine when it is red,* (Pro. 23. 31.) so dread the pleasures of the adulterer, as not to *look upon a woman to lust after her;* (Mat. 5. 28.) for these pleasures of sin not only are but for a season, but at the last they bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder. Either spiritual pleasures will deaden the force of the pleasures of sin, or the pleasures of sin will spoil the relish of spiritual pleasures.

Let us keep up a holy indifference even to the lawful delights of sense, and take heed not to love them more than God. The eye that has looked at the sun, is dazzled to every thing else. Have we beheld the beauty of the Lord? Let us see and own, how little beauty there is in other things. If we be tempted to do any thing unbecoming us, by the allurements of pleasure, we may well say, "Offer these things to those that know no better; but we do, and will never leave fountains of living water for cisterns of puddle-water."

(4.) Let not our hearts envy sinners. Envy arises from an opinion that the state of others is better than our own, which we grudge and are displeased at; and wish ourselves in their condition. Good people are often cautioned against this sin; *Be not thou envious against evil men, nor desire to be with them;* (Pro. 24. 1. Ps. 37. 1.) for if there be all this pleasure in religion, and we have experienced it, surely we would not exchange our condition with any sinner, even in his best estate.

Envy not sinners their outward prosperity, their wealth and abundance, which put them into a capacity of having all the delights of sense raised to the highest pitch of pleasure: though they lie *upon beds of ivory,* (Amos 6. 4, 5, 6.) and *stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flocks, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, though they chant to the sound of the viol, drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments;* yet those have no reason to envy them, whose souls dwell at ease in God, who are fed with the bread of life, the true manna, angels' food, and drink of the water of life freely, that make melody with their hearts to the Lord, and are made to hear from him joy and gladness; and have received the anointing of the Spirit. If we have relished the delights of religion, we shall say as David, *Let us not eat of their dainties,* Ps. 141. 4.

Envy not sinners the liberty they take to sin; that they can allow themselves in the full enjoyment of those pleasures which we cannot think of without horror; but have not we then the enjoyment of those pleasures which are infinitely better, and which they are strangers to? We cannot have both, and of the two, are not ours', without dispute, preferable to theirs'; and why then should we envy them? Their pleasures are enslaving, ours' enlarging; theirs' debasing to the soul, ours' ennobling; theirs' surfeiting, ours' satisfying; theirs' offensive to God, ours' pleasing to him; theirs' will end in pain and bitterness, ours' will be perfected in endless joys: and what reason then have we to envy them?

(5.) Let not our spirits sink, or be dejected, under the afflictions of this present time. We disparage our comforts in God, if we lay too much to heart our crosses in the world: and therefore, hereby let us evidence, that, being satisfied *of* God's loving-kindness, we are satisfied *with* it. Let us look upon that as sufficient

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to balance all the unkindnesses of men. They that value themselves upon God's smiles, ought not to vex themselves at the world's frowns. The light of God's countenance can shine through the thickest clouds of the troubles of this present time: and therefore, we should walk in the light of the Lord, even when, as to our outward condition, we sit in darkness.

We manifest that we have found true delight and satisfaction in the service of God, and communion with him, when the pleasure of them will make the bitterest cup of affliction that our Father puts into our hand, not only passable but pleasant; so that, like blessed Paul, when we are as sorrowful, yet we may be always rejoicing, and may take pleasure in infirmities and reproaches, because, though, for the present, they are not joyous but grievous, yet when afterwards they yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, they become not grievous, but truly joyous. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest.*

(6.) Let the pleasure we have found in religion, dispose us to be liberal and charitable to the poor and distressed. The pleasing sense we have of God's bounty to us, by which he has done so much to make us easy, should enage us bountifully to distribute to the necessities of saints, according to our ability, not only to keep them from perishing, but to make them easy, and that they may rejoice as well as we. Cheerfulness that enlarges the heart, should open the hand too. Paul observes it concerning the churches of Macedonia, who were ready to give for the relief of the poor saints at Jerusalem, that it was the *abundance of their joy*, their spiritual joy, their joy in God, that *abounded unto the riches of their liberality*, 2 Cor. 8. 2.

When the people of Israel are commanded to *rejoice in every good thing* which God had given them, (Deut. 26. 11, 12.) they are commanded also to give freely to *the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat, and be filled.* And when upon a particular occasion they are directed to *eat the fat*, and *drink the sweet*, (Neh. 8. 10.) at the same time they are directed to *send portions to them, for whom nothing is prepared:* and then the joy of the Lord will be their strength. By our being charitable, we should shew that we are cheerful; that we cheerfully taste God's goodness in what we have, and trust his goodness for what we may hereafter want.

(7.) Let us do what we can to bring others to partake of the same pleasures in religion, which we have tasted, especially those who are under our charge. It adds very much to the pleasure of an enjoyment, to communicate of it to others, especially when the nature of it is such, that we have never the less, but the more rather, for others sharing in it. What good tidings we hear, that are of common concern, we desire that others may hear them, and be glad too. He that has but found a lost sheep, *calls his friends and neighbours to rejoice with him;* (Luke 15. 6.) but he that has found Christ, and found comfort in him, can say, not only, Come rejoice with me, but, Come and partake with me; for yet there is room enough for all, though ever so numerous, enough for each, though ever so necessitous and craving.

When Sampson had found honey in the carcase of the lion, (Judg. 14. 8.) he brought some of it to his parents, that they might partake with him: thus when we have found a day in God's courts better than a thousand, we should invite others into those courts, by telling them what God has done for our souls, and how willing he is to do the same for theirs', if they, in like manner, apply themselves to him. When Andrew with a surprising pleasure finds the Messiah, (John 1. 41, 45.) he cannot rest till he has brought his brother Peter to him; nor Philip till he has brought his friend Nathaniel. They that are feasted with the comforts of God's house, should not covet to eat their morsel alone, but be willing to communicate of their spiritual things.

(8.) Let us be willing to die, and leave this world. We have reason to be ashamed of ourselves, that we, who have not only laid up our treasures above, but, fetch our pleasures thence, are as much in love with our present state, and as loath to think of quitting it, as if our riches, and pleasure, and all, were wrapt up in the things of sense and time. The delights of sense entangle us and hold us here; these are the things that make us loath to die, as one once said, viewing his fine house and gardens. And are these things sufficient to court our stay here, when God says, *Arise, and depart, for this is not your rest?* Mic. 2. 10.

Let us not be afraid to remove from a world of sense to a world of spirits, since we have found the pleasures of sense not worthy to be compared with *spiritual pleasures.* When in old age, which is one of the vallies of the shadow of death, we can no longer relish the delights of the body, but they become sapless and tasteless, (as they were to Barzillai,) yet we need not call those *evil days*, and *years in which we have no pleasure*, if we have walked and persevered in Wisdom's Ways; for if so, we may then in old age look back with pleasure upon a life well-spent on earth, (as Hezekiah did,) and look forward with more pleasure, upon a life to be better spent in Heaven.

And when we have received a sentence of death within ourselves, and see the day approaching, the pleasure we have in loving God, and believing in Christ, and in the expressions of holy joy and thankfulness, should make even a sick-bed and a death-bed easy; *The saints shall be joyful in glory, and shall sing aloud upon their beds,* (Ps. 149. 5.) those beds to which they are confined, and from which they are removing to their graves, their beds in the darkness. Our religion, if we be faithful to it, will furnish us with living comforts, in dying moments, sufficient to balance the pains of death, and take off the terror of it, and to enable us to triumph over it, *O Death! where is thy sting?* Let us then evidence our experience of the pleasures of religion, by living above the inordinate love of life, and fear of death.

(9.) *Lastly,* Let us long for the perfection of these spiritual pleasures in the Kingdom of Glory. When we come thither, and not till then, they will be perfected; while we are here, as we know and love but in part, so we rejoice but in part; even our spiritual joys here,

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here, have their damps and allays; we mix tears and tremblings with them: but, in heaven, there is a *fulness of joy* without mixture, and *pleasures for evermore*, without period or diminution. The servants of Christ will there enter into the joy of their Lord, and it shall be *everlasting joy*, Isa. 35. 10.

And what are the pleasures in the Way of Wisdom, compared with those at the End of the Way? If a complacency in the divine beauty and love be so pleasant while we are in the body, and are absent from the Lord, what will it be when we have put off the body, and go to be present with the Lord? If a day in God's courts, and a few minutes spent there in his praises, be so pleasant; what will an eternity within the vail be, among them that dwell in his house above, and are still praising him? If the earnest of our inheritance be so comfortable, what will the inheritance itself be?

Now wherever there is grace, it will be aiming at, and pressing towards, its own perfection; it is a *well of water springing up to eternal life*; (John 4. 14.) this therefore we should be *longing for*. Our love to God in this world is love in motion, in heaven it will be love at rest: O when shall that Sabbatism come, which remains for the people of God! Here we have the pleasure of looking towards God; *O when shall we come, and appear before him!* Our Lord Jesus, when, at his last passover which he earnestly desired to eat with his disciples, had tasted of the *Fruit of the vine*, speaks as one that longed to drink it *new in the kingdom of his Father*, Mat. 26. 29. It is very pleasant to serve Christ here, but to *depart and be with Christ, is far better. Now are we the Sons of God*, (1 John 3. 2.) and it is very pleasant to think of it: but *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*; something there is in reserve, which we are kept in expectation of: we are not yet at home, but should long to be there, and keep up holy desires of that Glory to be revealed, that we may be quickened, as long as we are here, to press *toward the mark for the prize of the high calling*.

THE

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A

DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

MEEKNESS AND QUIETNESS OF SPIRIT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SERMON ON ACTS 28. 22.

SHEWING THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS NOT A SECT; AND YET THAT IT IS EVERY WHERE SPOKEN AGAINST.

To the Reader.

I Do not think it at all needful to tell the world what it was which led me to the writing of this discourse concerning Meekness, the substance of which, was preached several years ago; nor am I concerned to apologize for the publication of it: if I thought it needed an apology, I would not consent to it. That temper of mind, which it endeavours to promote, and to charm men into, every one will own to be highly conducive to the comfort of human life, the honour of our holy religion, and the welfare and happiness of all societies, civil and sacred: and therefore, while the design cannot be disliked, I hope what is weak and defective in the management, will be excused. Some useful discourses have been of late published against rash anger, and an excellent dissuasive from revenge, by the present Bishop of Chester; wherein those brutish vices are justly exposed. I am co-operating in the same design, while I recommend the contrary virtues to the love and practice of all that profess relation to the Holy Jesus. And if this Essay have that good effect upon those into whose hands it shall at any time fall, my object will be attained.

As to the Sermon annexed, it is published (with some enlargements,) at the request of a very worthy friend who heard it preached in London last summer: and since, blessed be God, there are a great many testimonies borne, at this day, against the avowed infidelity and impiety of the age, I hope this may be accepted as a mite cast into that treasury, by a cordial friend to peace and holiness.

Chester, Nov. 21, 1698. M. HENRY.

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1 Pet. 3. 4. [latter part.]

——*Even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great Price.*

THE Apostle Peter, in this Epistle, (as also his beloved brother Paul, in many of his,) is very earnest in pressing upon Christians the conscientious discharge of the duties of their particular relations, and not without good reason; for generally it holds true, "That we are really, as we are relatively."[a] He is here, in the former part of this chapter, directing christian wives how to carry themselves in that relation, to the glory of God, their own comfort, and the spiritual benefit and advantage of their yoke-fellows. Among other good lessons, he teaches them how to dress themselves as it becomes women professing godliness.* Those of that sex are commonly observed to be very solicitous about their ornaments. When the question is asked, *Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?* It is supposed scarcely possible, Jer. 2. 32. This prevailing inclination the Apostle here takes hold of, for the recommending of those graces and duties to their choice and practice, which are indeed the most excellent and amiable adorning, not only of their sex to whom the exhortation is primarily directed, but of the other also, for whom, no doubt, it is likewise intended. Observe this method:

1. He endeavours to wean them from the vanity of outward ornaments, v. 3. *whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning*, &c. ὧν ἔστω—κόσμος. This does not forbid the sober and moderate use of decent ornaments, when it is according to the quality, place, and station, and in due season; (not on days of fasting and humiliation, when it is proper for ornaments to be laid aside, Exod. 33. 4, 5.) but it forbids the inordinate love and excessive use, (that is, the abuse,) of them. There *may be* the *plaiting of the hair*, and the *wearing of gold*, and there *must be* the *putting on of apparel*; (that shame, which came into the world with sin, has made it necessary;) but we must not make these things our adorning; that is, we must not set our hearts upon them, nor value ourselves by them, nor think the better of ourselves for them, nor pride ourselves in them, as if they added any real excellency to us, nor say to them as Saul did to Samuel, *Honour me now before this people*, out of a vain ambition to make *a fair shew in the flesh*. We must spend no more care, or thoughts, or time, or words, or cost, about them, and lay no more stress or weight upon them, than they deserve, and that is but a very little. It is but *glory hung upon* us, as the expression is, (Isa. 22. 24.) and has no glory, if compared with the glory that excelleth it even in the creatures

[a] V. 1, 2.

* Genus muliebre est φιλόκοσμον.—*The race of women is attached to ornaments. Lorin. in loc.*

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that are as far below us: [a]for Solomon, in all his glory, *was not arrayed* or beautified like one of those *lilies, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.* We must not seek first these things, nor seek them most, as if we had bodies for no other end than to wear out our clothes, and had nothing else to do with them than to make them fine. It was the folly, and proved the ruin, of that rich man in the parable, that he made his purple, and his fine linen, (with the other ornaments and delights of the body,) his good things, the things in which he placed his happiness, and in which he had his consolation, (Luke 16. 19, 25.) that is, in the language of this Scripture, he made them *his adorning;* [b]and so, being uncloathed of these, he was found naked. Let not the wearing of gold, and the putting on of apparel, be κόσμος—*the World;* so it may be rendered: it is *Mundus muliebris—a woman's world.* Let not these things be all the world with us, as they are with many, who reckon that to be out of the fashion (whatever it be) is to be out of the world.[c] Christians are called out of the world, and delivered from it, and should evidence a victory obtained by faith over it, as in other instances, so in this. It is a prescribed rule of our holy religion, (whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,) that *Women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety,* 1 Tim. 2. 9. But whereas there are some, on the one hand, that exclaim against vanity in apparel as the crying sin of this age, above any other, as if it were a new thing under the sun, and the former days were, in this respect, better than these;[d] and some, on the other hand, condemn it as a piece of fanaticism to witness (as there is occasion) against this vanity; both may receive a sufficient answer, if they will but read that excellent Homily of the Church of England, entitled, "An Homily against excess of apparel," (No. 18.) by which it will appear, that even in those early days of the reformation, it was a vanity that prevailed much in our land, and which the rulers of the Church thought themselves obliged to reprove. But we will hasten to the text.

2. He endeavours to bring them in love with the better ornaments, those of the mind, the graces of the blessed Spirit, here called ὁ κρυπτὸς ἄνθρωπος—*the hidden man of the heart.* Grotius observes, that "though he writes to women, yet he uses a word of the masculine gender, because the ornament he recommends, is such as both men and women must be adorned with." Grace, as a living principle of regular holy thoughts, words, and actions, is sometimes called the *New man,* (Eph. 4. 24.) sometimes the *Inward man,* (Rom. 7. 22.) and 2 Cor. 4. 16.) and so here, the *Hidden man of the heart.* It is called a Man, because it is made up of many parts and members, and its operations are vital and rational, and it restores those to the dignity of Men, who, by sin, had made themselves like the beasts that perish. [e]It is called the *Man of the heart,* because out of the heart are the *issues of life;* there lie the springs of the words and actions, and therefore into that the salt of grace is cast, and so all the waters are healed.[f] He is the christian indeed, that is one inwardly, and that circumcision, that baptism, which is *of the heart,* Rom. 2. 29. It is called the *hidden man of the heart,* because the work of grace is a secret thing, and does not make a pompous shew in the eye of the world; it is a *Mystery of Godliness;* a [g]*Life* that is *hid* with Christ in God, to whom secret things belong; therefore the saints are called his *hidden ones,* (Ps. 83. 3.) for the world knows them not, much less does it yet appear what they shall be. The King's daughter that is espoused to Christ, is *all glorious within,* Ps. 45. 13. The working of grace in the soul is often represented as a regeneration, or being begotten again; and perhaps when this good work is called the *hidden man of the heart,* there may be some allusion to the [h]forming of the bones in the womb of her that is with child, which Solomon speaks of as unaccountable, as is also the way of the Spirit, Ecc. 11. 5. compare John 3. 8. And lastly, it consists in that which is not corruptible; it is not depraved or vitiated by the corruption that is in the world through lust, and is in the soul a *Well of living water, springing up unto eternal life,* John 4. 14.

In the text he specifies one particular grace; one member of this *Hidden man in the heart,* which we must every one of us adorn ourselves with, and that is, *A meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* Where observe,

(1.) The Grace itself here recommended to us; it is a *meek and quiet Spirit.* There must be not only a meek and quiet behaviour outwardly; there may be that, either by constraint, or with some base and disguised design, while the soul in the mean time is rough and turbulent, and envenomed; the words may be softer than oil, while war is in the heart, Ps. 55. 21. But the word of God is κριτικὸς—*a discerner* and *judge* of the *thoughts* and *intents* of the heart, Heb. 4. 12. The power of mens' laws may bind a man to good behaviour, but it is only the power of God's grace, that will *renew a right Spirit* within him, Ps. 51. 10. It is this that makes the tree good, and then the fruit will be good. The God with whom we have to do, demands the heart, looks at the principle, and requires truth in the inward parts, not only in the duties of his own immediate worship, that those be done in the Spirit, but also in the duty we owe to our neighbour, that that also be done with a pure heart, and without dissimulation. The word of command which the Captain of our salvation gives, is, Christians, *take heed to your Spirits,* Mal. 2. 15.

(2.) The excellency of this Grace; it is *in the sight of God of great price.* It is really a precious Grace, for it is so in the sight of God, and we know that he can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is πολυτελὴς, which is the same word that is used, (1 Tim. 2. 9.) for that *costly array,* which is joined with *gold* and *pearls,* ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ. Persons of quality, in their ornaments, affect not so much that which is gay, as that which is rich; not that which makes a glittering, gaudy shew, and pleases children and fools, but that which is of intrinsic value, and recommends itself to the intelligent. A meek and quiet spirit is such an ornament, which has

[a] Mat. 6. 29, 30. [b] 2 Cor. 5. 3. [c] Gal. 1. 4. 1 John 5. 4.
[d] Ecc. 7. 10. [e] Pro. 4. 23. [f] 2 Kings 2. 21.
[g] Col. 3. 3. [h] Ps. 139. 14, 15, 16.

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not that *Gaiety* which is agreeable to the humour of a carnal world, but that real worth which recommends it to the favour of God. It is one of those Graces which are compared to the *Powders of the merchant*, (Cant. 3. 6.) far-fetched, and dear-bought, even with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. [a] Herein we should every one φιλοτιμεῖσθαι—*labour*, and this we should be ambitious of, as the greatest honour, that present or absent, living and dying, we may be *accepted of the Lord*; and blessed be God it is a thing attainable, through the Mediator, from whom we have received how to walk so as to please him; we must walk with *meekness* and *quietness* of Spirit, for this is *in the sight of God of great price*. Therefore this mark of honour is, in a special manner, put upon the grace of meekness, because it is commonly despised and looked upon with contempt by the children of this world, as a piece of mean-spiritedness, but (however they be termed and treated now) they are happy, and will appear so shortly, whom God approves, and to whom he says, *Well-done, good and faithful servant*; for by his judgment we must stand or fall eternally.

These words, therefore, will easily afford us this plain Doctrine,

That meekness and quietness of spirit is a very excellent grace, which we should every one of us put on, and be adorned with.

In the prosecution hereof, we shall endeavour,

I. To shew *what this meekness and quietness of Spirit is*. And,

II. *What Excellency there is in it*. And,

III. *Apply it*.

CHAP. I.

The Nature of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.

MEEKNESS and quietness seem to import much the same thing, but the latter having something of metaphor in it, will illustrate the former, and therefore we shall speak of them distinctly.

I. We must be of a meek spirit.—πρᾶος qu. ῥᾷος—*facilis—easy*: so the Critics. Meekness is easiness of spirit; not a sinful easiness to be debauched, as Ephraim's, who willingly walked after the commandment of the idolatrous princes, (Hos. 5. 11.) Nor a simple easiness to be imposed upon and deceived, as Rehoboham's, who, when he was forty years old, is said to be young and tender-hearted, (2 Chron. 13. 7.) but a gracious easiness to be wrought upon by that which is good, as their's whose heart of stone is taken away, and to whom a *heart of flesh* is given. Meekness is easiness, for it accommodates the soul to every occurrence, and so makes a man easy to himself, and to all about him. The Latins call a meek man *mansuetus*, qu. *manu assuetus—used to the hand*; which alludes to the taming and reclaiming of creatures wild by nature, and bringing them to be tractable and familiar.[b] Man's corrupt nature has made him like *the wild ass used to the wilderness*, or the *swift dromedary traversing her ways*, (Jer. 2. 23, 24.) But the grace of *meekness*, when that gets dominion in the soul, alters the temper of it, brings it to hand, submits it to management; and now the wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid, and a little child may lead them; for enemies are laid aside, and there is nothing to *hurt or destroy*, Isa. 11. 6, 9.

Meekness may be considered with respect both to God, and to our Brethren; it belongs to both the tables of the law, and attends upon the *first* great commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*; as well as the *second*, which is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; though its special reference is to the latter.

1. There is meekness toward God, and it is the easy and quiet submission of the soul to his whole will, according as he is pleased to make it known, whether by his Word, or by his Providence.

(1.) It is the silent submission of the soul to the Word of God: the understanding bowed to every divine truth, and the will to every divine precept; and both without murmuring or disputing. The word is then an engrafted word, when it is received with meekness, (Jam. 1. 21.) that is, with a sincere willingness to be taught, and desire to learn. Meekness is a grace that cleaves the stock, and holds it open, that the word, as the Imp, or shoot, may be grafted in; it breaks up the fallow ground, and makes it fit to receive the seed; captivates the high thoughts, and lays the soul like white paper under God's pen. When the Day-*Spring* takes *hold of the ends of the earth*, it is said to be *turned as clay to the seal*, Job 38. 12, 13, 14. Meekness does, in like manner, dispose the soul to admit the rays of divine light, which before it rebelled against; it opens the heart, as Lydia's was opened; and sets us down with Mary at the feet of Christ; the learner's place and posture. (Compare Deut. 33. 3.) The promise of teaching is made to the meek, because they are disposed to learn; The *meek will he teach his way*, Ps. 25. 8, 9. The Word of God is Gospel indeed, good tidings to the meek, (Isa. 61. 1.) they will entertain it and bid it welcome; the poor in spirit are evangelized, (Mat. 11. 5.) and Wisdom's alms are given to those that with meekness [c] *wait daily at her gates*, and like beggars *wait at the posts of her doors*. The language of this meekness is that of the child Samuel, (1 Sam. 3. 9.) *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth*; and that of Joshua, who, when he was in that high post of honour, giving command to Israel, and bidding defiance to all their enemies, (his breast filled with great and bold thoughts,) yet, upon the intimation of a message from Heaven, thus submits himself to it, (Josh. 5. 14.) *What saith my Lord unto his Servant?* And that of Paul, (and it was the first breath of the new man,) Acts 9. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And that of Cornelius, (Acts 10. 33.) And *now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*. And that of the good man I have read of, who, when he was going to hear the word, used to say, "Now let the word of the Lord come; and if I had six hundred necks, I would bow

[a] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [b] Jam. 3. 7, 8. [c] Pro. 8. 34.

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them all to the authority of it." To receive the word with meekness, is to be delivered into it, as into a mould: it seems to be Paul's metaphor, Rom. 6. 17. that form of doctrine εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε—*into which you were given up.* Meekness softens the wax, that it may receive the impression of the seal, whether it be *for doctrine or reproof, for correction or instruction in righteousness.* It opens the ear to discipline, silences objections, and suppresses the risings of the carnal mind against the word; consenting to the *Law that* it is *good,** and esteeming *all the precepts* concerning all things to be *right,* even when they give the greatest check to flesh and blood.

(2.) It is the silent Submission of the Soul to the *Providence* of God, for that also is the *Will* of God concerning us.

[1.] When the events of Providence are grievous and afflictive, displeasing to sense, and crossing our secular interests; Meekness not only quiets us under them, but reconciles us to them; and enables us not only to bear, but to receive evil as well as good at the hand of the Lord; which is the excellent frame that Job argues himself into, Job. 2. 10. It is to kiss the rod, and even to accept of the punishment of our iniquity; taking all in good part that God does: not daring to strive with our Maker, no, nor desiring to prescribe to him, but dumb, and not opening the mouth because God does it. How meek was Aaron under the severe dispensation which took away his sons with a particular mark of divine wrath! *He held his peace,* (Levit. 10. 3.) God was sanctified, and therefore Aaron was satisfied, and had not a word to say against it. Unlike to this, was the temper, or rather the distemper, of David, who was not like a man after God's own heart, when he was *displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah,* (2 Sam. 6. 8.) as if God must have asked David leave thus to assert the honour of his Ark. When God's anger is kindled, our's must be stifled; such is the law of meekness, that whatsoever pleases God, must not displease us. David was in a better frame when he penned the 56th Psalm, the title of which, some think, bespeaks the calmness and submissiveness of his spirit when the Philistines took him in Gath. It is upon *Jonathelem-reckokim,—the silent Dove afar off.* It was his calamity, that he was afar off, but he was then as a *silent Dove;* (mourning perhaps, Isa. 38. 14.) but not murmuring, not struggling, not resisting, when seized by the birds of prey; and the Psalm he penned in this frame, was, *Michtam,* a *Golden Psalm.* The language of this meekness is that of Eli, (1 Sam. 3. 18.) *It is the Lord:* and that of David to the same purport, (2 Sam. 15. 26.) *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* Not only, he *can* do what he will, subscribing to his power, for who can stay his hand? Or, He *may* do what he will, subscribing to his sovereignty, for he gives not account of any of his matters. Or, He *will* do what he will, subscribing to his unchangeableness, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him? But, *Let him do what he will,* subscribing to his wisdom and goodness, as Hezekiah (Isa. 39. 8.) *Good is the word of the Lord, which thou hast spoken.* Let him do what he will, for he will do what is best; and therefore, if God should refer the matter to me, (says the meek and quiet soul,) being well assured that he knows what is good for me better than I do for myself, I would refer it to him again; he shall *chuse our inheritance for us,* Ps. 47. 4.

[2.] When the methods of Providence are dark and intricate, and we are quite at a loss what God is about to do with us, *his way* is *in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known,* clouds and darkness are round about him; a meek and quiet spirit acquiesces in an assurance that all things shall work together for good to us, if we love God, though we cannot apprehend how or which way. It teaches us to follow God with an implicit faith, as Abraham did when he went out, not knowing *whither he went,* but knowing very well whom he followed, Heb. 11. 8. It quiets us with this, that though what he doeth, *we know not now,* yet we *shall know hereafter,* Joh. 13. 7. When poor Job was brought to that dismal plunge, that he could no way trace the footsteps of the divine providence, but was almost lost in that labyrinth, (Job 23. 8, 9.) how quietly does he sit down, v. 10. with this thought, *But he knows the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold.*

2. There is meekness toward our brethren, toward all Men, Tit. 3. 2. and so we take it here. Meekness is especially conversant about the affection of anger, not wholly to extirpate† and eradicate it out of the soul; (that were to quench a coal which sometimes there is occasion for, even at God's Altar, and to blunt the edge even of our spiritual weapons with which we are to carry on our spiritual warfare;) but its office is to direct and govern this affection, that we may *be angry and not sin,* Eph. 4. 26.

Meekness, in the school of the Philosophers, is a virtue consisting in a mean between the extremes of rash excessive anger on the one hand, and a defect of anger on the other, in which Aristotle‡ confesses it very hard exactly to determine.

Meekness, in the school of Christ, is one of the *Fruits of the Spirit,* (Gal. 5. 22, 23.) it is a Grace (both *gratis data—freely given,* and *gratum faciens—rendering kind,*) wrought by the Holy Ghost both as a sanctifier and as a comforter in the hearts of all true believers, teaching and enabling them at all times to keep their passions under the conduct and government of religion and right reason. I observe that it is wrought in the hearts of all true believers, because, though there are some rough and knotty pieces that the Spirit works upon, whose natural temper is unhappily sour and harsh,

* *Mitescere est non contradicere divinæ Scripturæ sive intellectæ si vitia percutit, sive non intellectæ quasi nos melius sapere possemus. Aug. l. 2. de doctrina Christi—True meekness will prevent us from opposing either the obvious parts of Scripture, severely as they may task our vices; or the mysterious parts, in reading which, vanity may suggest that we could have dictated what is more profitable.*

† Not ἀπαθεία—*insensibility,* but μετριοπαθεία—*moderation.* Anger is *cos fortitudinis—the whetstone of courage.*

‡ *Ethic.* l. 4. c. 6.

which

which are long in the squaring; yet wheresoever there is true Grace, there is a disposition to strive against, and strength in some measure to conquer, that distemper. And though in this, as in other graces, an absolute sinless perfection cannot be expected in this present state, yet we are to labour after it, and press towards it.

More particularly: the work and office of meekness is to enable us prudently to govern our own anger when at any time we are provoked, and patiently to bear the anger of others, that it may not be a provocation to us. The former is its office especially in superiors, the latter in inferiors, and both in equals.

(1.) Meekness teaches us prudently to govern our own anger, whenever any thing occurs that is provoking. As it is the work of temperance to moderate our natural appetites toward those things that are pleasing to sense, so it is the work of meekness to moderate our natural passions against those things that are displeasing to sense, and to guide and govern our resentments of those things. Anger in the soul is like mettle in a horse, good if it be well managed. Now meekness is the bridle, as wisdom is the hand that gives law to it, puts it into the right way, and keeps it in an even, steady, and regular, pace in that way, reducing it when it turns aside, preserving it in a due decorum, and restraining it and giving it check when at any time it grows head-strong and outrageous, and threatens mischief to ourselves or others. It must thus be held in, *like the horse and mule, with bit and bridle* (Ps. 32. 9.) lest it break the hedge, run over those that stand in its way, or throw the rider himself headlong. It is true of Anger,* which we say of Fire. That it is a "*good Servant,*" but a "*bad Master;*" it is good on the hearth, but bad in the hangings. Now meekness keeps it in its place, sets banks to this sea, and says, *Hitherto thou shalt come, and no further; here shall thy proud waves be stayed.*

In reference to our own anger, when at any time we meet with the excitements of it, the work of meekness is to do these four things.

[1.] To consider the circumstances of that which we apprehend to be a provocation, so as at no time to express our displeasure, but upon due and mature deliberation. The office of meekness is to keep reason upon the throne in the soul, as it ought to be, to preserve the understanding clear and unclouded, the judgment untainted and unbiassed in the midst of the greatest provocations, so as to be able to set every thing in its true light, and to see it in its own colour, and to determine accordingly, as also to keep silence in the court, that the still small voice, in which the Lord is, (as he was with Elijah at Mount Horeb, 1 Kings 19. 12, 13.) may not be drowned by the noise of the tumult of the passions. A meek man will never be angry at a child, at a servant, at a friend, till he has first seriously weighed the cause in just and even balances, while a steady and impartial hand holds the scales, and a free and unprejudiced thought adjudges it necessary. It is said of our Lord Jesus, John 11. 33. ἐτάραξε ἑαυτὸν—*he troubled himself;* which denotes it to be a considerate act, and what he saw reason for. Then things go right in the soul, when no resentments are admitted into the affections, but what have first undergone the scrutiny of the understanding, and thence received their pass. That passion which comes not in by this door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber, which we should stand upon our guard against. In a time of war, (and such a time it is in every sanctified soul in a constant war between grace and corruption,) due care must be taken to examine all passengers, especially those that come armed, whence they came, whither they go, whom they are for, and what they would have? Thus should it be in the well-governed, well-disciplined soul. Let meekness stand centinel, and, upon the advance of a provocation,† let us examine who it is that we are about to be angry with, and for what? What are the merits of the cause, wherein lay the offence, what was the nature and tendency of it? What are likely to be the consequences of our resentments, and what harm will it be if we stifle them, and let them go no further? Such as these are the interrogatories which meekness would put to the soul, and in answer to them would abstract all that which passion is apt to suggest, and hear reason only, as it becomes rational creatures to do.

Three great dictates of meekness we find put together in one Scripture, Jam. 1. 19. *Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;* which some observe to be couched in three proper names of Ishmael's Son, Gen. 25. 14. 1 Chr. 1. 30. (which Bishop Prideaux, in the beginning of the wars, recommended to a gentleman that had been his pupil, as the summary of his advice,) *Mishma, Dumah, Massa;* the signification of which is, *Hear, Keep silence, Bear.* Hear reason, keep passion silent, and then you will not find it difficult to bear the provocation.

It is said of the Holy-one of Israel, when the Egyptians provoked him, *Libravit semitam iræ suæ—He weighed a path to his anger:* so the margin reads it from the Hebrew, Ps. 78. 50. Justice first poised the cause, and then anger poured out the vials. Thus (Gen. 11. 5.) the Lord came down to see the pride of the Babel-builders, before he scattered them; and (Gen. 18. 21.) he came down to see the wickedness of Sodom, before he overthrew it, though both were obvious and bare-faced,‡ to teach us to consider before we are angry, and to judge before we pass sentence, that herein we may be *followers of God, as dear children,* and be merciful as our Father which is in heaven, is merciful.

* *Non cognoscitur audacia nisi in bello, amicus nisi in necessitate, sapiens nisi in ira—It is in war, that we discover the hero; in a time of need, the friend; and during anger, the man of wisdom. Sent. Arab.*

† *Expendantur verba, si dicendum hoc, si dicendum adversum hunc, si tempus sermonis sit hujus, &c.—We should carefully consider whether what we say ought to be said, whether it ought to be said against this particular person, whether this is the time for saying it, &c. Ambr. de Offic. l. 1. c. 9.*

‡ *In correptione vitiorum subesse menti debet Iracundia, non præesse—In reproving vice, though we admit a degree of anger, we should not suffer it to usurp arbitrary sway. Greg. in Job. l. 26. c. 36.*

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We read, Jam. 3. 13. of the *meekness of Wisdom*; for where there is not wisdom, (that wisdom which is profitable to direct, that wisdom of the prudent which is to understand his way,) meekness will not long be preserved.[a] It is our rashness and inconsideration that betray us to all the mischiefs of an ungoverned passion, on the * neck of which the reins are laid, (which should be kept in the hand of reason) and so we are hurried upon a thousand precipices. Nehemiah is a remarkable instance of prudence presiding in just resentments; he owns, (Neh. 5. 6, 7.) *I was very angry when I heard their cry;* but that anger did not at all transgress the laws of meekness, for it follows, *Then I consulted with myself,* or as the Hebrew has it, *My heart consulted in me.* Before he expressed his displeasure, he retired into his own bosom, took time for a sober thought upon the case, and then he *rebuked the Nobles,* in a very solid rational discourse, v. 8, 9, 10, 11. and the success was good, v. 12, 13. In every cause, when passion demands immediate judgment, meekness moves for further time, and will have the matter fairly argued, and counsel heard on both sides.

When the injured Levite had pitched upon a very barbarous course to irritate the tribes of Israel (who commonly were too fiery to need a spur) against the men of Gibeah, yet withal he referred the matter to their deliberate counsels, to teach us, when our hearts are meditating revenge, to do likewise, Judg. 19. 30. So and so the matter is, *consider of it, take advice,* and then *speak your minds.* When Job had any quarrel with his servants, he was willing to admit a rational debate of the matter, and to hear what they had to say for themselves. *For,* (says he,) *what shall I do when God riseth up?* And withal, *did not he that made me in the womb, make him?* Job 31. 13, 14, 15. When our hearts are at any time hot within us, we should do well to put that question to ourselves which God put to Cain, (Gen. 4. 6.) *Why am I wroth?* Why am I angry at all? Why so soon angry? Why so very angry? Why so far transported, and dispossessed of myself, by my anger? What reason is there for all this? *Do I well to be angry for a gourd,* that *came up in a night, and perished in a night?* Jonah 4. 9. Should I be touched to the quick by such a sudden and transient provocation? Will not my cooler thoughts correct these hasty resentments, and therefore were it not better to check them now? Such are the reasonings of the meekness of wisdom.

[2.] The work of meekness is to calm the spirit, so as that the inward Peace may not be disturbed by any outward provocation. No doubt a man may express his displeasure against the miscarriages of another, as much as at any time there is occasion for, without suffering his resentments to recoil upon himself, and to put his own soul into a hurry. What need is there for a man to *tear himself* (*his soul,* so it is in the Hebrew) *in his anger?* Job. 18. 4. Cannot we charge home upon our enemy's camp, without the wilful disordering of our own troops? Doubtless we may, if meekness have the command, for that is a grace which preserves a man master of himself, while he contends to be master of another, and which, though there may be some firing in the outworks, yet fortifies the heart, the main fort, the inner-wards, against the assaults of provocation, which do us no great harm, while they do not rob us of our peace, nor disturb the rest of our souls. As patience in case of sorrow, so meekness in case of anger, keeps *possession of the soul* (as the expression is, Luke 21. 19.) that we be not dispossessed of that freehold, and takes care when the bell is up, that it does not overturn. The drift of Christ's farewel-sermon to his Disciples we have in the first words of it, Joh. 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled.* It is the duty and interest of all good people, whatever happens, to keep trouble from their hearts, and to have them even and sedate, though the *Eye* (as Job expresses it) should *continue* unavoidably *in the provocation* of this world, Job 17. 2. The wicked (רִשְׁעִים the *turbulent* and *unquiet,* so the word primarily signifies) are *like the troubled sea when it cannot rest,* (Isa. 57. 20.) but that *Peace of God, which passeth all understanding,* keeps the *hearts and minds* of all the meek of the earth. Meekness preserves the mind from being ruffled and discomposed, and the spirit from being unhinged by the vanities and vexations of this lower world. It stills the noise of the sea, the noise of her waves, and the tumult of the soul; it permits not the passions to crowd out in a disorderly manner, like a confused ungoverned rabble; but draws them out like the trained-bands, rank and file, every one in his own order, ready to march, to charge, to fire, to retreat, as wisdom and grace give the word of command.

It is said of the just and holy God, that he is *Lord of his Anger,* Na. 1. 2. where we translate it, he is *furious,* (perhaps not so well, for *Fury is not in him,* Isa. 27. 4. but,) he is בַּעַל חֵמָה *the Lord of Anger, Compos iræ,* so some of the Critics render it; he is master of his own anger, and we should labour to be so too. Some Interpreters give this as the sense of that which God said to Cain, (Gen. 4. 7.) *Unto thee,* or, *Subject unto thee, shall be its desire, and thou shalt rule over it;* that is, over this passion of anger, which thou hast conceived in thy bosom, thou shouldest, and (if thou wouldest use the grace offered to thee) thou mightest subdue and keep under these intemperate heats, so as that they may not disquiet the repose of thy soul, nor break out into any extravagance.

[3.] Meekness will curb the tongue, and keep the mouth as with a bridle when the heart is hot, Ps. 39. 1, 2, 3. Even then, when there may be occasion for a keenness of expression, and we are called to *rebuke sharply,* (ἀποτόμως—*cuttingly,* Tit. 1. 13.) yet meekness forbids all fury and indecency of language, and every thing that sounds like *clamour and evil-speaking.* Eph. 4. 31. The meekness of Moses was not at hand when he

[a] Eccl. 10. 10. Prov. 14. 8.

* *Ratio id judicare vult quod æquum est, Iræ id æquum videri vult, quod judicavit—Reason prompts us to pass a righteous judgment; anger first hurries us into an opinion, and then, whatever it is, resolves to maintain it. Sen.*

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he spake that unadvised word, Num. 20. 10. [*Rebels,*] for which he was shut out of Canaan, though Rebels, they were, and at that time very provoking. Men in passion are apt to give reviling language, to call names, and those most senseless and ridiculous, to take the blessed name of God in vain, and so to profane it. It is a wretched way by which the children of hell vent their passion at their beasts, their servants, any person, or any thing, that provokes them, to swear at them. Men in a passion are apt to reveal secrets, to make rash vows and resolutions which afterward prove a snare, and sometimes to slander and belie their brethren, and bring railing accusations, and so to do the Devil's work; and to speak that in their haste concerning others, (as David, Ps. 116. 11. *All Men are Liars,*) which they see cause to repent of at leisure. How brutishly did Saul, in his passion, call his own son, the heir apparent to the crown, the *Son of the perverse rebellious Woman!* 1 Sam. 20. 30, that is, *the Son of a strumpet,* a fine credit to himself and his family! *Raca,* and *Thou Fool,* are specified by our Saviour as breaches of the law of the sixth commandment, (Mat. 5. 22.) and the passion in the heart is so far from excusing such opprobrious speeches, (for which purpose it is commonly alleged,) that really it is that which gives them their malignity, they are the smoke from that fire, the gall and wormwood springing from that root of bitterness; and if, [a] *for every idle word* that men speak, much more for such wicked words as these, must they *give an account at the Day of Judgment.* And as it is a reflection upon God to kill, so it is to curse men that are made after the image of God, (though ever so much our inferiors) that is, to speak ill of them, or to wish ill to them.

This is the disease which meekness prevents, and is *in the tongue a law of kindness,* as the expression is, Pro. 31. 26. It is to the tongue as the Helm is to the Ship, (it is the Apostle's comparison, Jam. 3. 4.) not to silence it, but to guide it, to steer it wisely, especially when the wind is high. If at any time we have conceived passion, and thought evil, meekness will *lay the hand upon the* **mouth,* (as the Wise Man's advice is, Pro. 30. 32.) to keep that evil thought from venting itself in any evil word, reflecting upon God or our brother. It will reason a disputed point without noise, give a reproof without a reproach, convince a man of his folly without calling him a fool, will teach superiors either to *forbear threatening,* (Eph. 6. 9.) or (as the Margin reads it) to *moderate* it, and will *look diligently,* lest *any root of bitterness, springing up, trouble us, and thereby we,* and *many others be defiled;* Heb. 12. 15.

[4.] Meekness will cool the heat of Passion quickly, and not suffer it to continue. As it keeps us from being soon angry, so it teaches us, when we are angry, to be soon pacified. The anger of a meek man is like fire struck out of steel, hard to be got out, but when it is out, soon gone. The Wisdom that is from above, as it is gentle, and so not apt to provoke, so it is *easy to be entreated* when any provocation is given, (Jam. 3. 17.) and has the ear always open to the first proposals and overtures of satisfaction, submission, and reconciliation, and so the anger is turned away. He that is of a meek spirit, will be forward to forgive injuries, and to put up with affronts, and has some excuse or other ready wherewith to extenuate and qualify the provocation, which an angry man, (for the exasperating and justifying of his own resentments,) will industriously aggravate. It is but saying, "There is no great harm done, or, if there be, there was none intended,† and peradventure it was an oversight;" and so the offence being looked at through that end of the perspective which diminishes, it is easily past by, and the distemper being taken in time, goes off quickly, the fire is quenched before it gets head, and by a speedy interposal the plague is stayed. While the world is so full of the sparks of provocation, and there is so much tinder in the hearts of the best, no marvel if anger come sometimes into the bosom of a wise man, but it rests only in the *Bosom of Fools,* Ecc. 7. 9. Angry thoughts, as other vain thoughts, may crowd into the heart upon a sudden surprise, but meekness will not suffer them to lodge there, (Jer. 4. 14.) nor let the sun go down upon the wrath, (Eph. 4. 26.) for if it do, there is danger lest it rise bloody the next morning. Anger concocted, becomes Malice; it is the wisdom of meekness, by proper applications, to disperse the humour before it comes to a head. One would have thought when David so deeply resented Nabal's abuse, that nothing less than the blood of Nabal and all his house could have quenched his heat, but it was done at a cheaper rate; and he shewed his meekness, by yielding to the diversion that Abigail's present and speech gave him, and that with satisfaction and thankfulness. He was not only soon pacified, but blessed her, and blessed God for her that pacified him. God does not *contend for ever,* neither is he *always wroth;* his *Anger endures but a moment,* Ps. 30. 5. How unlike then are those to him, whose sword devours for ever, and whose anger burns like the coals of Juniper? But the grace of meekness, if it fail of keeping the peace of the soul from being broken, yet fails not to recover it presently, and to make up the breach, and, upon the least transport, steps in with help in the time of need, restores the soul, puts it in frame again, and no great harm is done. Such as these are the achievements of meekness, as it governs our own anger.

(2.) Meekness teaches and enables us patiently to bear the anger of others, which property of meekness we have especially occasion for, in reference to our superiors and equals. Commonly, that which provokes anger, is anger, as fire kindles fire; now meekness prevents that violent collision which forces out these sparks,

[a] Mat. 12. 36.

* *In Socrate iræ signum erat, vocem submittere, loqui parcius; apparebat tunc illum sibi obstare—Anger was indicated in Socrates by his speaking little, and in a low key; thus he was observed to maintain a conflict within himself. Ita refert Seneca de ira, l. 3. c. 13. Plutarch de non irascendo.*

† It is a Maxim in the Law, *In verbis dubiis benignior sententia est præferenda—On words of dubious import we should pass a favourable construction.* And, *Semper fit præsumptio in meliorem partem—We should always presume on the candid side. Vid. Alciat. de præsumpt. Reg. 3.*

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sparks, and softens, at least, one side, and so puts a stop to a great deal of mischief; for it is the second blow that makes the quarrel. Our first care should be to prevent the anger of others, by giving no offence to any, but becoming all things to all men, every one studying to *please his neighbour for good to edification,* (Rom. 15. 2.) and endeavouring as much as lies in us, to accommodate ourselves to the temper of all with whom we have to do, and to make ourselves acceptable and agreeable to them. How easy and comfortable should we make every Relation, and all our intercourse, if we were but better acquainted with this art of obliging. Napthali's Tribe, that was famous for giving *goodly Words,* (Gen. 49. 21.) had the happiness of being *satisfied with favour,* (Deut. 33. 23.) for *Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer,* Pro. 24. 26. In the conjugal relation it is taken for granted (1 Cor. 7. 33, 34.) that the care of the husband is to *please his wife,* and the care of the wife is to *please her husband;* and where there is that mutual care, comfort cannot be wanting. Some people love to be unkind, and take a pleasure in displeasing, and especially contrive to provoke those they find passionate and easily provoked, that (as he that giveth his *Neighbour drink, and putteth his bottle to him,* Hab. 2. 15, 16.) they may look upon his shame, to which, in his passion, he exposes himself, and so they make a mock at sin, and become like the mad man that casts firebrands, arrows and death, and says, "*Am not I in sport?*" But the law of Christ forbids us to *provoke one another,* Gal. 5. 26. (unless it be to *love and to good works,*) and enjoins us (as it follows there, Ch. 6. 2.) to *bear one another's burthens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ.*

But because they must rise betimes, who will please every body, and carry their cup even indeed, who will give no offence; our next care therefore must be so to behave ourselves when others are angry, that we may not make bad worse. And this is one principal thing in which the younger must submit themselves to the elder; nay, in which, all of us must be subject one to another, as our rule is, 1 Pet. 5. 5. And here meekness is of use, either to enjoin silence, or indite a soft answer.

[1.] To enjoin silence. It is prescribed to servants, (Tit. 2. 9.) to *please their masters well in all things,* not *answering again,* for that must needs be displeasing; better say nothing, than say that which is provoking. When our hearts are hot within us, it is good for us to keep silence, and hold our peace: so David did, Ps. 39. 2, 3. and when he did speak, it was in prayer to God, and not in reply to the wicked that were before him. If the heart be angry,* angry words will but inflame it the more, as wheels are heated by a rapid motion. One reflection, and repartee, begets another, and the beginning of the debate is like the letting forth of water, which is with difficulty stopt when the least breach is made in the dam; and therefore meekness says, "By all means keep silence, and leave it off before it be meddled with." When a fire is begun, it is good, if possible to smother it, and so prevent its spreading. Come on, let us deal wisely, and stifle it in the birth, lest afterward it prove too strong to be dealt with. Anger in the heart is like those books which were stowed up in cellars in the conflagration of London, which, though they were extremely heated, yet, never took fire, till they took air many days after, where giving vent to the heat put them into a flame. When the spirits are in a ferment, though it may be some present pain to check and suppress them, and the headstrong passions hardly admit the bridle, yet afterward it will be no grief of heart to us.

Those who find themselves wronged and aggrieved, think they may have leave to speak, but it is better to be silent than to speak amiss, and make work for repentance. At such a time, he that holds his tongue, holds his peace; and if we soberly reflect, we shall find we have been often the worse for our speaking, but seldom the worse for our silence.† This must be especially remembered and observed by as many as are under the yoke, who will certainly have most comfort in meekness, and patience, and silent submission not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. It is good in such cases to remember our‡ place, and (*If the spirit of a Ruler rise up against us,*) not to *leave* it, that is, not to do any thing unbecoming, for yielding *pacifieth great offences,* Ecc. 10. 4. We have a common proverb that teaches us this, "*When thou art the hammer, knock thy fill; but when thou art the anvil, lie thou still:*" for it is the posture thou art cut out for, and which best becomes thee.

If others be angry at us without cause, and we have ever so much reason on our side, yet oftentimes it is best to adjourn our own vindication, though we think it necessary, till the passion be over; for there is nothing said or done in passion, but it may be better said and better done afterwards. When we are calm, we shall be likely to say it and do it in a better manner; and when our brother is calm, we shall be likely to say it and do it to a better purpose. A needful truth, spoken in a heat, may do more hurt than good, and offend rather than satisfy. The Prophet himself forbare even a message from God, when he saw Amaziah in a passion, 2 Chron. 25. 16. Sometimes it may be advisable to get some one else to say that for us, which is to be said, rather than say it ourselves. However, we have a righteous God, to whom (if, in a meek silence, we suffer ourselves to be run down unjustly) we may *commit our cause;* and having his

* *Quid refert inter provocantem et provocatum, nisi quod ille prior in maleficio deprehenditur, et ille posterior: nulla vero in maleficio ordinis ratio est:*—*What is the difference between him that provokes and him that is provoked, but this, that the one did wrong in the first instance, and that the other did wrong afterward? In the act of doing wrong they are alike culpable. Tertul. de Patientia, c.* 10.

† *Complures vidi loquendo peccatum incidisse, vix quenquam tacendo: ideoq; tacere nosse quam loqui difficilius est*—*I have known many sin by speaking, scarcely one by continuing silent, it is therefore more difficult to know how to be silent than how to speak. Ambr. de Offic. l.* 1. *c.* 2.

‡ *Locus tuus patientia est, locus tuus sapientia est, locus tuus ratio est, et sedatio indignationis*—*Your place is to be patient, wise, and reasonable. Ambr. ubi supra, c.* 21.

Promise,

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Promise, that he will *bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day,* (Ps. 37. 6.) we had better leave it in his hands, than undertake to manage it ourselves, lest that which we call clearing ourselves, God should call quarrelling with our brethren. David was greatly provoked by those that sought his hurt, and spake mischievous things against him; and yet, (says he,) *I as a deaf man heard not, I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth,* Ps. 38. 13. And why so? It was not because he wanted something to say, or because he knew not how to say it; but v. 15. because *in thee, O Lord, do I hope, thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.* If *God* hear, what need have *I* to hear? *His* concerning himself in the matter supersedes *Our's,* and he is not only engaged, in justice, to own every righteous cause that is injured, but he is further engaged, in honour, to appear for those who, in obedience to the law of meekness, commit their cause to him, and trust him with it. If there be any vindication or avenging necessary, (which infinite Wisdom is the best judge of,) he can do it better than we can; and therefore *give place unto wrath,* (Rom. 12. 19.) that is, to the judgment of God, which is according to truth and equity, make room for him to take the seat, and do not you step in before him; it is fit that our wrath should stand by to give way to his, for the *wrath of man* engages not the *righteousness of God* for him.[a] Even just appeals made to him, if they be made in passion, are not admitted into the court of Heaven, being not duly put in; that one thing, error, is sufficient to over-rule them: let not therefore those that do well, and suffer for it, spoil their own vindication by mis-timing and mismanaging it, but tread in the steps of the Lord Jesus, *who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but was as a Lamb dumb before the Shearers,* and so *committed himself to him that judges righteously.* It is indeed a great piece of self-denial to be silent when we have enough to say, and provocation to say it; but if we do thus control our tongues, out of a pure regard to peace and love, it will turn to a good account, and will be an evidence for us that we are Christ's disciples, having learned to deny ourselves. It is better by silence to yield to our brother, who is, or has been, or may be, our friend, than by angry speaking to yield to the Devil, who has been, and is, and ever will be, our sworn enemy.

[2.] To indite a soft answer. This Solomon commends as a proper expedient to turn away wrath, while grievous words do but stir up anger, Prov. 15. 1. When any speak angrily to us, we must pause a while, and study an answer, which, both for the matter and manner of it, may be mild and gentle. This brings water, while peevishness and provocation would but bring oil to the flame. Thus is Death and Life in the power of the tongue; it is either healing or killing, an antidote or a poison, according as it is used. When the waves of the sea beat on a rock, they batter and make a noise; but a soft sand receives them silently, and returns them without damage. A soft tongue is a wonderful specific, and has a very strange virtue in it; for, Solomon says, *It breaks the bone,* (Pro. 25. 15.) that is, it qualifies those that were provoked, and makes them pliable; it heaps *coals of fire* upon the head of an enemy, not to burn him, but to melt him, Pro. 25. 21, 22. "Hard words (we say) break no bones;" but it seems soft ones do (and yet do no harm) as they calm an angry spirit, and prevent its progress, breaking it, as we do a flint, upon a cushion. A stone that falls on a wool-pack rests there, and rebounds not to do any further mischief, such is a meek answer to an angry question. It is observed in that rencounter which was between the Royal Tribe and the other ten, that the *Words of the Men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the Men of Israel,* 2 Sam. 19. 43. When Passion is up, that God whose eyes are upon all the ways of men, takes notice who speaks fiercely, and sets a mark upon them.

The good effects of a soft answer, and the ill consequence of a peevish one, are observable in the stories of Gideon and Jephtha: both of them in the day of their triumphs over the enemies of Israel, were causelesly quarrelled with by the Ephraimites (an angry sort of people it seems*) who took it very heinously when the danger was past and the victory won, that they had not been called upon to engage in the battle; Gideon pacified them with a soft answer, (Judg. 8. 2.) *What have I done now in comparison of you?* magnifying their achievements, and lessening his own, speaking honourably of them, and meanly of himself, *Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezar?* In which reply it is hard to say whether there was more of wit or wisdom: and the effect was very good; the Ephraimites were pleased, their anger turned away, a civil war prevented, and no body could think the worse of Gideon for his mildness and self-denial; but on the contrary, that he won more true honour by this victory over his own passion, than he did by his victory over all the host of Midian; for he that *hath rule over his own Spirit, is better than the mighty,* Prov. 16. 32. The Angel of the Lord has pronounced him a *Mighty man of valour,* (Judg. 6. 12.) and this his tame submission did not at all derogate from that part of his character. But Jephtha (who by many instances appears to be a man of a rough and hasty spirit, though enrolled among the eminent believers, Heb. 11. 32. for all good people are not alike happy in their temper) when the Ephraimites in like manner pick a quarrel with him, rallies them, upbraids them with their cowardice, boasts of his own courage, challenges them to make good their cause, Judg. 12. 2, 3. They retort a scurrilous reflection upon Jephtha's country (as it is usual with passion to taunt and jeer one another) *Ye Gileadites are fugitives,* v. 4. From words they go to blows, and so great a matter does this little fire kindle, that there goes no less, to quench the flame, than the blood of two and forty thousand Ephraimites, v. 6. All which

[a] Jam. 1. 20.

* Hence we read of the Envy of Ephraim, Isa. 11. 13.

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had been happily prevented, if Jephtha had had but half as much meekness in his heart, as he had reason on his side.

A soft answer is the dictate and dialect of that wisdom which is from above, which is *peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated:* and to recommend it to us, we have the pattern of good men, as that of Jacob's carriage to Esau; though, who is so hard to be won, as a brother offended, yet, as he had prevailed with God by faith and prayer, so, he prevailed with his brother by meekness and humility: we have also the pattern of good angels, who, even when a rebuke was needful, durst not turn it into a railing accusation, durst not give any reviling language, not to the Devil himself, but referred the matter to God, *The Lord rebuke thee,* as that passage, Jude, v. 9. is commonly understood. Nay, we have the pattern of a good God, who, though he could plead against us with his great power, yet gives soft answers; witness his dealing with Cain, when he was wroth, and his countenance fallen, reasoning the case with him, (Gen. 4. 6, 7.) *Why art thou wroth——If thou doest well, shalt not thou be accepted?* With Jonah likewise, when he was so discontented, Jon. 4. 4, 9. *Doest thou well to be angry?* This is represented in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, by the carriage of the father towards the elder brother, who was so high and humoursome, so angry, that he would not come in. The Father did not say, "Let him stay out then," but he came himself and intreated him, (when he might have interposed his authority, and commanded him) and said, *Son, thou art ever with me,* Luke 15. 28, 31. When a passionate parley is begun, there is a plague broke out; the meek man, like Aaron, takes his censer with the incense of a soft answer, steps in seasonably, and stays the plague.

This soft answer, in case we have committed a fault, (though perhaps not culpable to that degree that we are charged with) must be penitent, humble, and submissive, and we must be ready to acknowledge our error, and not stand in it, or insist upon our own vindication, but rather aggravate than excuse it, rather condemn than justify ourselves. It will be a good evidence of our Repentance toward God, to humble ourselves to our brethren, whom we have offended; as it will be also a good evidence of our being forgiven of God, if we be ready to forgive those that have offended us: and such yielding pacifies great offences. Meekness teaches us, as often as we trespass against our brother, to turn again and say, *I repent,* Luke 17. 4. An acknowledgment in case of a wilful affront, is perhaps as necessary to pardon, as (we commonly say) restitution is in case of wrong. And so much for the opening of the Nature of Meekness, which yet will receive further light from what follows.

II. We must be of a quiet spirit. Quietness is the evenness, the composure, and the rest of the soul, which speaks both the nature and the excellency of the grace of meekness. The greatest comfort and happiness of man is sometimes set forth by quietness. That Peace of conscience which Christ has left for a legacy to his disciples, that present Sabbatism of the soul, which is an earnest of the rest that remains for the people of God, is called *Quietness and Assurance for ever,* and is promised, as the *effect of righteousness,* Isa. 32. 17. and it follows, v. 18. *My people shall dwell in quiet resting-places.* So graciously has God been pleased to intwine interests with us, as to enjoin the same thing under the notion of a duty, which he proposes and promises under the notion of a privilege. Justly may we say, that we serve a good master, whose *Yoke is easy,* (Mat. 11. 30.) it is χρηστὸς, not only easy, but *sweet* and *gracious,* (so the word signifies) not only tolerable, but amiable and acceptable: *Wisdom's ways* are not only pleasant, but Pleasantness itself, and all her *Paths are Peace,* Pro. 3. 17. It is the character of the Lord's people, both in respect of holiness and happiness, that (however they be branded as the troublers of Israel) they are the *Quiet in the Land,* Ps. 35. 20. If every saint be made a spiritual Prince (Rev. 1. 6.) having a dignity above others, and a dominion over himself, surely he is like that Seraiah, Jer. 51. 59. a *quiet prince.* It is a reign with Christ, the transcendent Solomon, under the influence of whose golden scepter there is abundance of peace *as long as the moon endures,* yea, and longer, *for, of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end.* Quietness is in the Text recommended to us as a grace which we should be endued with, and as a duty which we should practise. In the midst of all the affronts and injuries that are or can be offered us, we must keep our spirits sedate, and undisturbed, and evidence by a calm and even, and regular behaviour, that they are so. This is quietness. Our Saviour has pronounced the blessing of adoption upon the peace-makers, Mat. 5. 9. εἰρηνοποιοὶ, *those that are for peace,* as David professes himself to be, Ps. 120. 7. in opposition (such an opposition as meekness is capable of) to those that *delight in War,* Ps. 68. 30. Now if Charity be for peace-making, surely this "Charity begins at home," and is for making peace there in the first place. Peace in our own souls is some conformity to the example of the God of Peace, who, though he does not always give peace on this earth, yet, evermore *makes peace in his own high-places,* Job 25. 2. * This, some think, is the primary intention of that peace-making, on which Christ there commands the blessing: it is to have strong and hearty affections to peace, to be peaceably-minded; for making in Scripture notes the bent and inclination of the soul: as to make a lie, is to be given to lying; so to make peace, is to be addicted to peace; to have a disposition in the soul ready to command the peace, when there is at any time any kind of disturbance. In a word, quietness of spirit is the soul's stillness, and silence, from intending provocation *to,* or resenting provocation *from* any with whom we have to do.

The word has something in it of a metaphor, which we would not chuse, but fairly prosecute, for the illustration of the grace of meekness.

1. We must be quiet as the air is quiet from winds. Disorderly passions are like stormy winds in the soul,

* Dr. Hammond, Pract. Catech. p. 125.

they

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they toss and hurry it, and often split, or strand, or overset it; they move it *as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind;* it is the Prophet's comparison, Isa. 7. 2. and is an apt emblem of a man in passion. Now Meekness restrains these winds, says to them, *Peace, be still,* and so preserves a calm in the soul, and makes it conformable to him, who has the winds in his hands, and is herein to be praised, that even the stormy winds fulfil his word. A brisk gale is often useful, especially to the *Ships of Desire,* (as the Hebrew Phrase is, Job. 9. 26.) so there should be in the soul such a warmth and vigour as will help to speed us to the desired harbour. It is not well to lie wind-bound in dulness and indifferency; but tempests are perilous, yea, though the wind be in the right point; so are strong passions, even in good men, they both hinder the voyage and hazard the Ship: such a quickness as consists with quietness is what we should all labour after, and meekness will contribute very much toward it, it will silence the noise, controul the force, moderate the impetus, and correct all undue and disorderly transports. What manner of grace is this, that even the winds and the sea obey it? If we will but use the authority God has given us over our own hearts, we may keep the * winds of passion under the command of religion and reason, and then the Soul is quiet, the Sun shines, all is pleasant, serene, and smiling, and the man sleeps sweetly and safely on the lee-side. We make our voyage among rocks and quick-sands, but if the weather be calm, we can the better steer so as to avoid them, and by a due care and temper hit the mean between extremes; whereas he that suffers these winds of passion to get head, and spread a large sail before them, while he shuns one rock, splits upon another, and is in danger of being drowned in destruction and perdition, by many foolish and hurtful lusts, especially those whence *Wars and Fightings come.*

2. We must be quiet as the sea is quiet from waves. The wicked (whose sin and punishment both lie in the unruliness of their own souls, and the violence and disorder of their own passions, which perhaps will not be the least of their eternal torments) are compared *to the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast forth mire and dirt,* (Isa. 57. 20.) that is, they are uneasy to themselves, and to all about them, *raging Waves of the Sea,* (so they are described, Jude 13.) *foaming out their own shame;* their *hard Speeches* which they speak against God, v. 15. and *dignities,* v. 8. and *things which they know not,* v. 10. their *great swelling words,* v. 16. and *mockings,* v. 18. these are the *shame* they *foam out.* Now meekness is a grace of the Spirit, that *moves upon the face of the waters,* and quiets them, smooths the ruffled sea, and stills the Noise of it, (it is now *mare pacificum—the Pacific Ocean,*) it casts forth none of the mire and dirt of passion. The waves mount not up to the heaven in proud and vain-glorious boastings; go not down to the depths to scrape up vile and scurrilous language; no reeling to and fro, as men overcome with drink, or with their own passion, which is all one, (for if *wine* be a *mocker,* and *strong drink raging,* Pro. 20. 1. anger is no less so) none of that transport which brings them to their wits end: I refer to the Psalmist's description of a storm, Ps. 107. 26, 27. but as it follows there, v. 30. *They are glad because they are quiet, so he bringeth them to their desired haven.* This calmness and evenness of spirit makes our passage over the sea of this world safe and pleasant, quick and speedy towards the desired harbour, and is amiable and exemplary in the eyes of others, such a path does the meek and quiet christian make to shine after him, that one would think the deep to be hoary.

3. We must be quiet as the land is quiet from war. It was the observable felicity of Asa's Reign, that in his days *the Land was quiet,* 2 Chro. 14. 1, 5. In the preceding reigns there was *no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in,* whether outward bound or homeward bound, they were exposed to *great vexations,* ch. 15. 5. but now the rumours and alarms of war were stilled, and the people *delivered from the noise of archers at the place of drawing waters,* as when the land had rest in Deborah's time, Judg. 5. 11. Such a quietness there should be in the soul, and such a quietness there will be where meekness sways the sceptre. A Soul inflamed with wrath and passion upon all occasions, is like a kingdom embroiled in war, in a civil war, subject to continual frights, and losses, and perils; deaths and terrors in their most horrid shapes, walk triumphantly, sleeps disturbed, families broken, friends suspected, enemies feared, laws silenced, commerce ruined, business neglected, cities wasted, such heaps upon heaps does ungoverned anger lay, when it is let loose in the soul. *Jusq; datum sceleri—When vice has free scope, &c.* But meekness makes these wars to cease, breaks the bow, cuts the spear, sheaths the sword, and in the midst of a contentious world, preserves the soul from being the seat of war, and makes peace in those borders. The rest of the soul is not disturbed, its comforts not plundered, its government not disordered, the laws of religion and reason rule, and not the sword: the trading duties are not interrupted, neither its communion with God, nor its communion with the saints intercepted, no breaking in of temptation, no going out of corruption, no complaining in the streets, no occasion given, no occasion taken to complain. *Happy is the Soul that is in such a case,* Ps. 144. 14, 15. *The words of such wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among Fools, and this wisdom is better than weapons of war;* Ecc. 9. 17, 18. This is the Quietness we should every one of us labour after, and it is what we might attain to, if we would but more support and exercise the authority of our Graces (which are as the Commissioners of the peace) and guide and controul the power of our passions (which are as the Commissioners of Array) in our souls.

4. We must be quiet as the Child is quiet after weaning. It is the Psalmist's comparison, Ps. 131. 2. *I have behaved* (or rather, I have *composed,* so Ainsworth reads it) *and quieted my self,* (*my Soul,* Heb. for

* *Æolus sis effectuum tuorum.—Rule your passions, as Æolus the winds.* Neiremb.

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our souls are ourselves, and our principal care must be concerning them) *as a child that is weaned of his mother, my soul is even as a weaned child.* A Child while it is in the weaning perhaps is a little cross and froward, and troublesome for a time; but when it is perfectly weaned, how quickly does it forget the breast, and accommodate itself to its new way of feeding! Thus a quiet soul, if provoked by the denial or loss of some creature-comfort or delight, that has been dear, quiets itself, and does not fret at it, nor perplex itself with anxious cares, how to live without it, but composes itself to make the best of that which is. If wormwood be put upon the breasts, which we have called the breasts of our consolation, it is but to make us indifferent to them, and we must set ourselves to answer that intention, and sit loose to them accordingly. And this holy indifference to the delights of sense, is (like the weaning of a child) a good step taken towards the *perfect man,* the *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.** A Child newly weaned is free from all the uneasiness and disquietude of care, and fear, and envy, and anger, and revenge: how undisturbed are its sleeps, and even in its dreams it looks pleasant and smiling? How easy its days? How quiet its nights? If put into a little pet now and then, how soon is it over, the provocation forgiven, the sense of it forgotten, and both buried in an innocent kiss? Thus, if ever we would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, we must be converted from pride, envy, ambition and strife for precedency, and must *become like little children.*† So our Saviour has told us, (who, even after his resurrection, is called, *The Holy Child Jesus,* Acts 4. 27.) Mat. 18. 3. And even when we have put away other childish things, yet still in *malice* we must be children, 1 Cor. 14. 20. And as for the quarrels of others, in all broils and heats, a meek and quiet christian endeavours to be as disinterested, and as little engaged, as a weaned child in the mother's arms, that is not capable of such angry resentments.

This is that Meekness and Quietness of spirit which is here recommended to us, such a command and composure of the soul, that it be not unhinged by any provocation whatsoever, but all its powers and faculties preserved in due temper for the just discharge of their respective offices.[a] In a word; *Put off all wrath, and anger, and malice,* (those corrupted limbs of the old man) pluck up and cast away those roots of bitterness, and stand upon a constant guard against all the exorbitances of your own passion, and then you will soon know, to your comfort, better than I can tell you, what it is to be of a Meek and Quiet Spirit.

* Yet corrupt Passions appear betimes. *Vidi zelantem parvulum qui intuebatur pallidus amaro aspectu collactaneum suum—I have seen a young child pale with envy, while looking on another child that was nourished at the same breast.* Aug. Conf. 1. 7.

† *Et si cito pueri inter se moventur, facile sedantur et majori suavitate in se recurrunt; nesciunt se subdole artificioseque tractare—Though boys are soon irritated, they are soon reconciled, and become kinder than before they quarrelled; they are strangers to artifice and circumvention.* Amb. de Offic. l. 1. c. 21.

[a] Col. 3. 8.

CHAP. II.

The Excellency of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.

THE very opening of this cause, one would think, were enough to carry it, and the explaining of the Nature of Meekness and Quietness, should suffice to recommend it to us: such an amiable sweetness does there appear in it, upon the very first view; that if we look upon its beauty, we cannot but be enamoured with it. But because of the opposition that there is in our corrupt hearts to this, as well as to the other Graces of the Holy Spirit, I shall endeavour more particularly to shew the excellency of it, that we may be brought (if possible to be in love with it, and to submit our souls to the charming power of it.

It is said, (Pro. 17. 27.) That *a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.*—He is קַר רוּחַ (so the *Chetib,* though the *Keri,* which our translation follows, reads it יקר) *frigidus Spiritu,* so Tremellius, he is *of a cool Spirit;* put them together and teach us, that a cool spirit is an excellent spirit, and that he is *a man of understanding* who is governed by such a spirit. The text tells us) what need we more?) that *it is in the sight of God of great price,* and we may be sure that is precious indeed which is so in God's sight; that is good, very good which he pronounces so, for his judgment is according to truth, and sooner or later he will bring all the world to be of his mind; for as he has decided it, so shall our doom be, and he will be *justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth.*

The excellency of a meek and quiet spirit will appear, if we consider the *Credit* of it, and the *Comfort* of it, the present *Profit* there is by it, and the *Preparedness* there is in it for something further.

1. Consider how Creditable a meek and quiet spirit is. Credit or Reputation is a thing which most people are very sensibly touched with the ambition of, though few consider aright either what it is, or what is the right way of obtaining it, and particularly it is little believed what a great deal of true honour there is in the Grace of Meekness, and what a sure and ready way mild and quiet souls take to gain the good word of their Master, and of all their fellow-servants who love our master, and are like him.

Let us see what Credit there is in Meekness.

1. There is in it the Credit of a victory. What a great figure do the names of high and mighty conquerors make in the records of fame! How are their conduct, their valour, and success cried up and celebrated? But if we will believe the word of truth, and pass a judgment upon things according to the rules of it, *He that is slow to Anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City:* Pro. 16. 32. Behold, a greater than Alexander or Cæsar is here; the former of which (some think) lost more true honour by yielding to his own ungoverned anger, than he got by all his conquests. No triumphant chariot

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so easy, so safe, so truly glorious, as that in which the meek and quiet soul rides over all the provocations of an injurious world, with a gracious unconcernedness: no train so splendid, so noble, as that train of comforts and graces which attend this chariot. The conquest of an unruly passion, is more honourable than that of an unruly people, for, it requires more true conduct. It is easier to kill an enemy without, which may be done at a blow, than to chain up and govern an enemy within, which requires a constant, even, steady hand, and a long and regular management. It was more to the honour of David to yield himself conquered by Abigail's persuasions, than to have made himself a conqueror over Nabal and all his house. A rational victory must needs be allowed more honourable to a rational creature than a brutal one. This is a cheap, safe, and unbloody conquest that does no-body any harm, no lives, no treasures are sacrificed to it, the glory of these triumphs are not stained as others generally are with funerals. *Every battle of the warrior* (says the Prophet, Isa. 9. 5.) *is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning, even by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts*; as a *Spirit of judgment* and a *Spirit of burning*. Nay, in meek and quiet suffering we are *more than conquerors through Christ that loved us*, (Rom. 8. 37.) conquerors *with little loss*; we lose nothing but the gratifying of a base lust; conquerors with great gain, the spoils we divide are very rich, the favour of God, the comforts of the Spirit, the foretastes of everlasting pleasures, these are more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. We are more than conquerors; that is, *triumphers*, we live a life of victory, every day is a day of triumph to the meek and quiet soul.

Meekness is a victory over ourselves and the rebellious lusts in our own bosoms; it is the quieting of intestine broils, the stilling of an insurrection at home, which is oftentimes more hard to do than to resist a foreign invasion. It is an effectual victory over those that injure us, and make themselves enemies to us, and is often a means of winning their hearts. The Law of Meekness is, *If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, πότιζε αὐτὸν, propina illi*, not only *give him drink*, (which is an act of charity) but *drink to him*, in token of friendship and true love and reconciliation; and *in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head*, not to consume him, but to melt and soften him, that he may be cast into a new mould: and thus while the angry and revengeful man, that will bear down all before him with a high hand is overcome of evil, the patient and forgiving *overcome evil with good*, (Rom. 12, 20, 21.) and forasmuch as their *ways please the Lord*, he makes even their *Enemies to be at peace* with them, Pro. 16. 7. Nay, Meekness is a victory over Satan, the greatest enemy of all: what conquest can sound more great than this? It is written for caution to us all, and it reflects honour on those who through grace overcome, that *We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world*, Eph. 6. 12. The magnifying of the adversary, magnifies the victory over him; such as these are the meek man's vanquished enemies, *the spoils of these are the trophies of his victory. It is the design of the Devil, that great deceiver and destroyer of souls, that is baffled; it is his attempt that is defeated, his assault that is repulsed by our meekness and quietness. Our Lord Jesus was more admired for controuling and commanding the unclean spirits, than for any other cures which he wrought: unruly passions are unclean spirits, legions of which, some souls are possessed with, and desperate outrageous work they make, the soul becomes like that miserable creature (Mark 5. 3, 4, 5. that *cried and cut himself*; or that, Mark 9. 22. who was so often *cast into the fire, and into the waters.*) The meek and quiet soul is through Grace a conqueror over these enemies, their fiery darts are quenched by the shield of faith, Satan is in some measure trodden under his feet, and the victory will be complete shortly, when *he that overcometh shall sit down with Christ upon his throne, even as he overcame and is set down with the Father upon his throne*, where he still appears in the emblem of his meekness, a *Lamb as it had been slain*, Rev. 5. 6. And upon Mount Zion, at the head of his heavenly hosts, he appears also as a Lamb, Rev. 14. 1. Such is the honour Meekness has in those higher regions.

2. There is in it the Credit of Beauty. The Beauty of a thing consists in the symmetry, harmony and agreeableness of all the parts: now what is Meekness, but the soul's agreement with itself? It is the joint concurrence of all the affections to the universal peace and quiet of the soul, every one regularly acting in its own place and order, and so contributing to the common good. Next to the Beauty of Holiness, which is the soul's agreement with God, is the Beauty of Meekness, which is the soul's agreement with itself. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is, for the powers of the soul thus to dwell together in unity, the reason knowing how to rule, and the affections at the same time knowing how to obey. Exorbitant passion is a discord in the soul; it is like a tumor in the face, which spoils the beauty of it: meekness scatters the humour, binds down the swelling, and so prevents the deformity, and preserves the beauty. This is one instance of the comeliness of Grace, through *my comeliness* (says God to Israel, Ezek. 16. 14.) *which I had put upon thee*. It puts a charming loveliness and amiableness upon the soul, which renders it acceptable to all who know what true worth and beauty is. *He that in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* (that is, in christian meekness and quietness of spirit) *serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of Men*, Rom. 14. 17, 18. And to whom else can we wish to recommend ourselves?

Solomon (a very competent judge of beauty) has determined, That it is a man's Wisdom that makes *his face to shine*, (Ecc. 8. 1.) and doubtless the Meekness of Wisdom contributes as much as any one branch of it to this lustre. We read in scripture of three whose faces

* Ἕνα μόνον ἐχθρὸν ἔχε τὸν Διάβολον, πρὸς ἀνθρώπους μηδέποτε καταλλάττου, πρὸς ἀδελφὸν μηδέποτε ἀπεχθῶς ἔχε—*Have but one enemy, the Devil; never be reconciled to him, with a brother never fall out.* Chrysost. Hom. 19.

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shone remarkably, and they were all eminent for meekness. The face of Moses shone, (Exod. 34. 30.) and he was the meekest of all the men on earth. The face of Stephen shone, (Acts 6. 15.) and he it was, who, in the midst of a shower of stones so meekly submitted, and prayed for his persecutors. The face of our Lord Jesus shone in his transfiguration, and he was the great pattern of meekness. It is a sweet and pleasing air which this grace puts upon the countenance, while it keeps the soul in tune, and frees it from those jarring ill-favoured discords which are the certain effect of an ungoverned passion.

3. There is in it the Credit of an Ornament. The text speaks of it as an *Adorning* much more excellent and valuable than gold, pearls, or the most costly array, much more recommending than all the bravery of the Daughters of Zion. It is an adorning to the Soul, the principal, the immortal part of the man. That outward adorning does but deck and beautify the body, which at the best is but a sister to the worms, and will ere long be a feast for them; but this is the ornament of the soul, by which we are allied to the invisible world: it is an adorning that recommends us to God, which is in his sight of *great price;* so the text says, and in that says enough to its praise. Ornaments go by estimation: now we may be sure the judgment of God is right and unerring. Every thing is indeed, as it is with God: those are righteous indeed, that are [a] righteous before God; and that is an ornament indeed which he calls and counts so, It is an ornament of God's own making: is the soul thus decked? it is he that has decked it: *By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens,* (Job 26. 13.) and by the same Spirit has he garnished the meek and quiet soul. It is an ornament of his accepting, (it must needs be so if it be of his own working) for to him who has this ornament, more adorning shall be given. He has promised, (Ps. 149. 4.) that he will *beautify the meek with salvation;* and if the garments of salvation will not beautify, what will? The robes of glory will be the everlasting ornaments of the meek and quiet spirits. This meekness is an ornament that (like the Israelites' clothes in the wilderness) never waxes old, nor will ever go out of fashion while right reason and religion have any place in the world: all wise and good people will reckon those best drest that put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk with him in the white of meekness and innocency. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these Lilies of the Vallies, though *Lilies among thorns.*

The same ornament, which in the text is recommended to wives, is, by the same apostle, recommended to us all, (1 Pet. 5. 5.) *Yea, all of you be subject one to another:* that explains what Meekness is; it is that mutual yielding which we owe one to another, for edification and in the *fear of God,* Eph. 5. 21. This seems to be a hard saying, how shall we digest it? an impracticable duty, how shall we conquer it? why, it follows, *Be clothed with humility.* The word is * την ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε, *innodate,* from κόμβος, *a knot.* Which notes, (1.) the *Fixedness* of this Grace: we must gird it fast to us, and not leave it to hang loose, so as to be snatched away by every temptation: carelessness is no commendation of the soul's adorning; watchfulness and resolution in the strength of Christ must tie the knot upon our graces, and make them as the girdle that cleaves to a man's loins. (2.) The comeliness and ornament of it; put it on as a knot of ribbons, as an ornament to the soul: such is the Meekness of Wisdom, it gives to the head an *Ornament of Grace,* and (which is more) *a Crown of Glory,* Pro. 1. 9. and 4. 9.

There is in it the Credit of true courage.† Meekness is commonly despised and run down by the grandees of the age as a piece of cowardice and mean-spiritedness, and the evidence of a little soul, and is posted accordingly; while the most furious and angry revenges are celebrated and applauded under the pompous names of valour, honour, and greatness of spirit, which arise from a mistaken notion of courage, the true nature whereof is thus stated by a very ingenious pen, ‡" That it is a resolution never to decline any evil of pain, when the chusing of it, and the exposing of ourselves to it, is the only remedy against a greater evil." And therefore, he that accepts a challenge, and so runs himself upon the evil of sin, which is the greater evil, only for fear of shame and reproach, which is the less evil, he is the coward; while he that refuses the challenge, and so exposes himself to reproach, for fear of sin, § he is the valiant man. True courage is such a presence of mind, as enables a man rather to suffer than to sin, to choose affliction rather than iniquity, to pass by an affront, though he lose by it, and be hissed at for a fool and a sneak, rather than engage in a sinful quarrel. He that can deny the brutal lust of anger and revenge, rather than violate the royal law of love and charity (however contrary the sentiments of the world may be) is truly resolute and courageous; the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. Fretting and vexing is the fruit of the weakness of women and children, but much below the strength of a man, especially of the new man, that is born from above. When our Lord Jesus is described in his majesty, riding prosperously, the glory he appears in, is *truth,* and *meekness,* and *righteousness,* Ps. 45. 4. The courage of those who overcome this great red dragon of wrath and revenge, by meek and patient suffering, and by *not loving their lives unto the death,* (Rev. 12. 11.) will turn to the best and most honourable account on the other side the grave, and will be crowned with *Glory,* and *Honour,* and *Immortality;* when those that *caused their terror in the land of the living,* fall ingloriously, and *bear their shame with them that go down to the pit*: Ezek. 32. 24.

5. The credit of a conformity to the best patterns. The resemblance of those that are confessedly excellent and glorious, has in it an excellence and glory. To be

[a] Luke 1. 6.

* *Vobis infixam habete—Fix within you.* Eras.

† *Magni animi est proprium, placidum esse & injurias superne despicere—It belongs to a great mind to be calm, and to despise injuries as one elevated above their power.* Sen.

‡ Norris Miscell. p. 167, 188.

§ Paul shewed more true *Valour* when he said, *I can do nothing against the Truth,* than Goliah did, when he defied all the host of Israel. *Ward.*

meek

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meek is to be like the greatest saints, the elders that obtained a good report, and were of renown in their generation. It is to be like the greatest angels, whose meekness in their converse with, and ministration to the saints, is very observable in the Scriptures; nay, it is to be like the great God himself, whose goodness is his glory, (who is *Deus Optimus—the best God*, and therefore *Maximus—the greatest*;) who is slow to anger, and in whom *Fury is not*, Isa. 27. 4. We are then *followers of God, as dear children*, when we *walk in Love*, and are *kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another*, Eph. 5. 1, 2. compare ch. 4. 2. The more quiet and sedate we are, the more like we are to that God, who, though he be nearly concerned in all the affairs of this lower world, is far from being moved by its most violent convulsions and revolutions: but as he was from eternity,* so he is and will be to eternity, infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself. It is spoken to his praise and glory, Ps. 29. 10. *The Lord sits upon the Floods*, even when *the Floods have lifted up their voice, have lifted up their waves*, Ps. 93. 3. Such is the rest of the eternal mind, that he sits as † firm and undisturbed upon the moveable flood, as upon the immoveable rock, the same *yesterday, to-day, and for ever*: and the meek and quiet soul that preserves its peace and evenness against all the ruffling insults of passion and provocation, does thereby somewhat participate of a *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Let the true honour that attends this grace of meekness, recommend it to us: it is one of those things that are *honest*, and *pure*, and *lovely*, and *of good report*: a virtue that has a *praise* attending it, Phil. 4. 8. A praise, not perhaps, of men, but of God, Rom. 2. 29. It is the certain way to get and keep, if not a great name, yet a good name; such as is *better than precious ointment*. Though there be those that trample upon the meek of the earth, and look upon them as Michal upon David, despising them in their hearts; yet *if this is to be vile*, let us be *yet more vile* and *base in our own sight*, and we shall find (as David argues there) that there are those of whom we shall be *had in honour*, sooner or later, (2 Sam. 6. 22.) for the word of Christ shall not fall to the ground, that those who humble themselves shall be exalted.

II. Consider how comfortable a meek and quiet spirit is. Inward comfort is a desirable good, which has more in it of reality, and depends less upon opinion, than that of Credit: and this is that which Meekness and Quietness of Spirit has such a direct tendency to, nay, which it carries along with it. What is true comfort and pleasure, but a quietness in our own bosom? Those are most easy to themselves, who are so to all about them; while they that are a burthen and a terror to others, will not be much otherwise to themselves. He that would lead a quiet, must lead a peaceable life, 1 Tim. 2. 2. The surest way to find rest to our souls, is to learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart, Mat. 11. 29. Let but our moderation be known unto all men: *and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds*, Phil. 4. 5, 7. Quietness is the thing which even the busy, noisy part of the world pretend to desire and pursue: they will be quiet, yea, that they will, or they will know why, they will not endure the least disturbance of their quietness. But verily they go a mad way to work, in pursuit of quietness; greatly to disquiet themselves inwardly, and put their souls into a continual hurry, only to prevent or remedy some small outward disquietude from others. But he that is meek, finds a sweeter, safer quietness, and much greater comfort than that which they in vain pursue. *Great peace have they that love this law of love*, for *nothing shall offend them*, (Ps. 119. 165.) Whatever offence is intended, it is not so interpreted, and by that means the peace is preserved. If there be a heaven any where upon earth, it is in the meek and quiet soul, that acts and breathes above that lower religion, which is infested with storms and tempests, the harmony of whose faculties is like the music of the spheres they talk of, a perpetual melody. *Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

A meek and quiet christian must needs live very comfortably, for he enjoys himself, he enjoys his friends, he enjoys his God, and he puts it out of the reach of his enemies to disturb him in these enjoyments.

1. He enjoys himself. Meekness is very nearly allied to that patience which our Lord Jesus prescribes to us, as necessary to the keeping possession of our own souls, Luke 21. 19. How calm are the thoughts, how serene are the affections, how rational the prospects, and how even and composed are all the resolves of the meek and quiet soul? ‡ How free from the pains and tortures of an angry man, who is disseized and dispossessed even of himself, and while he toils and vexes to make other things his own, makes his own soul not so: his reason is in a mist, confounded and bewildered, cannot argue, infer, or foresee with any certainty. His affections are on the full-speed, hurried on with an impetus, which is as uneasy as it is hazardous. Who is that good man who is § *satisfied from himself*? Pro. 14. 14. Who but the quiet man that needs not go abroad for satisfaction, but having Christ dwelling in his heart by faith, has in him that peace, which the world can neither give nor take away: while those that are fretful and passionate, rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow in pursuit of revengeful projects, the God of peace *gives to his beloved* (Jedidijah's, one of Solomon's names, who was a man of peace) *sleep*, Ps. 127. 2. The sleep of the meek is quiet, and sweet, and undisturbed: those that by innocency and mildness make themselves the sheep of Christ, shall be made to lie down in the *green pastures*, Ps. 23. 2. That which would break an angry man's heart, will not break

* The *Hebrew Critics* observe, that in the name יהוה all the letters are *quiescent*.

† *Quod desideras magnum & summum est, Deoque vicinum, non concuti.* Sen.——*Dus proximus ille est, quem ratio non ira movet—What you want is, that noble, that divine attainment—Unshaken tranquillity.* Claud.

‡ Opinion is the rate of things
From whence our peace doth flow:
I have a better fate than kings,
Because I think it so. Mrs. Phillips.

§ ——— *Ne te quæsiveris extra.*

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break a meek man's sleep. It is promised, Ps. 22. 26. That *the meek shall eat and be satisfied.* He has what sweetness is to be had in his common comforts, while the angry man either cannot eat, his stomach is too full and too high, (as Ahab, 1 Kin. 21. 4.) or eats and is not satisfied, unless he can be revenged, as Haman, Esth. 5. 12, 13. *All this avails me nothing*, (though it was a banquet of wine with the king and queen) as long as Mordecai is unhanged.

It is spoken of as the happiness of the meek, that they *delight themselves in the abundance of peace*, (Ps. 37. 11.) others may delight themselves in the abundance of wealth; a poor delight that is interwoven with so much trouble and disquietude; but the meek, though they have but a little wealth, have peace, abundance of peace, peace like a river, and this such as they have a heart to delight themselves in, *sat lucis intus—light enough within*, as Oecolampadius said, their souls are a Goshen in the midst of the Ægypt of this world, they have a light in their dwelling, when clouds and darkness are round about them: this is the *Joy which a stranger doth not meddle with.* We may certainly have (and we would do well to consider it) less inward disturbance, and more true ease and satisfaction in forgiving twenty injuries, than in avenging one. No doubt Abigail intended more than she expressed, when to qualify David, and to persuade him to pass by the affront which Nabal had given him, she prudently suggested, that *hereafter this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart.*[a]——Not only so, but it would be very sweet and easy, and comfortable in the reflection. Such a rejoicing is it, especially in a suffering-day, to have the testimony of conscience, that in *simplicity* and *godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God*, particularly the grace of Meekness, *we have had our conversation in the world*, and so have pleased God, and done our duty. He did not speak the sense, no not of the sober heathen, that said, *Est vindicta bonum, vitâ jucundius ipsâ—Revenge is sweeter than life;* for it often proves more bitter than death.

2. He enjoys his friends:——And that is a thing in which lies much of the comfort of human life. Man was intended to be a sociable creature, and a christian much more so. But the angry man is unfit to be so, that takes fire at every provocation; fitter to be abandoned to the lion's dens, and the *Mountains of the Leopards*, than to *go forth by the footsteps of the flock.* He that has *his hand against every man*, cannot but have (with Ishmael's character, Ishmael's fate) *every Man's hand against him*, (Gen. 16. 12.) and so he lives in a state of war; but meekness is the cement of society, the bond of christian-communion; it planes and polishes the materials of that beautiful fabric, and makes them lie close and tight, and the living stones which are built up a spiritual house, to be like the stones of the temple that Herod built, all as one stone, whereas, " Hard upon hard " (as the Spaniards Proverb is) " will never make a Wall." Meekness preserves among brethren that unity, which is like the ointment upon the Holy Head, and the dew upon the Holy Hill, Ps. 133. 1, 2. In our present state of imperfection there can be no friendship, correspondence, or conversation maintained without mutual allowances; we do not yet dwell with angels or spirits of just men made perfect, but with men subject to like passions. Now Meekness teaches us to consider this, and to allow accordingly; and so distances and strangeness, feuds and quarrels are happily prevented, and the beginnings of them crushed by a timely care. How necessary to true friendship it is to surrender our passions, and to subject them all to the laws of it, was (perhaps) intimated by Jonathan's delivering to David his sword, and his bow, and his girdle, all his military habiliments, when he entered into a covenant of friendship with him, 1 Sam. 18. 3, 4.

3. He enjoys his God; and that is most comfortable of all. It is the quintessence of all happiness, and that, without which, all our other enjoyments are sapless and insipid: for this, none are better qualified than those who are arrayed with the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* It was when the Psalmist had newly conquered an unruly passion, and composed himself, that he lifted up his soul to God in that pious and pathetic breathing, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee?* Ps. 73. 25. We enjoy God when we have the evidences and the assurances of his favour, the tastes and tokens of his love, when we experience in ourselves the communication of his Grace, and the continued instances of his image stamped upon us: and this, those that are most meek and quiet have usually the greatest degrees of. In our wrath and passion we give place to the Devil, and so provoke God to withdraw from us: nothing grieves the Holy Spirit of God (by whom we have fellowship with the Father, more than *bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking*, Eph. 4. 30, 31. But to this man does the God of Heaven look with a peculiar regard, *even to him that is poor*, poor in Spirit, (Isa. 66. 2.) אל עני, —*to him that is quiet*, so the Syriac; *to him that is meek*, so the Chaldee. The great God overlooks heaven and earth, to give a favourable look to the meek and quiet soul. Nay, he not only looks at such, but (Isa. 57. 15.) *He dwells with them*; noting a constant intercourse and communion between God and humble souls. His secret is with them; he gives them more grace, and they that thus dwell in love, *dwell in God, and God in them.* The waters were dark indeed, but they were quiet; when the Sprit of God moved upon them, and out of them produced a beautiful world.

This calm and sedate frame does very much qualify and dispose us for the reception and entertainment of divine visits, and *sets bounds to the mountain*, (Exod. 19. 12.) on which God is to descend, that no interruption may break in, and charges the *Daughters of Jerusalem*, by *the Roes and the Hinds of the Field*, (those

[a] 2 Sam. 25. 31.

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(those sweet, and gentle, and peaceable creatures) *not to stir up or awake our Love till he please*, Cant. 2. 7. Some think it was for the quieting and composing of his spirit (which seems to have been a little ruffled) that Elisha called for the Minstrel, (2 Kings 3. 15.) *and then the hand of the Lord came upon him.* Never was God more intimate with any mere man, than he was with Moses, the meekest of all the men on the earth, and it was required as a needful qualification of the High-Priest, who was to draw near to minister, that he should have *Compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*, Heb. 5. 1, 2. The meek will he guide in judgment, with a still small voice, which cannot be heard, when the passions are loud and tumultuous. The angry man when he awakes, is still with the Devil, contriving some malicious project: the meek and quiet man, when he awakes, is still with God, solacing himself in his favour. *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul*, says David, (Ps. 116. 7.) when he had reckoned himself among the simple, that is, the mild, innocent, and inoffensive people. Return to thy Noah, so the word is, (for Noah had his name from Rest) perhaps alluding to the rest which the dove found with Noah in the ark, when she could find none any where else. Those that are harmless, and simple as doves, can with comfort return to God as to their rest. It is excellently paraphrased by Mr. Patrick, "God and thy Self" (my Soul) "enjoy; in quiet rest, freed from thy fears." It is said, Ps. 147. 6. That the *Lord lifteth up the meek:* as far as their meekness reigns, they are lifted up above the stormy region, and fixed in a sphere perpetually calm and serene. They are advanced indeed that are at home in God, and live a life of communion with him, not only in solemn ordinances, but even in the common accidents and occurrences of the world. Every day is a Sabbath-day, a day of *Holy Rest* with the meek and quiet soul, that is, one of the days of Heaven. As this grace gets ground, the comforts of the Holy Ghost grow stronger and stronger, according to that precious promise, (Isa. 29. 19.) *The Meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

4. It is not in the power of his enemies to disturb and interrupt him in these enjoyments. His peace is not only sweet, but safe and secure: as far as he acts under the law of meekness, it is above the reach of the assaults of those that wish ill to it. He *that abides quietly under the shadow of the Almighty, shall surely be delivered from the snare of the Fowler*, Ps. 91. 1, 3. The greatest provocations that men can give would not hurt us, if we did not,* by our inordinate and foolish concern, come too near them, and within reach of their cannon; we may therefore thank ourselves, if we be damaged: he that has learned with meekness and quietness, to forgive injuries, and pass them by, has found the best and surest way of baffling and defeating them;† nay, it is a kind of innocent revenge. It was an evidence that Saul was actuated by another spirit, in that, when the children of Belial despised him, and brought him no presents, (hoping by that contempt to give a shock to his infant-government,) *he held his peace*, and so neither his soul nor his crown received any disturbance, 1 Sam. 10. 27. Shimei, when he cursed David, intended thereby to pour vinegar into his wounds, and to add affliction to the afflicted; but David, by his meekness, preserved his peace, and Shimei's design was frustrated, *So let him curse;* (2 Sam. 16. 10.) Alas, poor creature! he hurts himself more than David, who, while he keeps his heart from being tinder to those sparks, is no more prejudiced by them, than the moon is by the foolish cur that barks at it. The meek man's prayer is that of David, (Ps. 61. 2.) *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I:* And there I can (as Mr. Norris expresses it,)

> ——— *Smile to see,*
> *The Shafts of Fortune all drop short of me.*

The meek man is like a ship that rides at anchor, *movetur, sed non amovetur—is moved, but not removed;* the storm *moves* it, (the meek man is not a stock or stone under provocation) but does not *remove* it from its port. It is a grace that in reference to the temptations of affront and injury, (as faith in reference to temptation in general,) quenches the fiery darts of the wicked;‡ it is armour of proof against the spiteful and envenomed, arrows of provocation, and is an impregnable wall to secure the peace of the soul there, where *Thief cannot break through to steal*, while the angry man lays all his comforts at the mercy of every wasp that will strike at him.

So that, upon the whole matter, it appears, That the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, is as easy as it is comely.

III. Consider how profitable a meek and quiet spirit is. All people are for what they can get; it is that which the busy world is set upon, *Every one for his gain from his quarter*, Isa. 56. 11. It is for this that they break their sleep, and spend their spirits, and raise so great a dust. Now it will be hard to convince such, that really, there is more to be gotten by meekness and quietness of spirit, than by all this hurry and confusion. They readily believe, that *in all labour, there is profit;* but let God himself tell them, *In Returning and Rest shall ye be saved, in Quietness and in Confidence shall be your strength:* they will not take his word for it, but they say, (as it follows there) *No, for we will flee upon horses, and we will ride upon the swift*, Isa. 30. 15, 16. He that came from heaven to bless us, has entailed a special blessing upon the Grace of Meekness, Mat. 5. 5. *Blessed are the Meek;* and his saying,

* *Nemo læditur nisi à seipso—No man is hurt but by himself.* Diet. Diogen.

† *Idcirco quis te lædit ut doleas, quia fructus lædentis in dolore læsi est; ergo, cum fructum ejus everteris non dolendo, ipse doleat necesse est amissione fructus sui, Improbum cædis sustinendo—He who injures you, does it in order to grieve you, for the grief of the person injured is precisely the injurer's reward; if therefore you deprive him of this reward by suppressing your grief, you turn the mischief he intended, on himself.* Tertull. de patientia. *cap.* 8.

‡ Meekness is the greatest Affront to all Injuries in the World, for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them Useless, Ineffective and Innocent. *Taylor's Great Exempl.* p. 304.

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saying, they are blessed, makes them so, for those whom he blesses, are blessed indeed; *blessed, and they shall be blessed.*

Meekness is gainful and profitable.

1. As it is the condition of the promise: the meek are therefore blessed, *for they shall inherit the earth:* it is quoted from Ps. 37. 11. and is almost the only express promise of temporal good things in all the New Testament.* Not that the meek shall be put off with the earth only, then they would not be truly blessed, but they shall have that as an earnest of something more. Some read it, *They shall inherit the Land,* that is, the Land of *Canaan,* which was not only a type and figure, but to them that believed, a token and pledge of the heavenly inheritance. So that, " A double Canaan," (as Dr. Hammond observes) " is thought little enough for the meek Man.† The same felicity, in a manner, attending him which we believe of Adam, if he had not fallen, a life in Paradise, and thence a transplantation to Heaven."——But besides this, meekness is a branch of godliness, which has more than other branches of it, the *promise of the Life that now is;* 1 Tim. 4. 8. *They shall inherit the Earth;* the sweetest and surest tenure is that by inheritance, which is founded in son-ship: that which comes by descent to the heir, the law attributes to the act of God, who has a special hand in providing for the meek. They are his children, and *if children, then heirs.* It is not always the largest proportion of this world's goods that falls to the meek man's share, but whether he has more or less, he has it by the best title; not by a common, but a covenant-right: he holds *in Capite,*‡—*in* (Christ) *our Head,* an honourable tenure.

If he has but a little, he has it from God's love, and with his blessing, and behold all things are clean and comfortable to him. The wise man has determined it, (Pro. 17. 1.) *Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife:* And ch. 15. 17. *Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.* Be the fare ever so scanty, he that has rule over his own spirit, knows how to make the best of them; how to *suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock,* Deut. 32. 13. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall* wield *the Earth;* so Old Wickliff's translation reads it, (as I remember it is quoted in the Book of Martyrs) and very significantly. Good management contributes more to our comfort than great possessions. Whatever a meek man has of this earth, he knows how to wield it, to make a right and good use of it; that is all in all. Quiet souls so far inherit the earth, that they are sure to have as much of it as is good for them; as much as will serve to bear their charges through this world to a better, and who would covet more? Enough is as good as a feast. The promise of God without present possession, is better than possession of the world, without an interest in the promise.

2. As it has in its own nature a direct tendency to our present benefit and advantage. He that is thus wise, is wise for himself, even in this world, and effectually consults his own interest.

(1.) Meekness has a good influence upon our Health. If envy be the *rottenness of the Bones,* (Pro. 14. 30.) Meekness is the preservation of them. As the indulging of inordinate appetites towards those things that are pleasing to the flesh, so the indulging of inordinate passions against those things that are displeasing, do in the effect prejudice and injure the very body which they contend so much for. The excesses and exorbitances of anger stir up those peccant humours in the body which kindle and increase wasting and killing diseases; but meekness governs those humours, and so contributes very much to the good temper and constitution of the body. When Ahab was sick for Naboth's vineyard, Meekness would soon have cured him. Moses, the meekest of men, not only lived to be old, but was then free from the infirmities of age: *His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated,* (Deut. 34. 7.) which may be very much imputed to his Meekness, as a means. The days of old age would not be such evil days, if old people did not, by their own frowardness and unquietness, make them worse than otherwise they would be. Ungoverned anger enflames the natural heat, and so begets acute diseases, dries up the radical moisture, and so hastens chronical decays. The body is called the sheath or scabbard of the soul, Dan. 7. 15. *Marg.* How often does an envious fretful soul, like a sharp knife, cut its own sheath, and, as they say of the viper's brood, eat its own way out: all which, Meekness happily prevents.

The quietness of the spirit will help to cool distempering heats, to suppress melancholy vapours; and this, as other of wisdom's precepts, will be *Health to the navel, and marrow to the bones; length of days, and long life, and peace they shall add unto thee: but wrath kills the foolish man*; Job. 5. 2.

(2.) It has a good influence upon our wealth, the preservation and increase of it. As in kingdoms, so in families and neighbourhoods, war begets poverty. Many a one has brought a fair estate to ruin, by giving way to the efforts of an ungoverned anger, that barbarous Idol, to which, even the children's portions and the family's maintenance are oftentimes sacrificed. Contention will as soon clothe a man with rags as slothfulness; that, therefore, which keeps the peace, does not a little befriend the plenty. It was Abraham's meek management of his quarrel with Lot, that secured both his own and his kinsman's possessions, which otherwise would have been an easy prey to the Canaanite and the Perizzite that dwelt then in the land, Gen.

* As Heaven is taken by Violence, so is Earth by Meekness. *Trap in loc.*

† *Pract. Cat.* p. *(mihi)* 117.

‡ *Terram inhabitant quam sibi divinitus concessam esse norunt, & secure agunt sub Dei tutela; & hoc illis satis est, donec mundi hæreditatem ultimo die adeant. Feroces vero omnia possidendo nihil possident—They inhabit the earth which they know to be their's by the divine allotment, and they are safe beneath the divine protection; this suffices them, till, in the last day, they arrive at the full possession of their inheritance. The furious, on the contrary, by grasping at all, lose every thing.* Calv. *in* Mat. 5. 5.

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Gen. 13. 7, 8. And Isaac, whom I have sometimes thought to be the most quiet and calm of all the patriarchs, and that passed the days of his pilgrimage most silently, raised the greatest estate of any of them, (Gen. 26. 13.) *he grew till he became very great:* And his son Jacob lost nothing in the end, by his meek and quiet carriage toward his uncle Laban. Revenge is costly; Haman bid largely for it, no less than ten thousand talents of silver, (Esth. 3. 9.) it is better to forgive, and save the charges. Mr. Dod used to say, "Love is better than law; for love is cheap, but law is chargeable." Those tradesmen are commonly observed to thrive most, that make the least noise, that with quietness work, and mind their own business; 2 Thes. 3. 12.

(3.) It has a good influence upon our safety. In the day of the Lord's anger, the meek of the earth are most likely to be secured. *It may be you shall be hid,* (so runs the promise, Zeph. 2. 3.) if any be, you shall, you stand fairest for special protections. Meekness approaches to that innocence which is commonly an effectual security against wrongs and injuries. However, some base and servile spirits may insult over the tame and humble; yet, with all persons of honour, it is confessedly a piece of cowardice to set upon an unarmed unresisting man, that resents not provocation. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers τῦ ἀγαθῦ, of him that is good,* in his goodness, 1 Pet. 3. 13. Who draws his sword, or cocks his pistol at the harmless silent lamb, while every one is ready to do it at the furious barking dog? Thus does the meek man escape many of those perplexing troubles, those woes, and sorrows, and wounds without cause, which he that is passionate, provoking and revengeful, pulls upon his own head. Wise men turn away wrath, but a fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for strokes. It is an honour to a man to cease from strife, but every fool will be meddling to his own hurt. An instance of this I remember Mr. Baxter gives in his Book of "Obedient Patience," which was this; "That once, going along London streets, a hectoring rude fellow justled him; he went on his way, and took no notice of it: but the same man affronting the next he met in like manner, he drew his sword and demanded satisfaction, and mischief was done." He that would sleep both in a whole skin, and in a whole conscience, must learn rather to forgive injuries than to revenge them. The two goats that met upon the narrow bridge (as it is in Luther's fable) were both in danger, should they quarrel; but were both preserved by the condescension of one that lay down and let the other go over him. It is the evil of passion, that it turns our friends into enemies; but it is the excellency of Meekness, that it turns our enemies into friends, which is an effectual way of conquering them. Saul, as inveterate an enemy as could be, was more than once melted by David's mildness and meekness. *Is this thy voice, my son David?* (says he, 1 Sam. 24. 16.) *I have sinned, return my son David,* 1 Sam. 26. 21. And after that, Saul persecuted him no more, ch. 27. 4. The change that Jacob's meekness made in Esau, is no less observable; and (some think) is remarked as very strange and surprising, by an unusual pointing in the Hebrew text, upon Esau's kissing Jacob, Gen. 33. 4. וַיִּשָּׁקֵהוּ a point over every letter, to put the reader in mind to take special notice of it. In the ordinary dispensations of Providence, some tell us,* that they have found it remarkably true in times of public trouble and calamity, that it has commonly fared best with the meek and quiet; their lot has been safe and easy, especially if compared with the contrary fate of the turbulent and seditious. Whoso is wise and observes these things, will understand the loving-kindness of the Lord to the quiet in the land, against whom we read indeed of plots laid, and deceitful matters devised, (Ps. 35. 20.—37. 12, 14.) But those by a kind and over-ruling providence are ordinarily baffled and made successless. Thus does this grace of meekness carry its own recompence along with it, and in keeping this commandment, as well as after keeping it, there is a *great reward,* Ps. 19. 11.

IV. Consider what a preparative it is for something further. It is a very desirable thing to *stand complete in all the will of God,* (Col. 4. 12.) to be fitted and furnished for every good work, to be made ready, a people prepared for the Lord: a living principle of grace is the best preparation for the whole will of God. Grace is establishing to the heart, it is the Root of the Matter, and a good foundation for the time to come. This Grace of Meekness is particularly a good preparation for what lies before us in this world.

1. It makes us fit for any duty. It puts the soul in frame, and keeps it so for all religious exercises. There was no noise of axes and hammers in the building of the temple: those are most fit for temple service that are most quiet and composed. The work of God is best done, when it is done without noise. Meekness qualifies and disposes us to hear and receive the word; when malice and envy are laid aside, and we are like new-born babes for innocence and inoffensiveness, then we are most fit to *receive the sincere milk of the word,* and are most likely to grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Meekness prepares the soil of the heart for the seed of the word, as the husbandman *opens and breaks the clods of his ground, and makes plain the face thereof,* and then *casts in the principal wheat and the appointed barley;* Isa. 28. 24, 25. Christ's ministers are fishers of men, but we seldom fish successfully in these troubled waters. The voice that Eliphaz heard, was ushered in with a profound silence, (Job 4. 16.) and in *slumberings upon the bed,* a quiet place and posture. *God opens the ears of men, and sealeth their instructions,* Job 33. 15, 16. Prayer is another duty which Meekness disposes us for the right and acceptable performance of. We do not lift up pure hands in prayer, if they be not without wrath, (1 Tim. 2. 8.) Prayers made in wrath are written in gall, and can never be pleasing to, or prevailing with the God of love and peace. Our rule is, *First go and be reconciled to thy Brother, and then*

* Dr. Hammond, *Pract. Cat.* p. 117.

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come and offer thy gift;* Mat. 5. 23, 24. And if we do not take this method, though we seek God in a due ordinance, we do not seek him in the due order.

The Lord's Day is a day of rest, and none are fit for it but those who are in a quiet frame, whose souls are entered into that present Sabbatism which the Gospel has provided for the people of God, Heb. 4. 9. The Lord's Supper is the Gospel-Feast of *unleavened bread*, which must be kept, not with the old leaven of wrath, and malice, and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.†

God made a gracious visit to Abraham, (Gen. 13. 14.) after that Lot was separated from him, *viz.* after the strife betwixt him and Lot was over, in which he had discovered so much mildness and humility. The more carefully we preserve the communion of saints, the fitter we are for communion with God. It is observable, that the sacrifices which God appointed under the law, were not ravenous beasts, and birds of prey; but calves, and kids, and lambs, and turtle-doves, and young pigeons, all of them emblems of meekness, and gentleness, and inoffensiveness; for *with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* This quietness of spirit contributes very much to the constant steadiness and regularity of a religious conversation. Hot and eager spirits, that are ready to take fire at every thing, are usually very inconstant in their profession, and of great inconsistency with themselves, like a man in an ague-fit, sometimes burning hot, and sometimes shivering for cold; or like those that gallop in the beginning of their journey, and tire before the end of it; whereas the meek and quiet christian is still the same; and, by keeping to a constant rate, rids ground. If you would have one foot of the compass go even round the circumference, you must be sure to keep the other fixed and quiet in the centre, for your strength is to sit still.

2. It makes us fit for any relation, which God in his Providence may call us into. Those who are quiet themselves, cannot but be easy to all that are about them; and the nearer any are to us in relation and converse, the more desirable it is that we should be easy to them. Relations are various, as superiors, inferiors, and equals; he that is of a meek and quiet spirit, is cut out for any of them. Moses was forty years a courtier in Egypt, forty years a servant in Midian, and forty years a king in Jeshurun; and his meekness qualified him for each of these posts, and still he held fast his integrity. There are various duties requisite, according as the relation is, and various graces to be exercised; but this of meekness is the golden thread that must run through all. If man be a sociable creature, the more he has of humanity, the more fit he is for society. Meekness would greatly help to preserve the wisdom and due authority of superiors, the obedience and due subjection of inferiors, and the love and mutual kindness, and serviceableness of equals. A calm and quiet spirit receives the comfort of the relation most thankfully, studies the duty of the relation most carefully, and bears the inconvenience of the relation (for there is no unmixed comfort under the sun) most cheerfully and easily. I have heard of a married couple, who, though they were both naturally of a hot and hasty temper, yet lived very comfortably in that relation, by observing an agreement made between themselves, "Never to be both angry together;" an excellent law of meekness it is, which, if faithfully lived up to, would prevent many of those breaches among relations, which occasion so much guilt and grief, and are seldom healed without a scar. It was part of the good advice given by a pious and ingenious father, to his children newly entered into the conjugal relation;

Doth one speak Fire? t' other with Water come;
Is one provok'd? be t' other soft or dumb.

And thus *one wise, both happy.* But where wrath and anger are indulged, all relations are embittered, those that should be helps, become as thorns in our eyes, and goads in our sides. *Two indeed are better than one*, and yet it is better to dwell alone in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry relation, *who is like a continual dropping in a very rainy day*, Pro. 21. 19.—27. 15. Some of the Hebrew Criticks have noted, that if you take away יה *the fear of the Lord*, from איש and אשה *Husband and Wife*; there remains but אש and אש *Fire, Fire.*—It is so in other relations.

3. It makes us fit for any condition, according as the wise God shall please to dispose of us. Those that through grace are enabled to compose and quiet themselves, are fit to live in this world, where we meet with so much every day to discompose and disquiet us. In general, whether the outward condition be prosperous or adverse, whether the world smile or frown upon us, a meek and quiet spirit is neither lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other, but still in the same poise; in prosperity humble and condescending, the estate rising, but the mind not rising with it; in adversity encouraged and cheered up, *cast down, but not in despair*; in both *even*, like a dye, throw in which way you will, it lights on a square side. St. Paul, who had learned in every estate to be content, αὐταρκὴς—*satisfied within himself, knew how to be abased, and knew how to abound; every where, and in all things he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need*; Phil. 4. 11, 12. Changes without made none within. It is a temper which, as far as it has the ascendant

* *Leave thy Gift*: Θεὸς οὐ ἡγεῖται ἀτιμίαν εἶναι τῷ δώρῳ καταλιμπανομένῳ, καὶ συνομίζεις ὕβριν εἶναι, τὸ πρότερον ἀποκλθεῖν καὶ καταλλαγῆναι—*God does not deem that any dishonour attaches to him, when he leaves a gift, though it should be slighted; and dost thou think it degrading to make the first overture toward reconciliation? Chrysost. Hom.*

† *Quid est ad pacem Dei accedere sine pace? Ad remissionem debitorum cum retentione? Quomodo placabit patrem iratus in fratrem, cum omnis ira ab initio interdicta sit nobis?—How can we attain the peace of God without peace? How can we attain the remission of our sins without remitting the sins of others? How can he that is angry with his brother, pacify his father, who, from the first, forbids us to be angry?* Tertul. de Orat. c. 10.

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ascendant in the soul, makes every burthen sit light, by bringing the mind to the condition, when the condition is not in every thing brought to the mind. Prosperity and adversity have each of them their particular temptation to peevishness and frowardness; the former by making men imperious, the latter by making men impatient. Against the assaults of each of these temptations, the grace of meekness will stand upon the guard. Being to pass through this world *by Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report*, that is, through a great variety of conditions and treatments, we have need of that long-suffering and kindness, and love unfeigned, which will be the Armour of Righteousness, on the right hand and on the left. I refer to that Scripture, 2 Cor. 6. 6, 7, 8. Meekness and quietness will fortify the soul on each hand, and suit it to the several entertainments which the world gives us; like a skilful pilot, that, which point of the compass soever the wind blows from, will shift his sails accordingly; and knows either how to get forward, and weather his point with it, or to lie by without damage. It is the continual happiness of a quiet temper to make the best of that which is.*

4. It makes us fit for a day of persecution. If tribulation and affliction arise because of the word, (which is no foreign supposition) the meek and quiet spirit is armed for it, so as to preserve its peace and purity at such a time, which are our two great concerns, that we may neither torment ourselves with a base fear, nor pollute ourselves with a base compliance. We are accustomed to say, "We will give any thing for a quiet life;" I say, any thing for a quiet conscience, which will be best secured under the shield of a meek and quiet spirit, *which doth not render railing for railing*, (1 Pet. 3. 9.) nor aggravate the threatened trouble, or represent it to itself in its most formidable colours, but has learned to put a *but* upon the power of the most enraged enemies; they can but kill the body; and to witness the most righteous testimony with meekness and fear, (1 Pet. 3. 15.) like our Master, who, *when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. 2. 23. Suffering-saints (as the suffering-Jesus) are compared to Sheep, (Isa. 53. 7. Rom. 8. 36.) as sheep dumb before the shearer, nay, dumb before the butcher. The meek and quiet christian, if duly called to it, can tamely part, not only with the wool, but with the blood; not only with the estate, but with the life, and even then rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Angry, froward people, in a day of rebuke, are apt to pull crosses upon themselves by needless provocations, or to murmur, and complain, and fly in the face of instruments, and give unbecoming language, contrary to the laws of our holy religion, and the example of our Master, and so do more hurt than good by their suffering. Whenever we have the honour to be persecuted for righteousness-sake, our great care must be to glorify God, and to adorn our profession, (which is done most effectually by meekness and mildness, under the hardest censures, and the most cruel usage:) so manifesting that we are indeed under the power and influence of that holy religion, which we think it worth our while to suffer for.

5. It makes us fit for death and eternity. The grave is a quiet place; *there the wicked cease from troubling*, Job 3. 17. Those that were most troublesome, are there bound to the peace; and their *hatred and envy* (those great make-bates) *are there perished*, Eccl. 9. 6. Whether we will or no, in the grave we shall *lie still and be quiet*, Job 3. 13. What a great change then must it needs be to unquiet, angry, and litigious people? and what a mighty shock will that sudden forced rest give them, after such a violent rapid motion? It is therefore our wisdom to compose ourselves for the grave, to prepare ourselves for it, by adapting and accommodating ourselves to that which is likely to be our long home: this is dying daily, quieting ourselves, for death will shortly quiet us.

The meek and quiet soul is at death let into that rest which it has been so much labouring after; and how welcome must that needs be?——Thoughts of death and the grave are very agreeable to those who love to be quiet; for then, and there they shall *enter into peace*, and *rest in their beds*; Isa. 57. 2.

After death we expect the judgment, than which, nothing is more dreadful to them that are contentious, Rom. 2. 8. The coming of the Master brings terror along with it, to those who smite their fellow servants, (Luke 12. 45, 46.) but those that are meek and quiet, are likely to have their plea ready, their accounts stated, and whenever it comes, it will be no surprise to them: to those whose moderation is known to all men, it will be no ungrateful news to hear that *the Lord is at hand*, Phil. 4. 5. It is therefore prescribed, as that which ought to be our constant care, that whenever our Master comes, we may be found of him in peace, 2 Pet. 3. 14. that is, in a peaceable temper. *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find* in such a frame. "*A good Man*" (says the late excellent Abp Tillotson, in his preface to his book of Family Religion) "*would be loath to be taken out of the world reeking hot from a sharp contention with a perverse adversary; and not a little out of countenance to find himself in this temper translated into the calm and peaceable regions of the blessed, where nothing but perfect charity and good-will reigns for ever.*" Heaven, for certain, is a quiet place, and none are fit for it but quiet people. The heavenly Canaan, that land of peace, would be no heaven to those that delight in war; turbulent and unquiet people would be out of their element, like a fish upon dry ground, in those calm regions.

They are the sheep of Christ, (such as are patient and inoffensive,) that are called to inherit the kingdom; *without are dogs* that bite and devour, Rev. 22. 15.

They are the wings of a dove, not those of a hawk or

* Μὴ ζήτει τὰ γινόμενα γινέσθαι ὡς θέλεις ἀλλὰ θέλε γινόθαι τὰ γινόμενα ὡς γίνεται καὶ εὐπορήσεις—*Seek not to adjust events to your will so much as to adjust your will to events; thus you will act a becoming part. Epict.* c. 13.

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or eagle, that David would fly upon to his desired rest, Ps. 55. 6.

Now lay all this together, and then consider, Whether there be not a real excellency in this meekness and quietness of spirit, which does highly recommend it to all that love either God or themselves, or have any sensible regard to their own comfort, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

CHAP. III.

THE APPLICATION.

I. AND now, have we not reason to lament the want of *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*, among those that profess religion, and especially in our own bosoms? If this be christianity, the Lord help us! How little is there of the thing, even among those that make great pretensions to the name? Surely, (as one said in another case,) *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelici—Either this is not Gospel, or these are not Gospel-professors.* And Oh! how bare and uncomely does profession appear, for want of this adorning! When the Israelites had stript themselves of their ornaments, to furnish up a golden calf, it is said, they were *made naked to their shame*, Exod. 32. 25. How naked are we (like Adam when he had sinned) for want of this ornament, it is well if it were to the shame of true repentance; for there is reason enough for it.

I am not teaching you to judge and censure others in this matter, there is too much of that to be found among us; we are quick-sighted enough to spy faults in others, the transports of whose passions we should interpret favourably. But we have all cause, more or less, to condemn ourselves, and confess guilt in this matter. In many things we all offend, and perhaps in this, as much as in any, coming short of the law of meekness and quietness.

We are called christians, and it is our privilege and honour that we are so: we name the name of the meek and lowly Jesus, but how few are actuated by his Spirit, or conformed to his example? It is a shame that any occasion should be given to charge it upon professors, who, in other things, are most strict and sober, that in this, they are most faulty: and that many who pretend to conscience and devotion, should indulge themselves in a peevish, froward, and morose temper and conversation, to the great reproach of that worthy Name by which we are called. May we not say, as that Mahometan did, when a christian Prince had perfidiously broke his league with him, "O Jesus! are these thy Christians?"

It is the manifest design of our holy and excellent religion, to smooth, and soften, and sweeten our tempers, and to work off the ruggedness and unevenness of them. Is it not a wretched thing therefore, that any who profess it, should be soured, and imbittered, and less conversible and fit for human society, than other people? He was looked upon as a very good man in his day, (and not without cause,) who, yet had such an unhappy temper, and was sometimes so transported with passion, that his friend would say of him, "He had grace enough for ten men, and yet not enough for himself." All the disciples of Jesus Christ, even those of the first three, do not *know what manner of Spirit they are of*, Luke 9. 55. So apt are we to deceive ourselves, especially when these extravagances shroud themselves under the specious and plausible pretence of zeal for God and religion. But yet the fault is not to be laid upon the profession, or the strictness and singularity of it in other things which are praise-worthy; nor may we think the worse of christianity for any such blemishes: we know very well that *the wisdom that is from above, is peaceable, and gentle, and easy to be entreated*, and all that is sweet, and amiable, and endearing, though she is not herein justified of all who call themselves her children. But the blame must be laid upon the corruption and folly of the professors themselves, who are not so perfectly delivered into the mould of christianity as they should be; but neglect their ornament, and prostitute their honour, and suffer the authority of their graces to be trampled upon; they let fire go out of the rod of their branches, which devour their fruit: so that there is no meekness as a strong rod, to be a scepter to rule in the soul, which is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation; (I refer to that complaint, Ezek. 19. 14.) something resembling the woeful degeneracy of the angels that sinned, of whom it is said (Jude 6.) That they kept not τὴν ἰδιαν ἀρχὴν—*Suum Principatum.* So the Vulgar: might it not be read, *The Government of themselves?** They lost the command they should have had over their inferior faculties, and suffered them to get head. And is it not much like this, when those pretend to the dignity, who have lost the dominion of a religious profession, having no rule over their own spirits.

And yet, blessed be God! even in this corrupt and degenerate world, there are many, who appear in the excellent ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; and some whose natural temper is hasty and choleric, (as it is said Calvin's was,) yet have been enabled by the power of divine grace to shew in a good conversation, their works with meekness and wisdom. It is not so impracticable as some imagine, to subdue these passions, and to preserve the peace of the soul, even in a stormy day.

But that we may each of us judge ourselves, and find matter for repentance herein, I shall only mention those instances of irregular deportment towards our particular relations, which evidence the want of *Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.*

1. Superiors are commonly very apt to chide, and that is, for want of meekness. It is spoken to the praise of him, who is the great ruler of this perverse and rebellious world, that *he will not always chide*, Ps. 103. 9. But how many little rulers are there of families and petty societies, that herein are very unlike

* *Cudworth's Intellect. Syst.* p. 816.

him,

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him, for they are always chiding? Upon every little default, they are put into a flame, and transported beyond due bounds; easily provoked, either for no cause at all, or for very small cause; greatly provoked, and very outrageous, and unreasonable, when they are provoked. Their carriage is fiery and hasty, their Language is scurrilous and indecent; they care not what they say, nor what they do, nor whom they insult, they are such sons of Belial, that a man cannot speak to them, 1 Sam. 25. 17. One had as good meet a bear robbed of her whelps, as meet them. These require Meekness. *Husbands should not be bitter against their wives;* (Col. 3. 19.) *Parents should not provoke their Children,* (Eph. 6. 4.) *Masters must forbear threatening,* (Eph. 6. 9.) These are the rules, but how few are ruled by them? The undue and intemperate passion of superiors, goes under the umbrage and excuse of necessary strictness, and the maintaining of authority, and the education and controul of children and servants. But surely every little failure needs not be animadverted upon, but rather should be passed by; or if the fault must needs be reproved and corrected, may it not be done without such a heat? What needs so much noise and clamour, and all this *ado*? Is this the product of a meek and quiet spirit? Is this the best badge of your authority you have to put on? And are these the ensigns of your honour? Is there no other way of making your inferiors know their place, but by putting them among the dogs of your flock, and threatening them as such? Not that I am against government and good order in families, and such reproofs as are necessary to the support and preservation of it, and those, so sharpened, as some tempers require and call for. But while you are governing others, pray learn to govern yourselves, and do not disorder your own souls, under pretence of keeping order in your families: for though you yourselves may not be aware of it, yet it is certain, that by those indications of your displeasure, which transgress the laws of meekness, you do but render yourselves contemptible and ridiculous, and rather prostitute than preserve your authority. Though your children dare not tell you so, yet perhaps they cannot but think that you are very unfit to command yourselves.* Time was, when you were yourselves children, and scholars, and perhaps servants and apprentices; and so (if you will but allow yourselves the liberty of reflection) you cannot but know the heart of an inferior, (Exod. 23. 9.) and should therefore treat those that are now under you, as you yourselves then wished to be treated. A due expression of displeasure, so much as is necessary to the amendment of what is amiss, will very well consist with meekness and quietness. And your gravity and awful composedness therein will contribute very much to the preserving of your authority, and will command respect abundantly more than your noise and chiding. Masters of families (and masters of schools too) have need, in this matter, to behave themselves wisely, (Ps. 101. 2.) so as to avoid the two extremes, that of Eli's foolish indulgence on the one hand, (1 Sam. 2. 23, 24.) and that of Saul's brutish rage on the other hand, (1 Sam. 20. 30, 33.) and for the hitting of this golden mean, wisdom is profitable to direct.

2. Inferiors are commonly very apt to complain. If every thing be not just to their mind, they are fretting and vexing, and their hearts are hot within them; they are uneasy in their place and station, finding fault with every thing that is said or done to them. Here wants a quiet spirit, which would reconcile us to the post we are in, and to all the difficulties of it, and would make the best of the present state, though it be attended with many inconveniencies. Those unquiet people, whom the Apostle Jude in his epistle compares to *raging waves of the sea, and wandering stars,* (v. 13.) *were murmurers and complainers* (v. 16.) μεμψίμοιροι,—*blamers of their lot,*—so the word signifies. It is an instance of unquietness to be ever and anon quarrelling with our allotment. Those wives wanted a meek and quiet spirit, who *covered the altar of the Lord with tears,* Mal. 2. 13. Not tears of repentance for sin, but tears of vexation, at the disappointments they met with in their outward condition. Hannah's meekness and quietness was in some degree wanting, when she fretted, and wept, and would not eat, (1 Sam. 1. 7.) but prayer composed her spirit, and set her to rights, v. 18. *Her countenance was no more sad.* It was the unquietness of the spirit of the elder brother in the parable, that quarrelled so unreasonably with the Father, for receiving and entertaining the penitent prodigal, Luke 15. 29. For those that are given to be uneasy, will never want something or other to complain of. It is true, (though not so readily apprehended) that the sullenness, and murmuring, and silent frets of children and servants, are as great a transgression of the law of meekness, as the more open, noisy, and avowed passions of their parents and masters. We find the King's chamberlains *wroth with the King,* Esth. 2. 21. And Cain's quarrel with God himself, for accepting of Abel, was interpreted anger at God. Gen. 4. 6. *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?* The sour looks of inferiors are as certain an indication of anger resting in the bosom, as the disdainful looks of superiors; and how many such instances of discontent there have been, especially under a continual cross, our own consciences may perhaps tells us. It is the want of meekness only that makes those whom divine providence has put under the yoke, children of Belial, that is, impatient of the yoke.

3. Equals are commonly very apt to clash and contend. It is for want of meekness that there are in the Church so many pulpit and paper-quarrels, such strifes of words, and perverse disputings: that there are in the state such factions and parties, and between them such animosities and heart-burnings: that there are in neighbourhoods such strifes, and brawls, and vexatious lawsuits; or such distances, and estrangements, and shyness one of another: that there are in families envies and quarrels

* *Nemo regere potest, nisi qui & regi—No one is fit to rule, except he is willing to be governed.* Seneca.

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quarrels among the children and servants, crossing and thwarting, finding fault one with another: and that brethren that dwell together, do not, as they should, *dwell together in unity.* It is for want of meekness that we are so impatient of contradiction in our opinions, desires, and designs, that we must have our own saying, right or wrong, and every thing our own way: that we are so impatient of competitors, not enduring that any should stand in our light, or share in that work of honour which we would engross to ourselves: that we are so impatient of contempt, so quick in our apprehension and resentment of the least slight or affront; and so pregnant in our fancy of injuries, where really there are none, or none intended. They are not only loud and professed contentions, that evidence a want of meekness, but also those silent alienations in affection and conversation, which make a less noise; little piques and prejudices conceived, which men are themselves so ashamed of, that they will not own them: these shew the spirit disturbed, and wanting the ornament of meekness. In a word, the wilful doing any thing to disquiet others, slandering, backbiting, whispering, tale-bearing, or the like, is too plain an evidence, that we are not ourselves rightly disposed to be quiet.

And now, may we not all remember our faults this day? and, instead of condemning others, though ever so faulty, should we not each of us bewail before the Lord, that we have been so little actuated by this excellent spirit, and repent of all that, which we have at any time said, or done, contrary to the law of meekness, and from under the direction and influence of it? Instead of going about to extenuate and excuse our sinful passions, let us rather aggravate them, and lay a load upon ourselves for them: *So foolish have I been and ignorant, and so like a beast,* as the Psalmist speaks, when he is recovering himself from an intemperate heat, Ps. 73. 22. Think how often we have appeared before God and the world without our ornament, without our livery, to our shame. God kept account of the particular instances of the unquietness of Israel: *They have tempted me* (says he) *now these ten times,* Num. 14. 22. Conscience is God's register, that records all our miscarriages; even what we say and do in our haste, is not so quick as to escape its observation: let us, therefore, be often opening that book now, for our conviction and humiliation, or else it will be opened shortly to our confusion and condemnation. *But if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* May we not all say, as Joseph's brethren did, (and perhaps some are, as they were, in a special manner called to say it, by humbling providences) *We are verily guilty concerning our brother,* Gen. 42. 21. "Such a time, in such a company, upon such an occasion, I wanted meekness, and was unquiet; my spirit was provoked, and I spake unadvisedly with my lips, and now I remember it against myself. Nay, have not I lived a life of unquietness, in the family, in the neighbourhood, always in the fire of contention, as in my element, and breathing threatnings? And by so doing, have not I dishonoured my God, discredited my profession, disturbed my soul, grieved the blessed Spirit, and been to many an occasion of sin? And for all this, ought not I to be greatly humbled and ashamed?" Before we can put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, we must first wash in the laver of true repentance, not only for our gross and open extravagances of passion, but for all our neglects and omissions of the duties of meekness.

II. Have we not reason to labour and endeavour, since there is such a virtue, and such a praise, to attain these things? Should we not lay out ourselves to the utmost, for this *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit?* For your direction in this endeavour, (if you be indeed willing to be directed) I shall briefly lay before you,

1. Some scripture-precepts concerning meekness.
2. Some patterns of it.
3. Some particular instances, in which we have special need of it.
4. Some good principles that we should abide by. And,
5. Some good practices that we should abound in, in order to our growth in this grace of meekness.

And in opening these things, we will endeavour to keep close to the law, and to the testimony.

SECT. I.

1. *Some Scripture-Precepts concerning Meekness.*

If we lay the word of God before us for our rule, and will be ruled by it, we shall find the command of God making meekness and quietness to be as much our duty, as they are our ornament. We are there told, as the will of God;

(1.) That we must seek meekness. This command we have, Zeph. 2. 3. and (which is especially observable) it is directed to the meek of the earth: *Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth:—Seek meekness.* Though they were meek, and were pronounced so by him that searches the heart, yet they must seek meekness; which teaches us, that those who have much of this grace, have still need of more, and must desire and endeavour after more;* *Si dixisti, sufficit, periisti—if you say that you have enough, you must perish.* He that sits down content with the grace he has, and is not pressing forward towards perfection, and striving to grow in grace, to get the habits of it more strengthened and confirmed, and the operations of it more quickened and invigorated, it is to be feared has no true grace at all; but though he sit ever so high and ever so easy in his own opinion, yet sits down short of heaven. Where there is life, one way or other there will be growth, till we come to the perfect man. Job 17. 9. *He that hath clean hands will be stronger and stronger.* Paul was a man of great attainments in grace, and yet we find him forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before, Phil. 3. 13, 14. Those who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, are yet told, that they have *need of patience,* Heb. 10. 34, 36. Thus the meek of the

* *Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse—I am persuaded that many who have fallen short of wisdom, would have attained it, had they not supposed that they had attained it already.* Sen. de tranqu.

earth

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earth (who being on the earth, are in a state of infirmity and imperfection, of trial and temptation) have still need of meekness; that is, they must learn to be yet more calm and composed, more steady, and even, and regular, in the government of their passions, and in the management of their whole conversation. They who have silenced all angry words, must learn to suppress the first risings and motions of angry thoughts.

It is observable, that when the meek of the earth are especially concerned to seek meekness, even when the decree is ready to bring forth, when the day of the Lord's anger hastens on, when the times are bad, and desolating judgments are breaking in, then we have occasion for all the meekness we have, and all we can get, and all is little enough. Meekness toward God, the author, and towards men, the instruments of our trouble: meekness to bear the trial, and to bear our testimony in the trial. There is sometimes an *Hour of temptation*, (Rev. 3. 10.) a critical day, when the exercise of meekness is the work of the day: sometimes the children of men are more than ordinarily provoking, and then the children of God have more than commonly need of meekness. When God is justly angry, and men are unjustly angry, when our mother's children are angry with us, and our father angry too, there is anger enough stirring, and then "Blessed are the meek," that are careful to keep possession of their souls, when they can keep possession of nothing else, whose hearts are fixed, and quiet in shaking and unquiet times.

Now the way prescribed for the attainment of meekness, is to seek it. Ask it of God, pray for it, it is a fruit of the Spirit, it is given by the God of all grace, and to him we must go for it. It is a branch of that wisdom which he that *lacketh must ask of God*, and *it shall be given him*, Jam. 1. 5. The God we address is called, *The God of Patience and Consolation*, (Rom. 15. 5.) and he is therefore the *God of Consolation*, because the *God of Patience*, (for the more patient we are, the more we are comforted under our afflictions) and as such we must look to him, when we come to him for grace to make us like-minded, that is, meek and loving one towards another, which is the errand the Apostle there comes upon to the throne of grace. God's people are, and should be a generation of seekers, that covet the best gifts, and make their court to the best giver, who never said to the wrestling seed of Jacob, *Seek in vain*; but has given us an assurance, firm enough for us to build upon, and rich enough for us to encourage ourselves with, *Seek and ye shall find*. What would we more? Seek meekness, and ye shall find it.

The Promise annexed is very encouraging to the meek of the earth, that seek meekness; *It may be you shall be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger*. Though it be but a promise with an [*it may be*] yet it ministers abundance of comfort: God's Probabilities are better than the world's certainties; and the meek ones of the earth that hope in his mercy, and can venture their all upon an intimation of his good-will, shall find to their comfort, that when God brings a flood upon the world of the ungodly, he has an ark for all his Noahs, his resting quiet people, in which they shall be hid, it may be, from the calamity itself, however from the sting and malignity of it; "HID" (as Luther said) "either in heaven or under heaven, either in the possession, or under the protection of heaven." See Ps. 91. 1, 2.

(2.) We must put on meekness. This precept we have, Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved)—meekness.* It is one of the members of the new man, which, according to the obligations we lie under from our baptism, we must put on. Put it on as armour, to keep provocations from the heart, and so to defend the vitals. They that have tried it, will say it is "Armour of proof:" When you are putting on the whole armour of God, do not forget this. Put it on as attire, as your necessary cloathing, which you cannot go without; look upon yourselves as ungirt, undrest, unblest without it. Put it on as a livery-garment, by which you may be known to be the disciples of the meek, and humble, and patient Jesus, and to belong to that peaceable family. Put it on as an ornament, as a robe and a diadem, by which you may be both beautified and dignified in the eyes of others. Put it on as the *Elect of God, holy and beloved*,* because you are so in profession; and that you may approve yourselves so in truth and reality, be cloathed with meekness, as the *Elect of God*, a choice people, a chosen people, whom God has set apart for himself from the rest of the world, as holy, sanctified to God, sanctified by him; study these graces, which put such a lustre upon holiness, and recommend it to those that are without: as beloved, beloved of God, beloved of man, beloved of your ministers; for love's sake put on meekness. What winning persuasive rhetoric is here? enough (one would think) to smooth the roughest soul, and to soften and sweeten the most obstinate heart! Meekness is a grace of the Spirit's working, a garment of his preparing; but we must put it on, that is, we must lay our souls under the commanding power and influence of it. Put it on, not as a loose outer garment, to be put off in hot weather, but let it cleave to us, as the girdle cleaves to a man's loins; so put it on, as to reckon ourselves naked, to our shame, without it.

(3.) We must follow after meekness.—This precept we have, 1 Tim. 6. 11. Meekness is there put in opposition to those foolish and hurtful lusts that Timothy must flee from: *Thou, O Man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness:* see what good company it is ranked with. Every christian is in a sense a man of God, (though Timothy is called so as a minister) and those that belong to God are concerned to be and do so, as to recommend themselves to him, and his religion to the world, therefore, let the men of God follow after meekness. The occasions and provocations of anger often set our meekness at a distance from us, and we have it to seek when we have most need of it; but we must follow after it, and not be taken off from the pursuit by any diversion whatsoever. While others are

* *Aliter induuntur milites, aliter sacerdotes, ergo induite vobis convenientia vestimenta—Soldiers are attired in one way, and priests in another; let every person wear what best becomes him.* Aquin. in loc.

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ingenious and industrious enough in following after malice and revenge, projecting and prosecuting angry designs, be you wise and diligent to preserve the peace, both within doors and without.——Following meekness bespeaks a sincere desire, and a serious endeavour to get the mastery of our passion, and to check, govern, and moderate all the motions of it. Though, we cannot fully attain this mastery, yet, we must follow after it, and aim at it. Follow meekness, that is, *as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men*, endeavouring to *keep the unity of the Spirit:* we can but make one side of the bargain; if others will quarrel, yet, let us be peaceable; if others will strike the fire, that is their fault; let not us be as tinder to it.

(4.) We must shew all meekness unto all men. This is one of the subjects which Paul directs a young minister to preach upon, (Tit. 3. 2.) *Put them in mind to shew all meekness.*——It is that which we have need to be often reminded of. Meekness is there opposed to brawling and clamour, which is the fruit and product of our own anger, and the cause and provocation of the anger of others. Observe, it is *all meekness* that is here recommended to us πάσην πραΰτητα—*all kinds of meekness*, bearing meekness, and forbearing meekness, qualifying meekness, and condescending meekness, forgiving meekness; the meekness that endears our friends, and that which reconciles our enemies; the meekness of authority over inferiors; the meekness of obedience to superiors, and the meekness of wisdom towards all. *All meekness* is meekness in *all* relations, in reference to all injuries, all sorts of provocation, meekness in all the branches and instances of it: in this piece of our obedience we must be universal. Observe further, we must not only have meekness, all meekness, but we must shew it, by drawing out this grace into exercise, as there is occasion: in our words, in our looks, in our actions, in every thing that falls under the observation of men; we must manifest that we have indeed a regard to the law of meekness, and that we make conscience of what we say and do, when we are provoked. We must not only have the law of love written in our hearts, but in our tongues too, we must have the law of kindness, Pro. 31. 26. And thus the tree is known by its fruit. This light must shine, that others may see the good works of it, and hear the good words of it too, not to glorify us, but to glorify our Father, we should study to appear in all our converse, so mild, and gentle, and peaceable, that all who see us may witness for us, that we are of the meek of the earth. We must not only be moderate, but let our *moderation be known*, (Phil. 4. 5.)

He that is in this respect a wise man, let him shew it in the meekness of wisdom, Jam. 3. 13. What are good clothes worth, if they be not worn? Why has the servant a fine livery given him, but to shew it for the honour of his master, and of the family he belongs to? How can we say we are meek, if we do not shew it? The shewing of our meekness will beautify our profession, and will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and may have a very good influence upon others, who cannot but be in love with such an excellent grace, when thus, like the *ointment of the right hand, it betrayeth itself*, and the house is filled with the odour of it. Again, This meekness must be thus shewed unto all men, foes as well as friends, those without, as well as those within, all that we have any thing to do with. We must shew our meekness not only to those above us, that we stand in awe of, but to those below us, that we have an authority over. The poor indeed use intreaties, but whatever is the practice, it is not the privilege of the rich to answer roughly, (Pro. 18. 23.) We must *shew our meekness not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, for this is thankworthy;* 1 Pet. 2. 18, 19. Our meekness must be as extensive as our love, so exceeding broad is this commandment, *All meekness to all men.* We must shew this meekness most to those with whom we most converse. There are some that, when they are in company with strangers appear very mild and good humoured, their behaviour is plausible enough, and complaisant; but in their families they are peevish, and froward, and ill-natured, and those about them scarce know how to speak to them:* this shews that the fear of man gives greater check to their passions than the fear of God. Our rule is to be meek toward all, even to the brute creatures, over whom we are lords, but must not be tyrants: *A good man is merciful to his beast.*

Observe the reason which the Apostle there gives why we should *shew all meekness toward all men, for we ourselves also were sometime foolish*, † v. 3. Time was, when perhaps we were as bad as the worst of them we are now angry at; and if now it be better with us, we are purely beholden to the free grace of God in Christ, that made the difference: and shall we be harsh to our brethren, who have found God so kind to us? Has God forgiven us that great debt, and passed by so many wilful provocations, and shall we be extreme to mark what is done amiss against us, and make the worst of every slip and oversight? The great gospel-argument for mutual forbearance and forgiveness is, that God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, Col. 3. 13.

It may be of use also for the qualifying of our anger at our inferiors, to remember not only our former sinfulness against God in our unconverted state, but our former infirmities in the age and state of inferiors; were not we ourselves sometimes foolish? Our children are careless, and playful, and froward, and scarcely governable, and were not we ourselves so when we were of their age? And if we have now *put away childish things*, yet they have not.—*Children may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, without being provoked to wrath.*

(5.) We must study to be quiet, (1 Thes. 4. 11.) that is, study not to disturb others, nor to be yourselves disturbed by others; those are quiet that are apt not either to give or take offence, φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν—*Be ambitious of this, as the greatest honour, to be quiet:* so

* *Habet ubi se etiam in privato lare explicet magnus Animus—A great mind has an opportunity of displaying itself within the narrow circle of a family-scene.* Sen.

† *Hæc et nos risimus aliquando, Fiunt, non nascuntur Christiani—There was a time when we too made sport of these things; we were not born Christians, but become such.* Tertul.

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the word signifies. The most of men are ambitious of the honour of great business, and power, and preferment; they covet it, they court it, they compass sea and land to obtain it: but, the ambition of a christian should be carried out towards quietness, we should reckon that the happiest post, and desire it accordingly, which lies most out of the road of provocation. I cannot avoid mentioning, for the illustration of this, that most excellent poem of my Lord Hale, (the sense of which is borrowed from a heathen)

Let him that will ascend the tottering Seat
Of Courtly Grandeur, and become as Great
As are his mounting Wishes: As for me,
Let sweet Repose and Rest my Portion be.
——————Let my Age,
Slide gently by, not overthwart the Stage
Of Public Action, unheard, unseen,
And unconcern'd as if I ne'er had been.

This is studying to be quiet. Subdue and keep under all those disorderly passions which tend to the disturbing and clouding of the soul. Compose yourselves to this holy rest; put yourselves in a posture to invite this blessed sleep which God gives to his beloved. Take pains, (as students in arts and sciences do,) to understand the mystery of this grace. I call it a mystery because St. Paul, who was so well versed in the deep things of God, speaks of this as a mystery, Phil. 4. 12. μεμύημαι, *I am instructed, as in a mystery, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need;* that is, in one word, *to be quiet.*——To study the art of quietness is to take pains with ourselves, to work upon our own hearts the principles, rules, and laws of meekness; and to furnish ourselves with such considerations as tend to the quieting of the Spirit in the midst of the greatest provocations. Others are studying to disquiet us, the more need we have to study how to quiet ourselves, by a careful watching against all that which is ruffling and discomposing. Christians should above all studies, study to be quiet, and labour to be actuated by an even spirit, under all the unevennesses of providence, and remember that one good word, which Sir *William Temple* tells us the then Prince of Orange (late K. William) said he learnt from the master of his ship, who, in a storm was calling to the steersman with this word, *Steady, Steady:* let but the hand be steady, and the heart quiet, and then, though our passage be rough, we may make a shift to weather the point, and get safe to the harbour.

SECT. II.

2. *Some Scripture-Patterns of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.*

Good examples help very much to illustrate and enforce good rules, bringing them closer to particular cases, and shewing them to be practicable. Precedents are of great use in the law. If we would be found walking in the same spirit, and walking in the same steps, with those that are gone before us to glory, this is the Spirit we must be actuated by, and these are the steps we must walk in: this is the way of good men, for wise men to walk in. Let us go forth then by the footsteps of the flock, and set ourselves to follow them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. We are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, who will bear their testimony to the comfort of meekness, and upon trial recommend it to us; but we shall single out only some few from the Scripture.

(1.) Abraham was a pattern of meekness, and he was *The father of the faithful.* The Apostle here, in the verse but one before the text, proposes Sarah for an example to women, particularly an example of meekness in an inferior relation; she obeyed Abraham, and (in token of the respect due to a husband) she called him Lord. Now Abraham is a pattern of the same grace in a superior. He that was famous for faith, was famous for meekness: for the more we have of faith toward God, the more we shall have of meekness toward all men.——How meek was Abraham, when there happened a strife betwixt his herdsmen and Lot's, which, had it proceeded, might have been of ill consequence, for the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land; but it was seasonably taken up by the prudence of Abraham, (Gen. 13. 8.) *Let there be no strife, I pray thee:* though he might command the peace, yet for love's sake he rather beseeches. Every word has an air of meekness, and a tendency to keep the peace. And when the expedient pitched upon for the prevention of strife was their parting from each other, though Lot was the junior, yet Abraham, for peace-sake, quitted his right, and gave Lot the choice, v. 9. and the gracious visit which God gave him thereupon, v. 14. was an abundant recompence for his mildness and condescension. Another instance of Abraham's meekness, we have in his carriage towards Sarah, when she quarrelled with him so unreasonably about her maid, angry at that which she herself had the doing of, (Gen. 16. 5, 6.) *My wrong be upon thee;——The Lord judge between thee and me.* Abraham might soon have replied, You may thank yourself, it was your own contrivance; but laying aside the present provocation, he abides by one of the original rules of the relation, *Behold thy maid is in thy hand.* He did not answer passion with passion, that would have put all into a flame presently; but he answered passion with meekness, and so all was quiet. Another instance of Abraham's meekness, we have in the transactions between him and Abimelech his neighbour, (Gen. 21. 24, 25.) He first enters into a covenant of friendship with him, which was confirmed by an oath, and then (not reproaches him, but) reproves him for a wrong that his servants had done him about a well of water; which gives us this rule of meekness, "Not to break friendship for a small matter of difference:" such and such occasions there are, which, they that are disposed to it, might quarrel about, but *what is that between thee and me?* If meekness rule, matters in variance may be fairly reasoned and adjusted without violation or infringement of friendship. This is the example of that great Patriarch. The future

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happiness of the saints is represented as the bosom of Abraham, (Luke 16. 23.) a quiet state. Those who hope to lie in the bosom of Abraham shortly, must tread in the steps of Abraham now, whose children we are, as long as we thus do well, "and who" (as Maimonides expresses it) " is the Father of all who are gathered under the wings of the Divine Majesty."

(2.) Moses was a pattern of meekness, it was his master-grace, that in which, more than in any other, he excelled. This testimony the Holy Ghost gives of him, (Num. 12. 3.) *That the man* Moses *was very meek,* above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.*

This character of him comes in there in a parenthesis, (probably inserted by the same inspired pen that wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy) upon occasion of an affront he received from those of his own house; which intimates, that his quiet and patient bearing of it, was, of all others, the greatest proof and instance of his meekness. Those can bear any provocation, that can bear it from their near relations. The meekness of Moses, as the patience of Job, was tried on all hands. Armour of proof shall be sure to be shot at. It should seem that his wife was none of the best-humoured women; for what a passion was she in about the circumcising of her son, when she reproached him as a *Bloody husband,* and we do not read of one word that he replied, but let her have her saying, Exod. 4. 25, 26. When God was angry, and Zipporah angry, it was best for him to be quiet. The lot of his public work, was cast *in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness,* Ps. 95. 8. But, as if, all the mutinies of murmuring Israel were too little to try the meekness of Moses, his own brother and sister (and those of no less a figure than Miriam the prophetess, and Aaron the saint of the Lord) quarrel with him, speak against him, envy his honour, reproach his marriage, and are ready to head a rebellion against him, (Num. 12. 1, 2.) God heard this, (v. 2.) and was angry, (v. 9.) but Moses, though he had reason enough to resent it wrathfully, was not at all moved by it, took no notice of it, made no complaint to God, no answer to them, and so little interested in the matter, that we do not find one word that he said, till we find him, v. 13. praying so heartily for his provoking sister, who was then under the tokens of God's displeasure for the affront she gave him. The less a man strives for himself, the more is God engaged in honour and faithfulness to appear for him. When Christ said, *I seek not mine own glory,* he presently added, *but there is one that seeketh and judgeth.* And it was upon this occasion that Moses obtained this good report, *He was the meekest of all the men on the earth.*——" No man could have given greater proofs of courage than Moses:" (It is the learned Bp. Hall's remark, *Contemp.* l. 6.) " He slew the Egyptian, beat the Midianite Shepherds, confronted Pharaoh in his own court, not fearing the wrath of the king; he durst look God in the face amidst all the terrors of Mount Sinai, and draw near to the thick darkness where God was; and yet that Spirit which made and knew his heart, saith, he was the meekest, mildest man upon the earth. Mildness and fortitude may well lodge together in the same breast, which corrects the mistake of those that will allow none valiant but the fierce."

The meekness of Moses qualified him to be a magistrate, especially to be King in Jeshurun, among a people so very provoking, that they gave him occasion to use all the meekness he had, and all little enough to bear their manners in the wilderness. When they murmured against him, quarrelled with him, arraigned his authority, and were sometimes ready to stone him; he resented these provocations with very little of personal application or concern, but instead of using his interest in Heaven, to summon plagues upon them, he made it his business to stand in the gap, and by his intercession for them, to turn away the wrath of God from them; and this not once nor twice, but many times.

And yet we must observe, that, though, Moses was the meekest man in the world, yet when God's honour and glory were concerned, no one was more warm and zealous; witness his resentment of the golden calf, when in a holy indignation at that abominable iniquity, he deliberately broke the tables. And when Korah and his crew invaded the Priests Office, Moses, in a pious wrath, said unto the Lord, *Respect not thou their offering,* (Num. 16. 15.) He that was a lamb in his own cause, was a lion in the cause of God; Anger at sin, as sin, is very well consistent with reigning meekness. Nor can it be forgotten, that though Moses was eminent for meekness, yet, he once transgressed the laws of it; when he was old, and his Spirit was provoked, he *spake unadvisedly with his lips, and it went ill with him for it,* (Ps. 106. 32, 33.) which is written, not for imitation, but, for admonition; not to justify our rash anger, but, to engage us to stand upon our guard at all times against it, that he who *thinks he stands, may take heed lest he fall,* and that he who has thus fallen, may not wonder if he come under the rebukes of divine providence for it in this world, as Moses did, and yet may not despair of being pardoned upon repentance.

(3.) David was a pattern of meekness, and it is promised, (Zech. 12. 8.) *That the Feeble shall be as* David. In this, as in other instances, he was a man after God's own heart. When his own brother was so rough upon him without reason, 1 Sam. 17. 28. *Why camest thou down hither,* &c.? how mild was his answer? *What have I now done? Is there not a cause?* v. 29. When his enemies reproached him, he was not at all disturbed at it, (Ps. 38. 13.) *I, as a deaf man, heard not.* When Saul persecuted him with such an unwearied malice, he did not take the advantage which providence seemed to offer him, more than once, to revenge and right himself, but left it to God to do it for him. David's

* *Josephus,* Antiq. *l.* 4. *c.* 8. gives this character of *Moses; Affectus ita semper in potestate habuit, ut omnino illis carere videretur, & nomina tantum eorum ex his quæ in aliis hominibus conspiceret, cognita haberet.—He was so complete a master of himself, that he seemed altogether destitute of passions, and to be acquainted with them only from the manner in which he saw them agitate others.*

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vid's meek spirit concurred with the Proverb of the antients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, but my hand shall not be upon him,* 1 Sam. 24. 13. When Nabal's churlishness provoked him, yet Abigail's prudence soon pacified him, and it pleased him to be pacified. When Shimei cursed him with a bitter curse,* in the day of his calamity, he resented not the offence, nor would hear any talk of punishing the offender: *So let him curse; let him alone, for the Lord hath bidden him*: (2 Sam. 16. 10, 12.) quietly committing his cause to God, who judges righteously, v. 12. And other instances there are in his story, which evidence the truth of what he said, (Ps. 131. 2.) *My soul is even like a weaned child.* And yet David was † a great soldier, a man of celebrated courage, that slew a lion, and a bear, and a Philistine, (as much a ravenous beast as either of them) which shews, that it was his wisdom and grace, and not his cowardice, that at other times made him so quiet. David was a man that met with very many disquieting and disturbing events in the several scenes of his life, through which (though sometimes they ruffled him a little, yet) for the main he preserved an admirable temper, and an evenness and composedness of mind, which was very exemplary. When upon the surprise of a fright, *he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, and counterfeited that madness* which angry people realize, yet his mind was so very quiet and undisturbed, that at that time he penned the 34th Psalm, in which not only the excellency of the matter, and the calmness of the expression, but the composing of it Alphabetically (in the Hebrew) speaks him to be even then in a sedate frame, and to have very much the command of his own thoughts. As, at another time, when his own followers spake of stoning him, though he could not still the tumult of his troops, he could those of his spirits, for then he *encouraged himself in the Lord his God,* 1 Sam. 30. 6. As to those prayers against his enemies, which we find in some of his Psalms, and which, sometimes, sound a little harsh, surely they did not proceed from any such irregular passion, as did in the least clash even with the evangelical laws of meekness: we cannot imagine, that one who was so piously calm in his common conversation, should be sinfully hot in his devotion; nor are they to be looked upon as the private expressions of his own angry resentments, but as inspired predictions of God's judgments upon the public and obstinate enemies of Christ and his kingdom, as appears by comparing Ps. 69. 22, 23. with Rom 11. 9, 10. and Ps. 109. 8. with Acts 1. 20. Nor are they any more opposite to the spirit of the Gospel, than the cries of the souls under the altar, (Rev. 6. 10.) or the triumphs of heaven and earth in the destruction of Babylon, Rev. 19. 1, 2.

(4.) St. Paul was a pattern of meekness. Though his natural temper seems to have been warm and eager, which made him eminently active and zealous, yet that temper was so rectified and sanctified, that he was no less eminently meek: *He became all things to all men.* He studied to please all with whom he had to do, and to render himself engaging to them, *for their good to edification.* How patiently did he bear the greatest injuries and indignities, not only from Jews and Heathens, but from false brethren, that were so very industrious to abuse and undermine him? How glad was he that Christ was preached, though out of envy and ill-will by those that studied to *add affliction to his bonds!* In governing the Church, he was not led by the sudden resolves of passion, but always deliberated calmly concerning the use of the rod of discipline, when there was occasion for it; (1 Cor. 4. 21.) *Shall I come to you with a rod, or in the spirit of meekness?* that is, Shall I proceed immediately to censures, or shall I not rather continue the same gentle usage I have hitherto treated you with, waiting still for your reformation? Herein the spirit of meekness appears more open and legible, than in the use of the rod, though that also is very well consistent with it.

Many other patterns of meekness might be adduced, but the time would fail me to tell of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Joshua; of Samuel also, and Job, and Jeremiah, and all the Prophets and Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors, and eminent Saints, who by meekness subdued (not kingdoms, but) their own spirits; stopt the mouths (not of lions, but) of more fierce and formidable enemies; quenched the violence (not of fire, but) of intemperate and more ungovernable passions; and so wrought righteousness, obtained promises, escaped the edge of the sword, and out of weakness were made strong; and by all this *obtained a good report:* Heb. 11. 32, 33, 34.———But, after all,

(5.) Our Lord Jesus was the great pattern of meekness and quietness of Spirit: all the rest had their spots, the fairest marbles had their flaws, but here is a copy without a blot. We must follow the rest no further than they were conformable to this great original: *Be ye Followers of me,* (says Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 1.) *as I am of Christ.* He fulfilled all righteousness, and was a compleat exemplar of all that is holy, just, and good; but I think, in most, if not all, those places of Scripture where he is particularly and expressly propounded to us for an example, it is to recommend to us some or other of the duties of Christianity; those I mean which tend to the sweetening of our converse one with another: and therefore the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, that he might teach us how to dwell together in unity. We must *walk in love, as Christ loved us;* (Eph. 5. 2.) *Forgive, as Christ forgave us;* (Col. 3. 13.) *Please one another, for Christ pleased not himself,* (Rom. 15. 2, 3.) *Be charitable to the poor, for we know the Grace of our Lord Jesus,* (2 Cor. 8. 9.) *Wash one another's feet,* that is, stoop to the meanest offices of love, for Christ did so, (John 13. 14. Mat. 20.

* *Non ergo movebatur convitiis* David, *cui abundabat bonorum operum conscientia; itaq; is qui cito injuria movetur, facit se dignum contumeliæ videri.*—David, *having the abundant consciousness of good works, heard himself reproached without agitation; he who, when reproached, shews that he is greatly disturbed, induces a suspicion that he is not reproached without cause.* Ambr. de Offic. lib. 1. cap. 6.

† David *fuit fortis in prælio, mansuetus in imperio, patiens in convitio, ferre magis promptus quam referre injurias.*—*David was valiant in the field, clement on the throne, patient under reproach, and more willing to bear an injury than to resent it.* Ambr. l. 2. c. 17.

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20. 27, 28.) *Doing all with lowliness of mind, for it is the same mind that was in Christ Jesus;* (Phil. 2. 3, 5.) and many other the like: but above all, our Lord Jesus was an example of meekness. Moses had this grace as a servant, but Christ as a son; he was anointed with it above measure. He is therefore called *The Lamb of God,* for his meekness and patience, and inoffensiveness, and even in his exaltation he retains the same character. One of the elders told John, (Rev. 5. 5.) *That the lion of the tribe of Judah would open the sealed book: and I beheld,* (says John, v. 6.) *and lo! a Lamb.* He that was a lion for strength and courage, was a lamb for mildness and gentleness: and, if, a lion, yet, the lion of the tribe of Judah, which the dying Patriarch describes to be a lion *gone up from the prey,* and that is *stooped down and couched, and not to be roused up;* (Gen. 49. 9.) which speaks the quietness and repose even of this lion. If Christ be a lion, he is a lion resting, the devil is a lion *roaring,* 1 Pet. 5. 8. But the adorations given to Christ by the heavenly hosts speak of him as *the Lamb,* Rev. 5. 8, 12, 13. *Blessing and Glory—to him that sits upon the Throne*; they do not say, and to the lion of the tribe of Judah, but *to the Lamb;* though he has a name given him above every name, yet he will be known by that name, which denotes his meekness, as if this were to be his name for ever, and this his memorial to all generations: as *he that rides upon the heavens,* by his name *Jah,* is the *Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widows,* Ps. 68. 4, 5. Some make his* name χρηστὸς, to have an allusion to χρηστὸς, which signifies *kind,* and *gentle,* and *gracious.* Christ rides prosperously, *because of meekness,* Ps. 45. 4.

Now it is the character of all the saints, that they follow the Lamb, (Rev. 14. 4.) as a Lamb they follow him in his meekness, and are therefore so often called *the Sheep of Christ.* This is that part of his copy which he expressly calls us to write after, (Mat. 11. 29.) *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* If the master be mild, it ill becomes the servant to be froward. The Apostle is speaking of Christ's meekness under his sufferings, when he says, that *he left us an example, that we should follow his steps,* 1 Pet. 2. 21.

Let us observe particularly the meekness of our Lord Jesus, both towards his Father, and towards his friends, and towards his foes; in each of which he is an example to us.

[1.] He was very meek toward God his Father, cheerfully submitting to his whole will, and standing compleat in it. In his commanding will, *Lo I come,* (says he) *I delight to do thy Will;* though it enjoined him a very hard piece of service, yet, it was his *meat and drink,* (John 4. 34.) and *he always did those things that pleased his Father,* John 8. 29. So likewise in his disposing will, he acquiesced from first to last. When he was entering on that sharp encounter, though sense startled at it, and said, *Father, if it be possible, let the cup pass from me;* yet he soon submitted with a great deal of meekness, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt;* Mat. 26. 39. 42. Though it was a very bitter cup, yet his Father put it into his hand, and therefore he drank it without any struggle or reluctance, when it came to the point, reasoning himself from that topic into this compliance, (John 18. 11.) *The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* And it comes in there as a reason why he would not have a sword drawn in his defence.

[2.] He was very meek towards his friends that loved and followed him. With what remarkable instances of mildness, and gentleness, and tenderness, did he train up his disciples; though from first to last he was *a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;* and where the nature is corrupt, such are apt to be peevish and froward with those about them: yet how meek and calm his carriage was towards them all along, we may see,

First. In his bearing with their weaknesses and infirmities. After they had been long under the inspection and influence of such a teacher, and had all the advantages that men could have for getting acquaintance with the things of God; yet how weak and defective were they in knowledge, and gifts, and graces? How ignorant and forgetful were they? How slow of heart to understand and believe? And what blunders did they make? Dull scholars it should seem they were, and very bad proficients. But their hearts being upright with him, he did not cast them off, nor turn them out of his school; but made the best of them, rectified their mistakes, instructed them in their duty, and the doctrine they were to preach, by *precept upon precept;* and *line upon line;* and taught them as they were able to bear it, as one that considered their frame, and could have compassion on the *ignorant,* and on them that are *out of the way,* Heb. 5. 2. As long as he was with them, so long he suffered them, Mark 9. 19. This, as it is a great encouragement to christian learners, so it is a great example to christian teachers.

Secondly. In his forgiving and passing by their unkindnesses and disrespects to himself. He was not extreme to mark, no, not what they did amiss of this kind. When they murmured at the cost that was bestowed upon him, and called it waste, and had indignation at it, he did not resent it as he might have done, nor seem to observe how much what they said reflected upon him; nor did he condemn them any other way, than by commending the woman, Mat. 26. 8, 11. When Peter, and James, and John, the first three of his disciples, were with him in the garden, and very unseasonably slept, while he was in his agony praying, so little concerned did they seem to be for him, and such a grievous slight did they put upon him; yet, observe, how meekly he spoke to them, did not give them any hard language, but, *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* And when they had not a word to say for themselves, so inexcusable was their fault, he had something to say for them, and instead of accusing them, he apologises for them,

The

* The Heathens, by mistake, called Christ *Chrestus—Gracious*; and the Christians, *Chrestiani:* So *Sueton. Vit. Claud.* c. 25. *Impulsore Chresto.* *Lactantius* takes notice of this, *Instit.* l. 4. c. 7. So doth *Tertullian, Apol.* c. 3. and thence calls the Christian Name, *Nomen Innocuum—An innocent name.*

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The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak, Mat. 26. 40, 41. When Peter had denied him, and had cursed and sworn he did not know him, than which (besides the falsehood and perfidiousness of it) nothing could be more unkind; with what meekness did he bear it? It is not said, the Lord turned and frowned upon Peter, though he deserved to be frowned into Hell, but *the Lord turned and looked upon Peter,* (Luke 22. 61.) and that look recovered him into the way to Heaven; it was a kind look, and not an angry one. Some days after, when Christ and Peter met in Galilee, and had dined together as a token of reconciliation, and some discourse past between them, not a word was said of this matter: Christ did not upbraid him with his fault, nor chide him for it, nor did there appear any other fruit of the falling out of these lovers, but only the renewing of their love with greater endearments, (John 21. 15, 16, 17.) which teaches us to forgive and forget the unkindnesses of those that (we are satisfied) are for the main our true friends, and if any occasion of difference happen, to turn it into an occasion of confirming our love to them, as the Apostle expresses it, 2 Cor. 2. 8.

[3.] He was very meek toward his enemies, that hated and persecuted him. The whole story of his life is filled with instances of invincible meekness; while he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself,* which was a constant jar, he had a perpetual serenity and harmony within himself, and was never in the least discomposed by it. When his preaching and miracles were cavilled at and reproached, and he himself represented under the blackest characters, not only as the drunkard's companion, but as the Devil's confederate, with what a wonderful calmness did he bear it! How mildly did he answer, with reason and tenderness, when he could have replied in thunder and lightning! How well satisfied, under all such invidious reflections, with this, that *Wisdom is however justified of all her children!* Mat. 11. 19. When some of his disciples would have had fire from Heaven upon those rude people that refused him entertainment in their town, he was so far from complying with the motion, that he rebuked it, (Luke 9. 55.) *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you,* Gal. 5. 8. The design of Christ and of his holy religion is to shape men into a mild and merciful temper, and to make them sensibly tender of the lives and comforts even of their worst enemies. Christianity was intended to revive humanity, and to make those men, who had made themselves beasts. But our Lord Jesus did in a more especial manner evidence his meekness when he was in his last sufferings, that awful scene. Though he was the most innocent and the most excellent person that ever was, who by the doctrine he had preached, and the miracles he had wrought, had richly deserved all the honours and respects that the world could pay him, and infinitely more, and though the injuries he received were ingeniously and industriously contrived to the highest degree of affront and provocation, yet he bore all with an undisturbed meekness, and with that shield quenched all the fiery darts which his malicious enemies shot at him.

His meekness toward his enemies appeared,

First. In what he said to them, not one angry word, in the midst of all the indignities they offered him? *When he was reviled, he reviled not again,* (1 Pet. 2. 23.) When he was buffeted and spit upon, and abused, he took it all patiently; one would wonder at the gracious words which even then proceeded out of his mouth, witness that mild reply to him that smote him, (John 18. 23.) *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?*

Secondly. In what he said to God for them; *Father forgive them,*——so giving an example to his own rule, (Mat. 5. 44.) *Pray for them which despitefully use you.* Though he was then deeply engaged in the most solemn transaction that ever passed between heaven and earth; though he had so much to do with God for himself and his friends, yet he did not forget to put up this prayer for his enemies. The mercy he begged of God for them, was the greatest mercy, (that which he was then dying to purchase and procure,) the pardon of their sins: not only, Father spare them, or reprieve them, but, *Father, forgive them;* the excuse he pleaded for them, was the best their crime was capable of; *They know not what they do.* They did it ignorantly, 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 13.

Now in all these things our Master has left us an example. What is the practice of religion but the imitation of God endeavoured by us? And what the principle of it, but the image of God renewed in us? We are bid to be followers of God, as dear children. But this sets the copy we are to write after at a mighty distance, for God is in heaven, and we are upon earth; and therefore in the Lord Jesus Christ, God incarnate, God in our nature, the copy is brought among us, and the transcribing of it, in some measure, appears more practicable: *He that hath seen me,* (says Christ) *hath seen the Father,* (Joh. 14. 9.) and so he that imitates Christ, imitates the Father. The religion which our Lord Jesus came into the world to establish, being every way so well calculated for the peace and order of the world, and being designed to recover the lapsed souls of men from their degenerate state, and to sweeten their spirits and temper, and so to befriend human society, and to make it some way conformable to the blessed society above; he not only gave such precepts as were wonderfully fitted to this great end, but recommended them to the world by the loveliness and amiableness of his own example. Are we not called Christians from Christ, whom we call Master and Lord, and shall we not endeavour to accommodate ourselves to him? We profess to rejoice in him, as our fore-runner, and shall we not run after him? To what purpose were we listed under his banner, but that we might follow him as our leader? We have all of us reason to say, that Jesus Christ is very meek, or else, we that have provoked him so much and so often,

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often, had been in Hell long ago: we owe it to his meekness, to whom all judgment is committed, that we have not ere this been carried away with a swift destruction, and dealt with according to the desert of our sins, which, if duly considered, one would think should tend greatly to the softening of us. The Apostle fetches an argument from that kindness and love to us, which we ourselves have experienced, who were foolish and disobedient, to persuade us to *be gentle, and to shew all meekness*, (Tit. 3. 2, 3, 4.) and he beseeches the Corinthians, by *the meekness and gentleness of Christ*, as a thing very winning, and of dear and precious account, (2 Cor. 10. 1.) *Let the same mind therefore be in us*, not only which was, but which, as we find to our comfort, *still is in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 2. 5. That we may not forfeit our interest in his meekness, let us tread in the steps of it; and as ever we hope to be like him in glory hereafter, let us study to be like him in grace, in this grace now. It is a certain rule, by which we must all be tried shortly, *That if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ*, (that is, if he be not spirited, in some measure, as Christ was spirited) *he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. And if we be not owned as his, we are undone for ever.

SECT. III.

3. *Some particular Instances wherein the Exercise of Meekness is in a special Manner required.*

The rule is general; we must *shew all Meekness:* it will be of use to observe some special cases to which the Scripture applies this general rule.

(1.) We must give reproofs with meekness. It is the Apostle's direction, (Gal. 6. 1.) *If a Man be overtaken in a Fault*, (that is, if he be surprised by a temptation and overcome, as the best may be, if God leave them to themselves) *ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.* By the spiritual man, to whom he gives this rule, he means not ministers only, as if none were spiritual but they, though they perhaps are chiefly intended, because they are, as the Prophet speaks, (Isa. 29. 21.) *Reprovers in the gate*, that is, reprovers by office: yet doubtless it is a rule to private christians; all that have opportunity must reprove, and all that reprove, must do it with meekness. Ye that are spiritual, if you would approve yourselves so indeed, actuated by the Holy Spirit, and minding the things of the Spirit, be careful in this matter. Especially, let those that are christians of the highest form, that excel in grace and holiness, and the best gifts, (such are called spiritual in distinction from the babes in Christ, 1 Cor. 3. 1.) let them look upon themselves as obliged, in a more peculiar manner, to help others; for where God gives five talents, he expects the improvement of five; the strong must *bear the infirmities of the weak*, (Rom. 15. 1.) Do you therefore *restore such a one*, καταρτίζετε—*set him in joint again.* The setting of a dislocated joint, or a broken bone, is, for the present, painful to the patient, but it must be done, and it is in order to the making of *broken bones to rejoice.* Now this you must do with the spirit of meekness, with all the candour and gentleness, and convincing evidences of love and kindness that can be. The three qualifications of a good surgeon are very requisite in a reprover, viz. to have an Eagle's Eye, a Lion's Heart, and a Lady's Hand; that is, that he be endued with a great deal of wisdom, and courage, and meekness. Though sometimes it is needful to reprove with warmth, yet we must never reprove with wrath, *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, Jam. 1. 20. There is an observable difference, but no contradiction betwixt the directions Paul gives to Timothy, and those he gives to Titus in this matter. To Titus he writes to *reprove sharply*, (Tit. 1. 13.) and to rebuke *with all authority*, ch. 2. v. 15. To Timothy he writes *not to strive*, but *to be gentle*, (2 Tim. 2. 24.) to reprove *with all long-suffering*, ch. 4. 2. The reason of which may be taken either, [1.] From the different temper of those they had to deal with. Timothy was among the Ephesians, a tractable complaisant people, that would be easily managed, and with them he must always deal gently. Titus was among the Cretians, that were head-strong and rough-hewn, and not to be wrought upon, but by sharper methods. Thus in reproving, a difference must be made: of some we must have compassion, and others save with fear, but never with anger, plucking them out of the fire, Jud. *v.* 23. Or, [2.] The reason may be taken (as Gregory, one of the antients, assigns it) from the different temper of Timothy and Titus. "Titus was a man of a very soft and mild temper, and he had need of a spur to quicken him to a needful acrimony in his reproofs; but Timothy was a man of a more warm and sanguine temper, and he had need of a bridle to keep him from an intemperate heat in his reproofs;" and then it teaches us, that those who are naturally keen and fervent, should double their guard upon their own spirits, when they are reproving, that they may do it with all meekness. Christ's ministers must be careful while they display God's wrath, to conceal their own; and be very jealous over themselves, lest sinful anger shelter itself under the cloke of zeal against sin. When reproving (whoever be the reprover) degenerates into railing and reviling, and opprobrious language, how can we expect the desired success? It may provoke to contention and every evil work, but it will never provoke to love, and to good works. The work of heaven is not likely to be done by a tongue set on fire of Hell. Has Christ need of mad men? or will you talk deceitfully and passionately for him? A potion given too hot, scalds the patient, and does more hurt than good; and so many a reproof, good for the matter of it, hath been spoiled by an irregular management. Meekness hides the lancet, gilds the pill, and makes it passable; dips the nail in oil, and then it drives the better. Twice we find Jonathan reproving his father for his rage against David; once he did it with meekness, and it succeeded well, (1 Sam. 19. 4, 5.) *Let not the King sin against his servant*, [*against David,*] and it is said, v. 6. *Saul hearkened to him.*

But

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But another time his spirit was provoked, and he did it in a heat. ch. 20. 32. *Wherefore shall he be slain?* and the issue of it was ill. Saul was not only impatient of the reproof, but enraged at the reprover, and cast a javelin at him, v. 33. Reproofs are then likely to answer the intention, when they manifestly evidence the good will of the reprover, and are made up of soft words and hard arguments. This is to restore with the spirit of meekness, and there is a good reason added, considering thyself: *ille hodie, ego cras —he may fall to-day, I may to-morrow*; those who think they stand fast, know not how soon they may be shaken and overthrown, and therefore, we must treat those that are overtaken in a fault, with the same tenderness and compassion that we would wish to find, if it were our own case.

(2.) We must receive reproofs with meekness. If we do that which deserves rebuke, and we meet with those that are so just and kind to give it us, we must be quiet under it, not quarrelling with the reprover, nor objecting against the reproof, nor fretting that we are touched in a sore place; but submit to it, and lay our souls under the conviction of it. If reproofs be physic, it becomes us to be patient.* *Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness and an excellent oil,* healing to the wounds of sin, and making the face to shine; and let us never reckon that it *breaks the head,* if it do but help to *break the heart.* Meekness suffers the word of admonition, and takes it patiently and thankfully, not only from the hand of God that sends it, but from the hand of our friend that brings it. We must not be like the reprobate Sodomites, (Gen. 19. 9.) or that pert Hebrew, (Exod. 2. 14.) that flew in the face of their reprovers, (though really they were the best friends they had) with, *Who made thee a Judge?* but like David, who, when Abigail so prudently scotched the wheels of his passion, not only blest God that sent her, and blest her advice, but blest her, (1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. and v. 35.) not only *hearkened to her voice, but accepted her person.* Though perhaps the reprover supposes the fault greater than really it was, and though the reproof be not given with all the prudence in the world; yet meekness will teach us to accept it quietly, and to make the best use we can of it. Nay, if indeed we be altogether innocent of that which we are reproved for, yet, the meekness of wisdom would teach us to apply the reproof to some other fault which our own consciences convict us of; we would not quarrel with a real intended kindness, though not done with ceremony, and though in some circumstances mistaken or misplaced.

You that are in inferior relations, children, servants, scholars, must with all meekness and submission receive the reproofs of your parents, masters, and teachers; their age supposes them to have more understanding than you, however their place gives them an authority over you, to which you are to pay a deference, and in which you are to acquiesce, else farewel all order and peace in societies. The angel rebuked Hagar for flying from her mistress, though she dealt hardly with her, and obliged her to return and submit herself *under her hands,* Gen. 16. 6, 9. *If the spirit of any ruler rise up against thee,* and thou be chidden for a fault, *leave not thy place,* as an inferior, *for yielding pacifies great offences done,* and prevents the like, Ecc. 10. 4. *If thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth,* to keep that evil thought from breaking out in any undue and unbecoming language, Pro. 30. 32. Reproofs are then likely to do us good, when we meekly submit to them: then are they as an *Ear-ring* of *Gold,* and an *Ornament of fine Gold,* when an obedient ear is given to *a wise reprover,* Pro. 25. 12. Nay, even superiors are to receive reproofs from their inferiors with meekness, as they would any other token of kindness and good-will. Naaman, when he turned away from the prophet in a rage, yet hearkened to the reproof his own servants gave him, and was over-ruled by the reason of it, (2 King. 5. 11, 13, 14.) which was no more a disparagement to him, than it was to receive instruction from his wife's maid, to *whom to go for a cure of his leprosy,* v. 2, 3. Meekness teaches us, when a just reproof is given, to regard not so much who speaks, as what is spoken.

(3.) We must instruct gainsayers with meekness, 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. It is prescribed to Ministers, that they must not strive, but be *gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* They serve the Prince of peace, they preach the Gospel of peace, they are the Ambassadors of peace, and therefore must be sure to keep the peace. The Apostles, those prime ministers of state in Christ's Kingdom, were not military men, or men of strife and noise, but fishermen, that follow their employment with quietness and silence. It is highly necessary that the guides of the church be strict governors of their own passions: *Learn of me* (says Christ) *for I am meek and lowly,* and therefore fit to teach you, Mat. 11. 29. We must contend earnestly, but not angrily and passionately, no not *for the faith once delivered to the saints,* Jude v. 3. When we have ever so great an assurance that it is the cause of truth we are pleading, yet, we must so manage our defence of it against those who gainsay, as to make it appear, that it is not the confusion of the erroneous, but the confutation of the error that we intend. This meekness would teach us not to pre-judge a cause, nor to condemn an adversary unheard, but calmly to state matters in difference, as knowing that a truth well opened is half confirmed. It would teach us not to aggravate matters in dispute, nor to father upon an adversary all the absurd consequences which we think may be inferred from his opinion: it would teach us to judge charitably of those that differ from us, and to forbear all personal reflections in arguing with them. God's cause needs not the patronage of our sinful heats and passions, which not only shatter the peace, but often give a mighty shock even to the truth itself we plead for. Meekness would prevent and cure that bigotry which has been so long the bane of the Church, and

* *Neq; ulli patientius reprehenduntur, quàm qui maximè laudari merentur—Those who deserve the loudest applause, receive reproof with the best temper.* Plin.

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and contribute a great deal towards the advancement of that happy state, in which, notwithstanding little differences of apprehension and opinion, *the Lord shall be one, and his name one.* Public reformations are carried on with most credit and comfort, and are most likely to settle on lasting foundations, when meekness sits at the stern, and guides the motions of them. When Christ was purging the temple, though he was therein actuated by a zeal for God's house that even eat him up, yet he did it with meekness and prudence, which appeared in this instance, that when he drove out the sheep and oxen, which would easily be caught again, he said to them that sold doves, *Take these things hence,* Joh. 2. 16. He did not let loose the doves, and send them flying, for, that would have been to the loss and prejudice of the owners. Angry, noisy, bitter arguings ill become the asserters of that truth which is great and will prevail without all that ado. It was a very froward and perverse generation our Lord Jesus lived in, and yet it is said, (Mat. 12. 19.) *He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the street,* though he could have broken them as easily as a bruised reed, and extinguish them as soon as one could quench the wick of a candle newly lighted, yet he will not do it till the day comes when he shall *bring forth judgment unto victory.* Moses dealt with a very obstinate and stiff-necked people, and yet *my doctrine* (says he) *shall drop as the dew, and distil as the small rain,* Deut. 32, 2. It was not the wind, nor the earthquake, nor the fire that brought Elijah into temper, (for the Lord was not in them) but the still small voice did it; when he heard that, he *wrapt his face in his mantle,* 1 King 19. 11, 12, 13. In dealing with gainsayers, a spirit of meekness will teach us to consider their temper, education, custom, the power of prejudice they labour under, the influence of others upon them, and to make allowances accordingly, and not to call (as passionate contenders are apt to do) every false step an Apostacy; every error and mistake, nay, every misconstrued misplaced word, a Heresy; and every misdemeanour, no less than treason and rebellion; methods of proceeding more likely to irritate and harden, than to convince and reduce gainsayers. I have heard it observed long since, "That the scourge of the tongue has driven many out of the Temple, but never drove any into it."

(4.) We must make profession of the hope that is in us with meekness. 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Be ready always to give answer,* (to make your defence or apology, so the word is, ἕτοιμοι πρὸς ἀπολογίαν) whether judicially or extrajudicially, as there is occasion, *to every man that* (soberly, not scoffingly and in derision) *asks you a reason,* or an account, *of the hope that is in you,* that is, of the hope you profess, which you hope to be saved by, with meekness and fear. Observe, it is very well consistent with christian quietness, to appear in the defence of truth, and to avow our christian profession, when at any time we are duly called to it. That is not meekness, but base cowardice, that tamely betrays and delivers up any of Christ's truths or institutions, by silence, as if we were ashamed or afraid to confess our master. But the office of meekness at such a time is to direct us how and in what manner to bear our testimony, not with pride and passion, but with humility and mildness. Those that would successfully confess the truth, must first learn to deny themselves: and we must give an account of our hope, with a holy fear of missing it in such a critical juncture. When we give a reason for our religion, we must not boast of ourselves or of our own attainments, nor reflect contempt and wrath upon our persecutors, but remember that the *present truth,* (so it is called, 2 Pet. 1. 12.) the truth which is now to be asserted, is the same with *the word of Christ's patience,* (Rev. 3. 10.) that is the word which must be patiently suffered for, according to the example of him, who with invincible meekness, (before Pontius Pilate) *witnessed a good confession,* 1 Tim. 6. 13. A great abasement and diffidence of ourselves, may very well consist with a firm assurance of the truth, and a profound veneration for it.

In lesser things, wherein wise and good men are not all of a mind, meekness teaches us not to be too confident that we are in the right, nor to censure and condemn those that differ from us, as if we were the people, and wisdom should die with us; but quietly to walk accordingly to the light that God has given us, and charitably to believe that others do so too, waiting till God shall reveal either this to them, (Phil. 3. 15.) or that to us. Let it in such cases suffice to vindicate ourselves, which every man has a right to do, without a magisterial sentencing of others; why should we be many masters, when we are all offenders, (Jam. 3. 1, 2.) and the bar is our place, not the bench? Meekness will likewise teach us to manage a singular opinion, wherein we differ from others, with all possible deference to them, and suspicion of ourselves, not resenting it as an affront to be contradicted, but taking it as a kindness to be better informed. Nor must we be angry that our hope is enquired into, even such a trial of it, if we approve ourselves well in it, may be *found to praise, and honour, and glory;* to which our meekness will very much contribute, as it puts a lustre upon, and a convincing power into the testimony we bear: we then walk worthy of the *vocation wherewith we are called, when we walk in all lowliness and meekness,* Eph. 4. 1, 2.

(5.) We must bear reproaches with meekness. Reproach is a branch of that persecution which all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must count upon; and we must submit to it, behaving ourselves quietly, and with a due decorum, not only when Princes sit and speak against us, but even when the Abjects gather themselves together against us, and we become the song of the drunkards. Sometimes we find it easier to keep calm in a solemn and expected engagement, than in a sudden skirmish, or a hasty rencounter; and therefore, even against those slight attacks, it is requisite that meekness be set upon the guard. If we be nicknamed, and slandered, and have all manner of evil said against us falsely, our rule is, not to be disturbed at it, nor *to render railing for railing,* (1Pet. 3. 9.) but though we may, as we have opportunity, with meekness,

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ness, deny the charge, as Hannah did, when Eli overhastily censured her for a drunkard; *No, my Lord, I have drank neither wine nor strong drink,* 1 Sam. 1. 15. Yet, when that is done, we must, without meditating any revenge, quietly commit our cause to God, who will, sooner or later, clear up our *Innocency as the light,* which is promised, (Ps. 37. 5, 6.) and therefore *fret not thyself, but wait patiently,* v. 7. *cease from anger, and forsake wrath,* v. 8. Mr. Dod was wont to charm his friends into silence under reproaches, with this, "That if a dog bark at a sheep, the sheep will not bark at the dog again." We do but gratify our great adversary, and do his work for him, when we suffer the peace and serenity of our minds to be broken in upon by the reproaches of the world: for me to disquiet myself, and put myself into a passion, because another abuses me, is as if I should scratch up the skin of my face, to fetch off the dirt which my adversary throws in it. When reproaches provoke our passions, which put us upon rendering bitterness for bitterness, we thereby lose the comfort, and forfeit the honour and reward, which the divine promise has annexed to the reproach of Christ; and shall we suffer so many things in vain? We likewise thereby give occasion to those who had spoken evil of us falsely, to speak evil of us truly; and perhaps our religion suffers more by our impatience under the reproach, than by the reproach itself. What have we the law, and pattern, and promise of Christ for, but to calm our spirits under reproaches for well-doing? Truly those can bear but a little for Christ, who cannot bear a hard or an unkind word for him. If we either faint or fret in such a day of adversity, it is a sign our strength is small indeed. May it not satisfy us, that by our meekness and quietness under reproaches, we engage God for us, who has promised that he will *with righteousness judge the poor,* the poor in spirit, *and will reprove with equity for the meek of the earth,* Isa. 11. 4. —He that has bid us *to open our mouths for the dumb,* (Pro. 31. 8.) will not himself be silent. And shall we not learn at last, instead of fretting and being exceeding angry, to *rejoice and to be exceeding glad,* (Mat. 5. 11, 12.) when we suffer thus for righteousness sake? May we not put such reproaches as pearls in our crown, and be assured that they will pass well in the account another day, when there will be an advantageous resurrection of names as well as bodies, in the prospect of which we have reason to rejoice,* *That we are counted worthy to suffer shame for his name,* Acts 5. 41. That we are honoured to be dishonoured for him, who for our sakes endured the cross, and despised the shame. It is one of the laws of meekness, *Spernere se sperni—to despise being despised.*

SECT. IV.

4. *Some good Principles or Considerations which tend to make us meek and quiet.*

In order to the well-governing of the soul, the judgment must be furnished with proper dictates, else it will never be able to keep the peace in the affections: the motions of the soul are then likely to be even, and regular, and constant, when we have fixed to ourselves good principles which we are governed by, and act under the influence of. There are some carnal corrupt principles, which angry froward people are guided by; such as these, "That the forgiving one injury invites another,"* whereas it often qualifies an adversary; or if otherwise, the forgiving of one offence will enable us to bear the next the more easily. And that "we must have satisfaction given us for every wrong done us," whereas if we have not satisfaction for it, yet if it be not our own fault, we may have satisfaction under it, and that is as good. And, "That there is no living in the world without huffing and hectoring, and frightening people;" *Oderint dum metuant.—Let them hate, provided they fear*: whereas to live continually in that element, is to live in a hell upon earth; mutual indignation and mutual fear perhaps contributing to the torment of Devils and damned spirits: but, in opposition to these and the like ill principles, shall we treasure up these few good truths, chosen out of many which might be mentioned, proper for this purpose, and make use of them as there is occasion?

(1.) That he has the sweetest and surest peace, who is the most master of his own passions. The comfort that a man has in governing himself, is much greater than he could have in having people to serve him, and nations to bow down to him. It is certain, the worst enemies we have, if ever they break loose and get head, are in our own bosoms. Enemies without threaten only the evil of pain; they can but kill the body, and no great hurt in that to a child of God, if they do not provoke the enemies within, our own irregular passions, which, if they be not kept under, plunge us in the evil of sin, and that is a much greater evil. An invasion from abroad does not so much disturb the peace of a kingdom as an insurrection at home; and therefore it concerns us to double our guard, where our danger is greatest, and above all keepings, to keep our hearts, that no passion be allowed to stir, without a good reason to be given for it, and a good use to be made of it; and then if we be *troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, yet not in despair,* (2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.) offended by our fellow-servants, but not offending our master; reproached by our neighbours, but not by our own consciences; this is like Zion's peace, *Peace within the Walls,* Ps. 122. 7. We have need to pray as one did, *Libera me a malo isto homine, meipso;—Lord deliver me from that ill man, mine own self,* and then I am safe enough. The *lusts that war in our members,* (Jam. 4. 1.) are the *enemies that war against our souls,* 1 Pet. 2. 11. If this war be brought to a good issue, and those enemies suppressed, whatever other disturbances are given, peace is in the soul, *with grace and mercy from God, and from the Lord Jesus.* Nehemiah was aware of this, as the design of his enemies, when they hired a pretended

* *Dominus ipse maledictus est, & tamen solus est benedictus—The Lord himself, the only blessed, is pronounced accursed.* Tertul. de Patient. *cap.* 8.

* *Veterem ferendo injuriam invitas novam.*—Dict. Pub. Min.

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prophet to give an alarm, and to advise him meanly to shift for himself; it was (says he, Neh. 6. 13.) *That I should be afraid and do so, and sin.* Whatever we lose, we should not lose our peace, if we do but keep our integrity; therefore, instead of being solicitous to subdue our enemies that lay siege to us, let us double our watch against the traitors within the garrison, from whom, especially, our danger is; since we cannot prevent the shooting of the fiery darts, let us have our shield ready, wherewith to quench them. If we would not hurt ourselves, blessed be God no enemy in the world can hurt us. Let us but keep the peace within, by the governing of our own passions, and then, whatever assaults may be made upon us, we may therein, with the daughter of Zion, despise them, and laugh them to scorn, and shake our head at them, Isa. 37. 22. Let us believe, that in hurrying and disquieting times, our strength is to sit still, in a holy quietness and composure of mind: *This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing,* and it is enough, Isa. 28. 12.

(2.) That in many things we all offend. This truth we have, Jam. 3. 2. and it comes in as a reason why we must not be many masters, v. 1. It would help to subdue and moderate our anger at the offences of others, if we would but consider,

[1.] That it is incident to human nature to offend. While we are in this world, we must not expect to converse with angels, or the spirits of just men made perfect; no, we are obliged to have a communication with creatures that are foolish and corrupt, peevish and provoking, and who are all subject to like passions; such as these we must live among, else must we needs go out of the world. And have we not reason then to count upon something or other, uneasy and displeasing in all relations and conversations. The best men have their roughnesses and unevennesses in this imperfect state; those who are savingly enlightened, yet knowing but in part, have their blind side; the harmony, even of the communion of saints, will sometimes be disturbed with jarring strings; why then should we be surprised into passion and disquiet, when that which gives us the disturbance, is no more than what we looked for? Instead of being angry, we should think with ourselves thus: Alas! what could I expect but provocation from corrupt and fallen man? Among such foolish creatures as we are, it must needs be, that offences will come; and why should not I have my share of those offences? The God of heaven gives this as a reason of his patience towards a provoking world, that it is in their nature to be provoking, (Gen. 8. 21.) *I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth,* and therefore better is not to be expected from him. And upon this account he had compassion on Israel, (Ps. 78. 39.) *For he remembered that they were but flesh;* not only frail creatures, but sinful, and bent to backslide. *Do men gather grapes of thorns? I knew that thou wouldest deal treacherously, for thou wast called a transgressor from the womb,* Isa. 48. 8. And should not we, much more, be governed by the same consideration? *If thou seest the violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province,* remember what a provoking creature sinful man is, and then thou wilt not *marvel at the matter,* Eccl. 5. 8. The consideration of the common infirmity and corruption of mankind, should be made use of, not to excuse our own faults to ourselves, which does but take off the edge of our repentance, and is the poor subterfuge of a deceived heart; but to excuse the faults of others, and so take off the edge of our passion and displeasure, and preserve the meekness and quietness of our spirits.

[2.] That it is incident to ourselves among the rest to offend. The Apostle there puts himself into the number, **We all offend.* We offend God; if we say we do not, we deceive ourselves, and yet he bears with us from day to day, and is not extreme to mark what we do amiss; though our debts to him are talents, our brethren's to us but pence. Think then, if God should be as angry with me for every provocation, as I am with those about me, what would become of me? They are careless in their observance, and perhaps wilful in their offence, and am not I so to God? yea, am not I a thousand times worse? Job said, when his servants were provoking, and he was tempted to be harsh with them, *What then shall I do, when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?* Job 31. 13, 14.

And are we not apt enough likewise to offend our brethren? Either we have offended, or may offend; so that we have need that others should bear †with us, and why should not we bear with them? *Hanc veniam petimusq; damusq; vicissim—Let us seek and grant pardon alternately.* Our rule is, *What we would that men should do to us when we offend them, the same we should do to them when they offend us,* for *this is the law and the prophets,* Mat. 7. 12. ‡Solomon appeals to our consciences herein, Ecc. 7. 22. For *oftentimes also thine own heart* (which is instead of a thousand witnesses) *knoweth that thou thyself likewise hath cursed others.* The penitent remembrance of former guilt would greatly help to curb the passionate resentment of present trouble. When the undutiful rebellious son (in a story that I once read) dragged his father by the hair of the head to the house-door, it appeased the anger of the old man, to remember, that, just so far he had dragged his father; and it seems to have silenced Adonibezek, that he was now treated no otherwise than he had formerly treated others, Judg. 1. 7.

(3.) That Men are God's Hand: So it is said, Ps. 17. 14. *From men which are thy hand, O Lord,* or rather, *tools* in thy hand, so v. 13. which are thy *sword.* We must abide by this principle, that whatever it is that crosses us or is displeasing to us, at any time, God has an over-ruling hand in it. David was governed by this

* Σύνδουλον καὶ ἀυτὸς—*Himself a fellow-servant.*

† *Patienter idatam injuriam tolerat, qui piè meminit quòd fortasse adhuc habeat in quo debeat ipse tolerari—That man patiently endures wrong, who piously remembers that perhaps there is something in his conduct, which requires forbearance.*—Greg. M. in Job. l. 5. c. 32.

‡ *Cogitemus alios non facere injuriam, sed reponere—We should consider that when others do a mischief, they may be not so much inflicting an injury as revenging it.* Sen.

principle,

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principle, when he bore Shimei's spiteful reproaches, with such invincible patience, *So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David,* (2 Sam. 16. 10. and v. 11.) *Let him alone, for the Lord hath bidden him.* This consideration will not only silence our murmurings against God, [the author] but all our quarrellings with men, [the instruments of our trouble and vexation.] Men's reproaches are God's rebukes, and whoever he be that affronts me, I must see, and say, that therein my Father corrects me. This quieted the spirit of Job, in reference to the injuries of the Chaldeans and Sabeans, though he dwelt as a *King in the Army,* (ch. 29. 25.) and his power and interest seem to have been sustained, when those intruders first made that inroad upon him, and so he could not but see his help in the gate; yet we find him not meditating any revenge, but calming the disturbances of his own soul with the consideration of God's sovereign disposal, overlooking all the instruments of his trouble, thoughts of which, would but have mingled anger (the more disquieting passion) with his sorrow: this therefore suffices to still the storm, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,* ch. 1. 21. When his brethren stood aloof from him, his kindred and his friends looked scornfully upon him, as an alien, and instead of oil, poured vinegar into his wounds, so that his *eye continued in this provocation,* yet even in that part of his trouble he owns the hand of God, (ch. 19. 13.) *He hath put my brethren far from me.* It is a very quieting truth, (the Lord help us to mix faith with it) that every creature is that to us, and no more, that God makes it to be; and, that while many seek the ruler's favour, and more perhaps fear the ruler's displeasure, *Every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord.* Would we but more closely observe, and readily own the hand of God, in that which disquiets and provokes us, surely, though we regarded not man, yet if we had any fear of God before our eyes, that would reconcile us better to it, and suppress all intemperate and undue resentments. In murmuring at the stone, we reflect upon the hand that throws it, and lay ourselves under the woe pronounced against him *that strives with his maker,* Isa. 45. 9. We know it is interpreted, a taking up arms against the King, if we take up arms against any that are commissioned by him.

(4.) That there is no provocation given us at any time, but, if it be skilfully and graciously improved, there is good to be gotten by it. If we have but that wisdom of the prudent, which is *to understand his way,* and all the advantages and opportunities of it, doubtless we may, quite contrary to the intention of those who trespass against us, gain some spiritual, that is, some real benefit to our souls, by the injuries and offences that are done to us, for even these are made to *work together for good to them that love God.* This is a holy and a happy way of opposing our adversaries, and resisting evil. It is an ill weed indeed out of which the spiritual bee cannot extract something profitable, and for its purpose. Whatever lion roars against us, let us but go in the strength and spirit of the Lord, as Sampson did, and we may not only rend it as a kid, so that it shall do us no real harm, but we may withal get *meat out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong.* As it turns to the unspeakable prejudice of many, that they look upon reproofs as reproaches, and treat them accordingly with anger and displeasure, so it would turn to our unspeakable advantage, if we could but learn to call reproaches reproofs, and make use of them as such, for our conviction and humiliation; and thus the reproach of Christ may become true riches to us, and greater than the treasures of Egypt.

We are told of an imposthume that was cured with the thrust of an enemy's sword; and of one that was happily converted from drunkenness, by being called (in reproach) "a Tipler." It is very possible that we may be enlightened, or humbled, or reformed, may be brought nearer to God, or weaned from the world, may be furnished with matter for repentance, or prayer, or praise, by the injuries that are done us, and may be much furthered in our way to heaven by that which was intended for an affront or provocation.* This principle would put another aspect upon injuries and unkindnesses, and would quite alter the property of them, and teach us to call them by another name: whatever the subordinate instrument intended, it is likely *he meant not so, neither did his heart think so,* (Isa. 10. 7.) but God designed it as our other afflictions, to yield the *peaceable fruit of righteousness;* so that instead of being angry at the man that meant us ill, we should rather be thankful to the God that intended us good, and study to answer his intention. This kept Joseph in that good temper towards his brethren, though he had occasion enough to quarrel with them, Gen. 50. 20. *You thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.* This satisfied Paul, in reference to the thorn in the flesh, that is, the calamities and oppositions of the false apostles, which touched him more sensibly than all the efforts of persecuting rage; that it was intended to hide pride from him, *lest he should be exalted above measure, with the abundance of revelations,* (2 Cor. 12. 7.) and there seems to be an instance of that good effect it had upon him, immediately upon the mention of it, for within a few lines after he lets fall that humble word, (v. 11.) *I am nothing.* We should be apt to think too highly of ourselves, and too kindly of the world, if we did not meet with some injuries and contempts, by which we are taught to cease from man. Did we but more carefully study the improvement of an injury, we should not be so apt to desire the revenge of it.

(5.) That what is said and done in haste, is likely to be matter for deliberate repentance. We find David often remembering with regret, what he said in his haste, particularly one angry word he had said in the day of his distress and trouble, which seemed to reflect upon Samuel, and indeed upon all that had given him any encouragement to hope for the kingdom, Ps. 116. 11. *I said in my haste, All men are liars;* and this hasty word was a grief to him long after. *He that hasteth with*

* Ταράσσει τὰς ἀνθρώπους ὐ τὰ πράγματα ἀλλὰ τὰ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων δόγματα—*Mortals are made unhappy, not so much by* EVENTS *as by the* OPERATION *of their minds upon them.* Epict. Ench. c. 10.

his

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his feet sinneth, Pro. 19. 2. When a man is transported by passion into any impropriety, we commonly qualify it with this, "that he is a little hasty," as if there were no harm in that, but we see there is harm in it; he that is in haste, may contract much guilt in a little time. What we say or do unadvisedly when we are hot, we must unsay or undo again when we are cool, or do worse. Now who would wilfully do that, which sooner or later he must repent of? A heathen that was tempted to a chargeable sin, could resist the temptation with this consideration, "that he would not buy repentance so dear." Is repentance such a pleasant work that we should so industriously treasure up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, either the day of God's wrath against us, or our own against ourselves. You little think what a torrent of self-affliction you let in, when you let the reins loose to an immoderate ungoverned passion. You are angry at others, and reproach them, and call them hard names, and are ready to abhor them, and to revenge yourselves upon them, and your corrupt nature takes a strange kind of pleasure in this. But do you know that all this will at last rebound in your own faces, and return into your own bosoms? Either here or in a worse place, you must repent of all this; that is, you must turn all these passions upon yourselves, you must be angry at yourselves, and reproach yourselves, and call yourselves fools, and abhor yourselves, and smite upon your own breasts; nay, and if God give you grace, take a holy revenge upon yourselves (which is reckoned among the products of godly Sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 11.) and what can be more uneasy than all this? You take a mighty liberty in chiding those that you have under your power, and giving them very ill-favoured language, because you know they dare not chide you again; but dare not your own hearts smite you, and your consciences chide you? And is it not easier to bear the chidings of any man in the world, (which may either be avoided, or answered, or slighted) than to bear the reproaches of our own consciences, which, as we cannot get out of the hearing of, so we cannot make a light matter of? for when conscience is awake, it will be heard, and will tell us home, wherein *we are verily guilty concerning our brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Let this thought therefore quiet our spirits, when they begin to be tumultuous, that hereby we shall but make work for repentance; whereas, on the contrary, as Abigail suggested to David, (1 Sam. 25. 30, 31.) the bearing and forgiving of an injury will be no trouble or grief of mind afterwards. Let wisdom and grace therefore do that which time will do; that is, cool our heat, and take off the edge of our resentment.

(6.) That that is truly best for us which is most pleasing and acceptable to God, and that a meek and quiet spirit is so. No principle has such a commanding influence upon the soul, as that which has a regard to God, and wherein we approve ourselves to him. It was a good hint which the woman of Tekoah gave to David, when she was suing for a merciful sentence, (2 Sam. 14. 11.) *I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God:*——Nor could any thought be more appeasing than that. Remember how gracious, and merciful, and patient God is, how slow to anger, how ready to forgive, and how well pleased he is to see his people like him: remember the eye of thy God upon thee, the love of thy God towards thee, and the glory of thy God set before thee. Remember how much it is thy concern to be accepted of God, and to walk worthy of thy relation to him, unto all well-pleasing, and how much meekness and quietness of spirit does contribute to this, as it is consonant to that excellent religion which our Lord Jesus has established, and as it renders the heart a fit habitation for the blessed Spirit; *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, to lead quiet and peaceable lives*, 1 Tim. 2. 2, 3. It is a good evidence of our reconciliation to God, if we be cordially reconciled to every cross providence, which necessarily includes a meek behaviour toward those who are any ways instrumental in the cross. Very excellently does St. Austin express it (in Ps. 122.) *Quis placet Deo? cui Deus placuerit—Those please God who are pleased with him*, and with all he does, whether immediately by his own hand, or mediately by the agency of provoking injurious men. This is standing complete in all the will of God, not only his commanding, but his disposing will, saying it, without reluctance, *The will of the Lord be done.*——He that acts from an honest principle of respect to God, and sincerely desires to stand right in his favour, cannot but be in some measure adorned with that meek and quiet spirit, which he knows to be in the sight of God of great price.

Such as these are softening principles, and as many as walk according to these rules, peace shall be upon them, and mercy, and no doubt it shall be upon the Israel of God.

SECT. V.

5. *Some Rules of Direction.*

The laws of our holy religion are so far from clashing and interfering, that one christian duty does very much further and promote another; the fruits of the Spirit are like links in a chain, one draws on another; it is so in this; many other graces contribute to the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit.*

You see how desirable the attainment is, will you therefore, through desire, *separate* yourselves to the pursuit of it, and *seek* and *intermeddle with all wisdom*, (Pro. 18. 1.) and all little enough, that you may reach to the meekness of wisdom.

(1.) Sit loose to the world, and to every thing in it. The more the world is crucified to us, the more our corrupt passions will be crucified *in* us. If we would keep calm and quiet, we must by faith live above the stormy region. It is certain, those that have any thing to do in the world, cannot but meet with that every day from those with whom they deal, which will cross and provoke them; and if the affections be set upon these things, and we be filled with a prevailing concern about them, as the principal things, those crosses must needs pierce to the quick, and inflame the soul, and that

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that which touches us in these things, touches us in the apple of our eye. If the appetites be carried out inordinately towards those things that are pleasing to sense, the passions will be to the very same degree carried out against those that are displeasing. And therefore christians, whatever you have of the world in your hands, be it more or less, as you value the peace, as well as the purity of your souls, keep it out of your hearts, and evermore let out your affections towards your possessions, enjoyments, and delights in the world with a due consideration of the disappointment and provocation which probably you will meet with in them, and let that restrain and give check to their inordinancy.

It is the excellent advice of Epictetus, whatever we take a pleasure in, to consider the nature of the thing, and to proportion our complacency accordingly: Ἂν χύτραν τέργης μέμνησο ὅτι χύτραν τέργεις, κατεαγείσης γὰρ αὐτῆς ἐ ταραχθήσῃ—*If thou art in love with a China Cup, or a Venice Glass, love it as a piece of brittle ware, and then the breaking of it will be no great offence,* nor put thee into any disturbing passion, for it is but what thou didst expect. Those that idolize any thing in this world, will be greatly discomposed, if they be crossed in it. "The money which Micha's mother had, was her God, (it is Bishop Hall's note) before it had the shape either of a graven or a molten image, else the loss of it would not have set her a cursing, as it seems it did, Judg. 17. 2. Those that are greedy of gain, trouble their own hearts, as well as their own houses, (Pro. 15. 27.) They are a burthen to themselves, and a terror to all about them. They who will be rich, who are resolved upon it, come what will, cannot but fall into these foolish and hurtful Lusts, 1 Tim. 6. 9. And those also who serve their own bellies, who are pleased with nothing, unless it be wound up to the height of pleasure, who are like *the tender and delicate woman, that would not set so much as the sole of her foot to the ground, for tenderness and delicacy;* lie very open to that which is disquieting, and cannot, without a great disturbance to themselves, bear a disappointment: and therefore Plutarch (that great moralist) prescribes it for the preservation of our *Meekness,** "Not to be curious in diet, or clothes, or attendance; for (says he) they who need but few things, are not liable to anger, if they be disappointed of many."

Would we but learn in these things to cross ourselves, we should not be so apt to take it unkind if another crosses us. And therefore the method of the lessons in Christ's school, is first to *deny ourselves*, and then to *take up our cross*, (Mat. 16. 24.) We must also mortify the desire of the applause of men, as altogether impertinent to our true happiness. If we have learnt not to value ourselves by their good word, we shall not much disturb ourselves for their ill word. St. Paul bore reproaches with much meekness, because he did not build upon the opinion of man, reckoning it a small thing to be *judged of Man's judgment*, 1 Cor. 4. 3.

(2.) Be often repenting of your sinful passion, and renewing your covenants against it. If our rash anger were more bitter to us in the reflection afterwards, we should not be so apt to relapse into it. Repentance in general, if it be sound and deep, and grounded in true contrition and humiliation, is very meekening, and disposes the soul to bear injuries with abundance of patience. Those who live a life of repentance (as we have every one of us reason to do) cannot but live a quiet life; for no body can lightly say worse of the true penitent, than he says of himself. Call him a fool (an affront which many think deserves a challenge) the humble soul can bear it patiently with this thought, "Yea, a fool I am," and I have called myself so many a time; *more brutish than any man; I have not the understanding of a man*, Pro. 30. 2. But repentance does in a special manner dispose us to meekness, when it fastens upon any irregular inordinate passion with which we have been transported. Godly Sorrow for our former transgressions in this matter, will work a carefulness in us, not again to transgress. If others be causelesly or excessively angry with me, am not I justly requited for the like or more indecent passions. Charge it home therefore with sorrow and shame upon your consciences, aggravating the sin, and laying a load upon yourselves for it, and you will find that "the burnt child," especially while the burn is smarting, "will dread the fire," Job. 42. 6.

With our repentance for our former unquietness, we must engage ourselves by a firm resolution in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ to be more mild and gentle for the future. Say, *You will take heed to your ways that you offend not*, as you have done *with your tongue;* and be often remembering that you said so, as David does, Ps. 39. 1. Resolution would do much towards the conquering of the most rugged nature, and the quiet bearing of the greatest provocation; it would be like the bit and the bridle to the horse and mule, that have no understanding. It may be of good use every morning to renew a charge upon our affections to keep the peace, and having welcomed Christ in faith and meditation, let no rude unruly passion stir up or awake our love.

(3.) Keep out of the way of provocation, and stand upon your guard against it. While we are so very apt to offend in this matter, we have need to pray (and to practise accordingly) *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*——Those are enemies to themselves and to their own peace, as well as to human society,* who seek occasion of quarrel, who fish for provocations and dig up mischief; but meek and quiet people will on the contrary studiously avoid even that which is justly provoking, and will see it as if they saw it not. Those that would not be angry, must wink at that which would stir up anger, or put a favourable construction upon it. The advice of the Wise Man is very good to the purpose, (Ecc. 7. 21.) *Also take no heed to all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee;* and it is

better

* *Ne quære molliane tibi contingant dura—Ask not whether your allotment will be pleasing or painful.* Plurnut.

* *Facilius est excludere perniciosa quam regere, et non admittere quam admissa moderari—It is easier to exclude pernicious passions than to govern them; not to admit them, than to manage them when admitted.* Seneca.

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better for thee not to hear it, unless thou couldest hear it patiently,* and not to be provoked to sin in the hearing of it. It is a common story of Cotys, that being presented with a cupboard of curious glasses, he returned his thanks to his friend that had sent them, and gratified the messenger that brought them, and then deliberately broke them all, lest by the casual breaking of them severally, he should be provoked to passion. And Dion relates it, to the honour of Julius Cæsar, that Pompey's cabinet of letters coming to his hand, he would not read them, because he was his enemy, and he would be likely to find in them that which would increase the quarrel; "and therefore" (as Dr. Reynolds expresses it) he chose rather to make a fire on his hearth, than in his heart:" *De non existentibus et non apparentibus eadem est ratio—Keep the Injury out of sight, and it will be out of mind.*

But seeing *briars and thorns are with us,* and *we dwell among scorpions* (so the Prophet, Ezek. 2. 6.) and it must needs be, that offences will come, let us be so much the more careful, as we are, when we go with a candle among barrels of gunpowder, and exercise ourselves to have consciences void of offence, not apt to offend others, nor to resent the offences of others. When we are at any time engaged in business or company, where we foresee provocation, we must double our watch, and be more than ordinarily circumspect. *I will keep my mouth with a bridle* (says David) that is, with a particular actual care and diligence, *while the wicked is before me,* and frequent acts will confirm the good disposition, and bring it to a habit. Plutarch advises, "To set some time to ourselves for special strictness: so many days or weeks in which, whatever provocations do occur, we will not suffer ourselves to be disturbed by them." And thus he supposes, by degrees, the habit of vicious anger may be conquered and subdued. But after all, the Grace of Faith has the surest influence upon the establishment and quietness of the spirit: faith established the mercy of God, the meekness of Christ, the love of the Spirit, the commands of the word, the promises of the covenant, and the peace and quietness of the upper world; this is the approved shield, with which we may be able *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one,* and all his wicked instruments.

(4.) Learn to pause. It is a good rule, as in our communion with God, so in our converse with men, (Ecc 5. 2.) *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing.* When at any time we are provoked, delays may be as advantageous, as in other cases they are dangerous. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger,* Pro. 19. 11. *Cædissem nisi iratus essem—I would beat thee,*† (said Socrates to his servant) *if I were not angry;* but he that is hasty of spirit, that joins in with his anger upon the first rise of it, *exalteth folly,* Pro. 14. 29. The office of reason is to govern the passions, but then we must give time to act, and not suffer the tongue to over-run it. Some have advised, when we are provoked to anger to take, at least, so much time to deliberate, as while we repeat the alphabet; and others have thought it more proper to repeat the Lord's Prayer, and perhaps by that time we are past the fifth petition, [*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*] we may be reduced into temper. It is a good rule, "To think twice before we speak once;" for *he that hasteth with his feet, sinneth.* It was the noted saying of a great statesman in Q. Elizabeth's court, "*Take time, and we shall have done the sooner.*"* Nor can there be any thing lost by deferring our anger; for there is nothing said or done in our wrath, but it might be better said, and better done in meekness.

(5.) Pray to God by his Spirit to work in you this excellent grace of meekness and quietness of spirit. It is a part of that comeliness which he puts upon the soul, and he must be sought unto for it. If any man lack this meekness of wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives liberally, and does not upbraid us with our folly. When we begin at any time to be froward and unquiet, we must lift a prayer to him who stills the noise of the sea, for that grace which establishes the heart. When David's heart was hot within him, the first word that broke out was a prayer, Ps. 39. 3, 4. When we are surprised with a provocation, and begin to be in a ferment upon it, it will not only be a present diversion, but a sovereign cure, to lift up an ejaculation to God for grace and strength to resist and overcome the temptation: "Lord, keep me quiet now!" *Let your requests* in this matter *be made known to God; and the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds,* Phil. 4. 6, 7. You are ready enough to complain of unquiet people about you; but you have more reason to complain of unquiet passions within you; the other, are but thorns in the hedge, these are thorns in the flesh, against which, if you beseech the Lord, as Paul did, (2 Cor. 12. 8.) with faith, and fervency, and constancy, you shall receive *Grace sufficient.*

(6.) Be often examining your growth and proficiency in this grace.† Enquire what ground you have got of your passion, and what improvements you have made in meekness. Provocations recur every day, such as have been wont perhaps to put you into a passion, these give you an opportunity to make the trial. Do you find that you are less subject to anger, and when angry, that you are less transported by it than formerly, that your apprehension of injuries is less quick, and your resentments less keen than usual? Is the little kingdom of your mind more quiet than it has been, and the discontented party weakened and kept under?

* *Non vis esse iracundus? Ne sis curiosus—Wouldest thou avoid anger? Suppress curiosity.* Sen.

† *Seneca* makes it the saying of *Socrates; Ambr. de Offic.* and others ascribe it to *Archytas Tarentinus.*

* *Potest pœna dilata exigi, non potest exacta revocari—Punishment though deferred, may be inflicted; but when once inflicted, it cannot be recalled.* Sen. de ira.

† Ἀρξαιάπὸ τῶν μικρῶν, ἐκχεῖται τὸ ἐλαδίον; κλέπτεται ὀινάριον; ἐπίλειγε, ὁτὶ τοσοῦτο πωλεῖται ἀπάθεια τοσούτου ἀτραξία—*Begin with little things; Is the oil spilt? Is a trifling quantity of wine stolen? Say to thyself, "So much tranquillity is sold, so much composure."* Epict. c. 17.

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under? It is well if it be so, and a good sign that the soul prospers, *and is in health.* We should examine every night, whether we have been quiet all day? We shall sleep the better if we find we have. Let conscience keep up a grand inquest in the soul, under a charge from the judge of heaven and earth, to inquire, and due presentment make of all riots, routs, and breaches of the peace, and let nothing be left unpresented for favour, affection, or self-love; nor let any thing presented be left unprosecuted according to law. Those whose natural temper, or their age, or distemper, leads them to be hot, and hasty, and unquiet, have an opportunity, by their meekness and gentleness, to discover both the truth and strength of Grace in general; for it is the surest mark of uprightness to keep ourselves *from our own Iniquity*, Ps. 18. 23. And, yet, if the children of God bring forth these fruits of the Spirit in old age, when commonly men are most froward and peevish, it shews not only that they are upright, but rather that the Lord is upright, in whose strength they stand, that he is their rock, and there *is no unrighteousness in him*, Ps. 92. 14, 15.

7. Delight in the company of meek and quiet persons. Solomon prescribes it as a preservative against foolish passion, to *make no friendship with an angry man, lest thou learn his ways*, Pro. 22. 24, 25. When thy neighbour's heart is on fire, it is time to look to thy own. But man is a sociable creature, and cut out for converse; let us, therefore, since we must have some company, chuse to have fellowship with those who are meek and quiet, that we may learn their way, for it is a good way. The wolf is no companion for the lamb, nor the leopard for the kid, till they have forgot to hurt and destroy. Company is assimilating, and we are apt insensibly to grow like those with whom we ordinarily converse, especially with whom we delight to converse, therefore, let the quiet in the land be the men of our choice, especially into standing relations and bosom-friendship. Observe in others, how sweet and amiable meekness is, and what a heaven upon earth those enjoy who have the command of their own passions; and study to transcribe such copies.——There are those who take a pleasure in riotous company, and are never well but when they are in the midst of noise and clamour; sure Heaven would not be Heaven to such, for that is a calm and quiet region; no noise there, but what is sweet and harmonious.

8. Study the Cross of our Lord Jesus.———Did we but know more of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, we should experience more of the fellowship of his sufferings. Think often how and in what manner he suffered; see him led as a lamb to the slaughter, and arm yourselves with the same mind. Think also why and for what end he suffered, that you may not in any thing contradict the design of your dying Saviour, nor receive his grace in vain. Christ died as the great peace-maker, to take down all partition-walls, to quench all threatening flames, and to reconcile his followers, not only to God, but one to another, by the *slaying of all enmities*, Eph. 2. 14, 16. The Apostle often prescribes a believing regard to the sufferings of Christ, as a powerful allay to all sinful and intemperate heats, as Eph. 5. 2. Phil. 2. 5, &c. Those who would shew forth the meek and humble life of Christ in their mortal bodies, must *bear about with them continually the dying of the Lord Jesus*, 2 Cor. 4. 10. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which we shew forth the Lord's death, and the New Testament in his blood, must therefore be improved by us for this blessed end, as a love-feast, at which all our sinful passions must be laid aside, and a marriage-feast, where the ornament of a meek quiet spirit is a considerable part of the wedding-garment. The forgiving of injuries, and a reconciliation to our brother, is both a necessary branch of our preparation for that ordinance, and a good evidence and instance of our profiting by it. If God has there spoken peace to us, let not us go away and speak war to our brethren. The year of release under the law, which put an end to all actions, suits, and quarrels, began in the close of the day of atonement; then the jubilee-trumpet sounded.

9. Converse much in your thoughts with the dark and silent grave. You meet with many things now that disturb and disquiet you, and much ado you have to bear them; think how quiet death will make you, and how incapable of resenting or resisting injuries, and what an easy prey this flesh, you are so jealous for, will shortly be to the worm that shall feed sweetly on it. You will ere long be out of the reach of provocation, there where the wicked cease from troubling, and where their envy and their hatred is for ever perished. And is not a quiet spirit the best preparative for that quiet state? Think how all these things, which now disquiet us, will appear when we come to look death in the face; how small and inconsiderable they seem to one that is stepping into eternity. Think, "what need is there that I should so ill resent an affront or injury, that am but a worm today, and may be worms-meat to-morrow." They say, when bees fight, the throwing up of dust among them quickly parts the fray.

Hi motus animorum atq; hæc certamina tanta
*Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.**

A little sprinkling of the dust of the grave, which we are upon the brink of, would do much towards the quieting of our spirits, and the taking up of our quarrels. Death will quiet us shortly, let Grace quiet us now. When David's heart was *hot within him*, he prayed, *Lord, make me to know my end*, Ps. 39. 3, 4.

To conclude: I know no errand that I can come upon of this kind to you, in which methinks I should be more likely to prevail, than in this; so much does meekness conduce to the comfort and repose of our own souls, and the making of our lives sweet and pleasant to us. *If thou be wise herein, thou shalt be wise for thyself.* That which I have been so intent upon

* *Virg. Geor. lib.* 4.

Yet all those dreadful deeds, this dreadful fray,
A cast of scatter'd dust will soon allay. Dryden.

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upon in this discourse, is only to persuade you not to be your own tormentors, but to govern your passions, so that they may not be furies to yourselves. The ornament I have been recommending to you is confessedly excellent and lovely; will you put it on, and wear it, that by this all men may know that you are Christ's * disciples, and you may be found among the sheep, on the right hand, at the great day, when Christ's angels shall *gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends?* Every one will give meekness a good word; but in this, as in other instances, *Probitas laudatur & alget—Honesty is applauded, yet neglected.*

Love is commended by all, and yet the love of many waxeth cold: but let all that would not be self-condemned practise what they praise. And as there is nothing in which I should more expect to prevail, so there is nothing in which it will easier appear, whether I have prevailed or no; this tree will soon be known by its fruits: so many are the circumstances of almost every day, which call for the exercise of this grace, that our profiting therein will quickly appear to ourselves, and to all with whom we converse. Our meekness and quietness is more obvious, and falls more directly under a trial and observation than our love to God, and our faith in Christ, and other graces, the exercise whereof lies more immediately between God and our own souls. Shall we therefore set ourselves to manifest, in all our converse, that we have indeed received good by this plain discourse? that our relations and neighbours, and all that we have dealings with, may observe a change in us for the better, and may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus; and let not the impressions of it ever wear off, but, living and dying, let us be found among the *Quiet in the Land:* we all wish to see quiet families, and quiet churches, and quiet neighbourhoods, and quiet nations; and it will be so if there be quiet hearts, and not otherwise.

* *Chrysostom* argues excellently from the easiness of forgiving, and being meek: Τὶ ἐυκολώτερον τὴς ὀργὴς ἀφεῖναι, μὴ γὰρ μακρὰν ἀποδημίαν ἰέναι δεῖλαθαι μὴ χρήματα δαπανῆσαι ἀρκεῖ θελῆσαι μόνον, &c.—*What is more easy than to dismiss anger; for there is no necessity of sending to a remote country, nor to spend money; to will is all that is wanting. Hom.* 19. *ad Pop. Antioch.* This is one of *Epictetus's* τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν—*things within our power.*

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A

SERMON,

SHEWING

THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS NOT A SECT,

AND YET THAT IT IS EVERY WHERE SPOKEN AGAINST.

ACTS 28. 22.

——For as concerning this Sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

WOULD you think that such a false and invidious representation as this should ever be given of the christian religion, that [a] pure religion and undefiled, which came into the world supported by the strongest evidences of truth, and recommended by the most endearing allurements of grace and goodness, the [b] sayings whereof are so faithful, and so well worthy of acceptation; that sacred institution which scatters the brightest rays of divine light and love, that ever were darted from heaven to earth? That it is, which is here so invidiously called a *Sect*, and is said to be *every where spoken against*.

It will be worth while to observe,

1. Who they were that said this, they were the chief of the Jews who were at Rome, v. 17. The Jews were looked upon (at least they looked upon themselves) as a very knowing people; the Jews at Rome, (a place of learning and inquiry,) thought themselves more knowing than the other Jews. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, ch. 2. 17—20. takes notice of it: *Thou art called a Jew, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will,—and art confident that thou thyself art a guide to the blind, a light of them which are in darkness*, &c. And we have reason to suppose, that the chief of the Jews there, who had the greatest advantages of education and correspondence, were the most intelligent. It might also be justly expected, that upon the first notices of the Gospel, the Jews should have been of all people most ready to acquaint themselves with a religion which was so much the honour and perfection of their own; and yet, it seems, the Jews, the chief of the Jews at Rome, knew no more of christianity than this, that it was *a sect every where spoken against*. This we know (say they) and it was all they knew concerning it.

The Jews were of all other the most bitter and inveterate enemies to the christians. While the Roman emperors tolerated them, (as they did till Nero's time*) the Jews with an unwearied malice persecuted them from city to city, and were the first wheel in most of the opposition that the Gospel met with, when it was first preached. Now one would think they would not have been so vigorous and industrious to suppress christianity, if they had not very well acquainted themselves with it, and known it to deserve such opposition: but it seems by this, they knew little or nothing of the religion they so much maligned, had never searched into the merits of its cause, nor weighed the proofs of its divine authority; but against all law and reason condemned it, (διὰ τὴν φήμην—*merely upon common fame*, as Justin Martyr complains;†) and follow the cry to run it down, because it was *every where spoken against*.

2. Upon what occasion they said this. They were now appointing a time to discourse with St. Paul upon the grand question in debate, Whether Jesus of Nazareth were the true Messiah or no? And they seemed willing to hear what that great man had to say in defence of the religion he preached: *We desire* (say they) *to hear of thee what thou thinkest*——Now, one would expect that so good a cause, managed by such a skilful advocate, could not but carry the day, and be victorious, and that they would all have been brought over to the belief of christianity; but we find, v. 24. that it proved otherwise. After all, there were those that believed not; and the text intimates the reason of their infidelity, they came to hear the word under a prejudice; they had already imbibed an ill opinion of the way, which, right or wrong, they resolved to hold fast: and though some of them, by the help of divine grace, got over this stumbling-block, (that like the Bereans were more noble than the rest, and of freer thought,) yet, many of them continued under the power of those prejudices, and were sealed up under unbelief, v. 26, 27. Thus is the power of the word in many baffled by the power of prejudice: they do not believe, because they are resolved they will not: they conclude that no good thing can [c] come out of Nazareth, and will not be persuaded to come and see. Thus do they prejudge the cause, [d] *answering the matter before they hear it*, and it will prove *folly* and *shame* to them.

[a] Jam. 1. 27. [b] 1 Tim. 1. 15.

* Tertullian confidently asserts, *Primum Neronem in hanc Sectam tum maxime Romæ orientem Cæsariano gladio ferocisse—That Nero was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect rising at that time into general notice at Rome.* Apol. c. 5.

[c] John 1. 46. [d] Pro. 18. 13. John 7. 51.

† *Inquisitione & cognitione neglecta nomen detinetur, nomen expugnatur—not so sola prædamnat—All inquiry into the merits of the case is omitted; the name only is attacked; the name only consigns to condemnation.* Tert. Ap. c. 3.

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Now in the account they here give of their knowledge of the christian religion, we may observe,

(1.) That they looked upon it to be a *Sect*, and we will prove that to be false.

(2.) A Sect *every where spoken against*, and we will grant that to be true, that it is generally spoken against, though it is most unreasonable and unjust it should be so.

(1.) The christian religion is here called (but miscalled) a *Sect, αιρεσις—a heresy. After the way which they call heresy,* (says St. Paul, Acts 24. 14.) *so worship I the God of my fathers.—The sect of the Nazarenes;* so Tertullus calls it in his opening the indictment against Paul, Acts 24. 5. it is called *this way,* Acts 9. 2. and *that way,* Acts 19. 9. as if it were a by-path out of the common road. The practice of serious godliness is still looked upon by many as a sect, that is, a party-business, and a piece of affected singularity in opinion and practice, tending to promote some carnal design, by creating and supporting invidious distinctions among men. This is the proper notion of a sect, and therefore the masters and maintainers of sects are justly in an ill name, as enemies to the great corporation of mankind; but there is not the least colour of reason to put this invidious and scandalous character on the christian religion; however it may be mistaken and misrepresented, it is very far from being really a sect. There were sects of religion among the Jews; we read of the sect of the Sadduces, (Acts 5. 17.) which was built on peculiar notions, such as overturned the foundation of natural religion, by denying a future state of rewards and punishments. There was also the sect of the Pharisees, (Acts 15. 5.) the *straitest sect of* their *religion,* (Acts 26. 5.) which was founded in the observance and imposition of singular rites and customs, with an affected separation from, and contempt of all mankind. These were sects; but there is nothing of the spirit and genius of these in the christian religion, as it was instituted by its great author.

[1.] True christianity establishes that which is of common concern to all mankind, and therefore is not a sect. The truths and precepts of the everlasting Gospel are perfective of, and no way repugnant to the light and law of natural religion. Is that a sect which gives such mighty encouragements and assistances to those that *in every nation fear God, and work righteousness?* Acts 10. 35. Is that a sect which tends to nothing else but to reduce the revolted race of mankind to their antient allegiance to their great Creator, and to renew that image of God upon man, which was his primitive rectitude and felicity? Is that a sect which proclaims God in Christ [a] *reconciling the world unto himself,* and recovering it from that degenerate and deplorable state into which it was sunk? Is that a sect which publishes [b] good-will towards men, and Christ the [c] *Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world?* Surely, that which concurs so much with the uncorrupted and unprejudiced sentiments, and conduces much more to the true and real happiness of all mankind, cannot be thought to take its rise from such narrow opinions, and private interests, as sects owe their original to.

[2.] True christianity has a direct tendency to the uniting of the children of men, and the gathering of them together in one,† and therefore is far from being a sect, which is supposed to lead to a division, and to sow discord among brethren. The preaching of the Gospel did indeed prove the occasion of contention. Our Saviour foresaw and foretold, (Luke 12. 51, 52, 53.) that his disciples and followers would be *men of strife,* in the same sense that the prophet Jer. was, (Jer. 15. 10.) not men striving, but men striven with: but the Gospel was by no means the cause of this contention, for it was intended to be the cure of all contention. If there be any who, under the cloak and colour of the christian name, cause divisions, and propagate feuds and quarrels among men, let them bear their own burthen; but it is certain that the christian religion, as far as it obtains its just power and influence upon the minds of men, will make them meek and quiet, humble and peaceable, loving and useful, condescending and forgiving, and every way easy, and acceptable, and profitable one to another. Is that a sect which was introduced with a proclamation of *Peace on earth?* That which beats swords into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks? Or was he the Author of a sect, who is the great center of unity, and who died to break down [d] *partition-walls,* and to *slay* all *enmities,* that he might [e] *gather together in one the children of God, that were scattered abroad?* Was he the author of a sect, who came into the world [f] *not to destroy mens lives, but to save* them; and who taught his followers not only to love one another, but to love their enemies, and to count every one their [g] neighbour, to whom they could be any way serviceable?

[3.] True christianity aims at no worldly benefit or advantage, and therefore must by no means be called a sect. Those who espouse a sect, are supposed to be governed in it by their secular interest, and to aim at wealth, or honour, or the gratification of some base lust. The Pharisees proved themselves to be a sect, by their thirst after the praise of men, and their greedy devouring of widows houses: but, the professors of christianity have not only been taught by the law of their religion, to live above this world, and to look upon it with a holy contempt, but, have been exposed by their profession to the loss and ruin of all their secular comforts and enjoyments. Are those to be accounted politic and designing sectaries, who have for Christ cheerfully [h] *suffered the loss of all things?* Is that a sect, which, instead of preferring a man to honour, or raising him an estate, lays him open to disgrace and poverty, renders him obnoxious to fines and forfeitures, banishments and imprisonments, racks and tortures, flames and gibbets, which were the common lot of the primitive

* Αιρεσις, *Electio, optio.* An opinion not forced upon us by the evidences of truth, but chosen by us with some foreign design.

[a] 2 Cor. 5. 19. [b] Luke 2. 14. [c] John 1. 29. 3. 16. 1 John 2. 2.

† Secta *dicitur à* Secando—*It is called a sect from* Secando—*to be separated.*

[d] Eph. 2. 14, 15, 16. [e] John 11. 52. [f] Luke 9. 56. [g] Luke 10. 36, 37. [h] Phil. 3. 8.

christians.

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christians. Cæsar Vaninus, a sworn enemy to the christian religion, and one who was industrious in searching out objections against it, owned that he could find nothing in it that savoured of a carnal and worldly design: no, it has always approved itself a [a]*Heavenly Calling*, and the strictest professors of it (even their enemies themselves being judges) have had [b]*their conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom.* Very unjustly therefore is it called a sect.

As to this, therefore, suffer a word of caution and exhortation.

First, Let us take heed lest our profession of religion degenerate into any thing which may make it look like a sect. Christianity, as it was instituted by Christ, is not a sect; let not christians then be sectaries. We make our profession of religion a sect, when we monopolize the church and its ministry and sacraments, and spend that zeal in matters of doubtful disputation which should be reserved for the weightier matters of the law. When we place our religion in [c]*meats* and *drinks*, which should be placed in *righteousness*, and *peace*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost.* When we profess religion with a conceit of ourselves, and a contempt of others, and with any worldly design; when we sacrifice the common interests of Christ's kingdom to the particular interests of a party; and, in a word, when our profession is tainted with the [d]*Leaven of the Pharisees*, which is both souring and swelling; then it degenerates into a sect. Let us therefore adhere to the sure and large foundations and be actuated by a principle of love to, and so maintain communion with [e]*all that in every place*, and under every denomination, *call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's.* Let us be modest in our opinions, charitable and candid in our censures, self-denying in all our converse, acting always under the influence of that *Wisdom that is from above*, which is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy;* that by this well-doing we may [f]*put to silence the ignorance of* those who call religion a sect.

Secondly. Let us not be deterred from serious godliness, or any of the requirements of it, by the invidious name of a sect, which is put upon it. If a strict and sober and circumspect conversation, a conscientious government of our tongue, praying, and singing psalms in our families, a religious observation of the Lord's day, a diligent attendance upon the means of grace, joining in religious societies for prayer and christian conference, and endeavouring, in our places, the suppression of profaneness and immorality; if these, and the like be called and counted the marks and badges of a sect, let us not be moved at it, but say as David did, (2 Sam. 6. 22.) *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.* If the practice of piety be branded as a sect, it is better for us to come under the reproaches of men for following it, than under the *curse* of God for neglecting it It is a [z]*very small thing to be judged of man's day, but he that judgeth us is the Lord:* let us therefore be more afraid of being sectaries, than of being called so.

(2.) The christian religion is here said to be *every where spoken against.* That it was spoken against, was evident enough; but that it was *every where* spoken against, was more than they could be sure of: they did not know all places, nor had they correspondence with, or intelligence from every country; but we must not wonder if those who oppose the truth as it is in Jesus, make no conscience of transgressing the laws of truth in common conversation. But we will suppose that the acquaintance and converse of those Jews at Rome lay mostly with those who were enemies to christianity, and spoke against it; and they therefore concluded it every where spoken against, because they found it spoken against in all places that they came to, or had advice from. Thus apt are we to embrace that as a general sentiment and observation, which, we find received by those that we usually associate with, and so, we run ourselves into mistakes, which larger and more impartial inquiries would soon rectify.

But we will take it for granted, however, that what they said was true, not because they said it, but because the experience of all ages does confirm it, and concur with it: so that a little acquaintance with books and the world will prove the observation which we ground upon the text:

Doct. That it is, and always has been, the lot of Christ's holy religion, to be every where spoken against.

Or thus:

That true christianity has all along met with a great deal of opposition and contradiction in this world.

I purpose not to enter into a particular disquisition of that which has been, and is spoken against religion, nor do I undertake at present to shew how false and unreasonable it is; that has been done many a time by the best hands, and so effectually, that every impartial eye must needs look upon the cause of the adversaries of religion to be a baffled cause: but I shall only make some improvement of this general observation, which cannot be unseasonable in an age wherein the gates of hell seem to be making their utmost efforts against the church; and the Devil, as the calumniator and false accuser, to be [h]*more wroth* than ever *with the woman* the Church, and to push on the *war* with an unusual vigour against the *remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

I shall therefore, I. inquire what it is in Christianity that is spoken against. And II. shew you why so holy and excellent a religion is spoken against; and then III. draw some inferences from this observation.

I. Who, and what it is that is spoken against.

1. Jesus Christ, the author of our religion, is *every where spoken against.* When the first-begotten was brought into the world, old Simeon, among other great things, pronounced this concerning him, that he was a *sign which* should be *spoken against*, and by that

[a] Heb. 3. 1. [b] 2 Cor. 1. 12. [c] Rom. 14. 17, 18.
[d] Luke 12. 1. [e] 1 Cor. 1. 2. [f] 1 Pet. 2. 15.
[z] 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.
[h] Rev. 12. 17.

means

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means was set *for the fall of many*, (Luke 2. 34.) when he was here upon Earth, he was *spoken against*. The[a] stone which was designed to be the head of the corner, was rejected, and set at nought by the builders. It was not the least of his sufferings in the days of his flesh, that he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*, Heb. 12. 3. They spoke against his person as mean and contemptible, and one that had *no form, nor comeliness*:[b] they spoke against his preaching as false and deceiving, (Joh. 7. 12.) as factious and seditious, (Luke 23. 2.) as senseless and ridiculous, for the Pharisees derided him for it, Luke 16. 14. They spoke against his miracles as done in confederacy with Belzebub the Prince of the Devils, Mat. 12. 24. They spoke against his morals, charging him with blasphemy against God, profanation of the sabbath-day, and all the instances of debauchery which were usually met with in a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, and a friend of publicans and sinners, Mat. 11. 19. They spoke against his followers as a company of ignorant despicable people, John 7. 48, 49. Pass through all the steps and stages of his sufferings, and you will find him every where spoken against. They reproached him in all his offices; in his office of teaching, when they challenged him to tell who smote him: in his office of saving, when they challenged him to save himself as he had saved others: in his office of ruling, when they challenged him to prove himself the King of the Jews by coming down from the cross. The common people spoke against him, even they that[c] passed by reviled him. The Pharisees and chief Priests, the Grandees of the church were as severe as any in their reflections on him. *Princes also* did *sit and speak against him.* [d]Herod and his men of war set him at nought, ἐξουθένησας —*made nothing* of him that made all things.

Nay, even now that he is set down at the right-hand of the majesty on high, *far above all principalities and powers*,[e] (that is, both good and evil angels, so as to be no more hurt by the contradictions of the one, than he is benefited by the adorations of the other;) yet, still he is spoken against. Besides the contempt cast upon him by the Jews and Mahometans, are there not with us, even with us, those who daringly speak against him? Arians and Socinians are daily speaking against him as a mere man, thinking that a robbery in him, which he thought none, to be [f]equal with God; Quakers and Enthusiasts speak against him as a mere name, setting up, I know not what Christ within them, while they explode that Jesus that was crucified at Jerusalem. Atheists and Deists speak against him as a mere cheat, accounting the religion he established a great imposture, and his Gospel a jest. Profane and ignorant people speak slightly of him, as if our [g]beloved were no more than *another beloved*; and some speak scornfully of him, as Julian the apostate did, that called him in disdain the *Galilean*, and the *Carpenter's Son*. Such as these are the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him; the Lord rebuke them, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke them.

2. God himself, the great object of our religious regards, is *every where spoken against*. It is not only the christian revelation that is thus attacked by virulent and blasphemous tongues, but even natural religion also. The glorious and blessed God, the great creator and benefactor of the universe, that does good to all, and whose *mercies are over all his works*, even he is *every where spoken against*. Some deny his being; though his existence be so necessary, so evident, that if he be not, it is impossible any thing else should be, yet there are fools who *say in their hearts* what they dare not speak out, that *there is no God*, Ps. 14. 1. And he that says there is no God, wishes there were none, and if he could help it there should be none. Others blaspheme the attributes of God, who charge the All-seeing Eye with blindness, saying, *The Lord shall not see*, (Ps. 94. 7.) that charge the eternal mind with forgetfulness, saying *God hath forgotten*, (Ps. 10. 11.) that charge the almighty arm with impotency, saying, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?* which is there called *speaking against God*, Ps. 78. 19, 20. Those speak against God that promise themselves impunity in sin, saying, [h]*They shall not surely die*, and *God* [i]*will not require it.* And those that boldly avow their impiety and irreligion, saying to the Almighty, *Depart from us*—Job 21. 14, 15. Some speak meanly of God, though he is infinitely great and glorious; others speak hardly of him, though he is infinitely just and good. The name of God is spoken against by the profane using of it; so it is construed (Ps. 139. 20.) *They speak against thee wickedly, thine Enemies take thy name in vain.* Can there be a greater slight put upon the eternal God, than for men to use his sacred and blessed name as a by-word, with which they give vent to their exorbitant passions, or fill up the vacancies of their other idle words? The name of God is thus abused not only by those who utter dreadful oaths and curses, which make the ears of every good man to tingle, but by those who mention the name of God slightly and irreverently in their common conversation, in whose [k]*mouths* he is *near* when he is *far from their reins*. To use those forms of speech which properly signify an acknowledgment and adoration of God's Being, as *O God!* or *O Lord!* or an appeal to his omniscience, as *God knows*; or an invocation of his favour, as *God bless me*, or *God be merciful to me*: I say, to use these or the like expressions impertinently, and intending thereby to express only our wonder or surprise, or our passionate resentments, or any thing, but that which is their proper and awful signification, is an evidence of a vain mind, that wants a due regard to that glorious and fearful name, [l]*The Lord our God.* I see not that the profanation of the ordinance of praying is any better than the profanation of the ordinance of swearing. The serious consideration of this, I hope, will prevent much of that dishonour which is done to God, and to his holy name, by some that run not, with others, to an excess of riot.

[a] Ps. 118. 22. [b] Isa. 53. 2, 3. [c] Mat. 27. 39.
[d] Luke 23. 11. [e] Eph. 1. 20, 21. [f] Phil. 2. 6.
[g] Cant. 5. 9.

[h] Gen. 3. 4. [i] Ps. 10. 13. [k] Jer. 12. 2. [l] Deut. 28. 58.

The

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The Providence of God is likewise *every where spoken against* by [a] murmurers and complainers, who quarrel with it, and find fault with the disposal of it, and, when they are [b] *hardly bestead, curse their King and their God.* Thus is the *Mouth* of the ungodly *set against the Heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.*[c]

3. The Word of God, the great rule of our religion, is *every where spoken against;* so it was when it was first preached, wherever the Apostles went preaching the doctrine of Christ they met with those that *spake against it, contradicting and blaspheming,* Acts 13. 45. So it is now that it is written, Atheists speak against the scripture as not of authority; Papists speak against it as dark and uncertain, further than it is expounded, and supported by the authority of their Church, which receives* unwritten traditions *pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia—with the same pious affection and reverence* that they receive the scriptures; nay, and, if we may judge by their practice, with much more. Thus is the word of God blasphemed by them, who call themselves *The Temple of the Lord.* But if we take away revelation (as the Deists do) all religion will soon be lost; and if we derogate from the scriptures (as the Papists do) all revelation is much endangered.

Those also speak against the scriptures who profanely jest with them; and that they may the more securely rebel against scripture laws, make themselves and their idle companions merry with the scripture language: *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach,* as the Prophet complains, Jer. 6. 10. And another Prophet found it so, whose serious word of the necessity of *precept upon precept* was turned into an idle song, (as Grotius understands it) Isa. 28. 13. *The word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept*—Very likely it was done by the drunkards of Ephraim, spoken of v. 1. and it gave occasion to that caution, v. 22. *Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.* Profligate and debauched minds relish no wit like that which ridicules the sacred text, and exposes that to contempt; as of old the insulting Babylonians must be humoured with the [d] *Songs of Sion;* and no cups can please Belshazzar in his drunken frolic, but the sacred [e] vessels of the temple. Thus industrious are the powers of darkness to vilify the scriptures, and make them contemptible; but he that sits in Heaven shall laugh at them, for in spite of all the little efforts of their impotent malice, *He will magnify the law, and make it honourable,* according to the word which he has spoken, Isa. 42. 21.

4. The people of God, the professors of this religion, are every where spoken against. Not only those of some particular persuasion or denomination, but (without regard to that) such as have been zealous in fearing God and working righteousness have been, in many places very much *spoken against.* Our blessed Saviour has told his disciples what treatment of this kind they must expect, that they should be *reviled* and have *all manner of evil said against them falsely,* (Mat. 5. 11, 12.) that they and their *names* should be *cast out as evil,* Luke 6. 22. And if they called our Master Belzebub, no nick-names fastened on his followers can seem strange. Mocking was an old way of persecuting the covenant-seed, for thus, *He that was after the flesh, betimes persecuted them that were after the Spirit.* Compare Gen. 21. 9. with Gal. 4. 29. God's Heritage has always been as a [f] *speckled bird,* that all the birds are against, (Jer. 12. 9.) and his children *for signs and for wonders in* Israel, that every one has a *saying to.* Isa. 8. 18. Even Wisdom's children have been called and counted fools, and their life madness; the quiet in the land represented as enemies to the public peace, and those who are the greatest blessings of the age, branded as the troublers of Israel. The primitive christians were painted † out to the world under the blackest and most odious characters that could be, as men of the most profligate lives and consciences, and that even placed their religion in the grossest impieties and immoralities imaginable. Their enemies found it necessary for the support of the kingdom of the devil, the father of lies and slanders, *fortiter calumniari—to characterize them as the worst of men,* to whom they were resolved to give the worst and most barbarous treatment. It had not been possible to have baited them, if they had not first dressed them up in the skins of wild beasts. And as then, so ever since, more or less in all ages of the Church, reproach has been entailed upon the most serious and zealous professors of christian religion and godliness.

5. The ministers of Christ, the preachers of this religion, are with a distinguishing enmity every where spoken against. Under the Old Testament God's messengers and his Prophets were generally mocked and misused, and it was Jerusalem's measure-filling sin, 2 Chro. 36. 16. It was one of the devices they devised against Jeremiah, *to smite him with the tongue,* because they would not, and they desired that others might not, *give heed to any of his words,* Jer. 18. 18. Those to whom the Prophet Ezekiel was a very lovely song, and with their mouths shewed much love to him, yet were still *talking against him by the walls, and in the doors of their houses,* and God lets him know it; Ezek. 33. 30, 31, 32. And then it is not strange if the ministers of the New Testament (in which truth shines with a stronger light) be with no less enmity spoken against by those that love darkness rather than light. The Apostles, those prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, were so loaded with reproach, that they were made a spectacle to the world,‡ a spectacle of pity to those that have either grace or good-nature, but a spectacle of scorn to those that had neither. They were trampled upon as the filth of the world, and whereas the off-scouring of any thing is bad enough, they were looked upon as the *Off-scouring of all things,* even *unto this day;* after they had in so many instances approved themselves well, and could not but be made manifest in the consciences of their worst enemies, 1

[a] Jude 16. [b] Isa 8. 21. [c] Ps. 73. 9. [d] Ps. 137. 3. [e] Dan. 5. 2.

* *Trident. Conc.* Ses. 4.

[f] Zech. 3. 8.

† See this at large, represented by *Cæcilius* in *Minucius Felix.*

‡ Θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν——the *Theatre* they played upon.

Cor.

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Cor. 4. 9, 13. And it has all along been the policy of the Church's enemies by all means possible to bring the ministry into contempt, and to represent the Church's Nazarites, even those that were *purer than snow, whiter than milk*, and *more ruddy than rubies*, with a *visage blacker than a coal*, so that they *have not been known in the streets*. I allude to that complaint, Lam. 4. 7, 8. Marvel not if the standard-bearers be most struck at.

6. The christian religion itself has been, and still is *every where spoken against*. The truths of it contradicted as false and groundless, the great doctrines of the mediation of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead, were ridiculed by the Athenian philosophers. The laws of it described as grievous and unreasonable, as *hard sayings*, which could not be borne by those who bid open defiance to the obligation of them, and say, *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us*, Ps. 2. 3. The ordinances of it despised as mean, and having no form nor comeliness. Sabbaths mocked at, as of old, (Lam. 1. 7.*) and the sanctification of them represented as only a cloak for idleness. Sacraments reproached, and the sacred memorial of Christ's death and sufferings, by the persecutors of the primitive christians represented to the world, as the bloody and † inhuman killing and eating of a child, and their love-feasts, and holy kiss (which were then in use) as only introductions to the most abominable uncleanness. Primitive christianity was industriously put into an ill name; it was called emphatically "The Atheism," because it overthrew idolatry, and undermined the false gods and worships that had so long obtained. This was the out-cry at Ephesus, that if Paul's doctrine took place, the *Temple of the great Goddess* would be despised, (Acts 19. 26, 27.) It was also branded as a novelty, and an upstart doctrine, because it took people off from that [a] vain conversation, which they had *received by tradition from their fathers*. It was called at Athens a [b] *New doctrine*, and industriously represented in all places as a mushroom sect, that was but of yesterday ‡. It was looked upon as nearly allied to Judaism, because it was so much supported by the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and nothing was more despicable among the Romans than the Jews and their religion. The professors of Christianity were looked upon as unlearned and ignorant men, (Acts 4. 13.) the very dregs and refuse of the People. § Julian forbad the calling of them Christians, and would have them called nothing but Galileans, thereby to expose them to the contempt of those who are (as indeed most people are) governed more by a sound of words than by the reason of things. Thus when the Devil was silenced in his oracles (as it is well known he was, upon the setting up of christianity in the world) his mouth was opened in lies and slanders; and being forced to quit his pretensions to a Deity, he appears barefaced, as a *Devil*, (Διάβολος) a *False Accuser*.

The reformed religion in these latter ages has been in like manner *spoken against*: though it maintains all that [and only that] doctrine which Christ and his Apostles preached, and was before Luther there, where Popery, as such, never was before or since, that is, in the Holy Scriptures; yet the professors and preachers of it have been called and counted Heretics and Schismatics,* and by all possible artifices exposed to the odium of the people, that *none might buy or sell*, that is, have the benefit and comfort of civil society and commerce, that [c] *had not the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name*.

Nay, even among some that profess the Christian and reformed religion, the practice of serious godliness is very much *spoken against*. The power of religion is not only disliked and denied, but contradicted and condemned by those who rest in the form. They that call the evil, good, will call the good, evil; and it is not strange if they, who abandon themselves to work all uncleanness with greediness, speak ill of such as [d] *run not* with them *to the same excess of riot*, where [e] the *wicked walk on every side*, [f] *he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*. [g] The old enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is still working, and the old game every day played over again. [h] The *truth as it is in Jesus*, and the *truth which is according to godliness*, will be contradicted by those that *lie in wait to deceive*. Bigots on all sides will have something to say against Catholic charity and moderation: they that are *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, and *forward to every good work*, must expect to be evil spoken of by such as affect a lukewarmness and indifferency in religion: nor can those who *walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*, escape the lash of their tongues who live at large, and walk loosely, and at all adventures, as the *fools in Israel*.

II. I come now in the second place to enquire what is the reason that so holy and excellent a religion as Christianity is, meets with such hard usage, and is thus spoken against, *every where spoken against*: when we hear such an out-cry as this made against Christianity, it is natural for us to enquire as Pilate did, when such a clamour was raised against its author, *Why, what evil hath it done?* Truly we may say concerning it, as Pilate did concerning him, *We find no fault in it*. Which of all its opposers convinces it of sin or error? It invades no man's right, breaks in upon no man's property, is no disturbance of the peace, no enemy to the welfare of families and societies, is no prejudice at all to the interests of states and princes, but to all these highly beneficial and advantageous: why then is it thus accused, condemned and spoken against? We will endeavour to find out the true reason of it, though

[a] 1 Pet. 1. 18. [b] Acts 17. 18, 19.

* ——*Cui septima quæque fuit lux*
Ignava.——
Who made every seventh day a day of idleness. Juvenal.

† *Dicimur sceleratissimi de Sacramento infanticidii, & pabulo inde, & post convivium incesto.—We are charged with murdering and eating our children at the sacrament, and we are represented as incestuous*, &c. Tertull. Apol. c. 7.

‡ See Dr. *Cave's* Primitive Christianity, *lib.* 1. *chap.* 1.

§ Greg. Nazian. *Invect. in* Julian. *Orat.* 1. *p.* (mihi) 42.

[c] Rev. 13. 17. [d] Isa. 5. 20. [e] 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4. [f] Psal. 12. 8. [g] Isa. 59. 15. [h] Eph. 4. 21. compared with Tit. 1. 1.

* *Lollards* from *Lolium—Tares*, so my Lord Coke from Mr. Fox.

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it is impossible to assign a justifiable reason for that which is most unreasonable.

1. The adversaries of religion speak against it because they do not know it. Sound knowledge has not a greater enemy in the world than ignorance. Our Lord Jesus was therefore despised and hated by the world, because the world knew him not, John 1. 10. If they had known the dignity of his person, the excellency of his doctrine, and the gracious design and purpose of his coming into the world, certainly they *would not have crucified the Lord of Glory,* 1 Cor. 2. 8. [a]They that did it, did it through ignorance, and knew not what they did. Thus they who say to the Almighty, [b] *Depart from us,* could not say so if they did not at the same time studiously decline the knowledge of his ways. No man will speak against religion and the power of it, that has either seriously weighed the proofs and evidences of it, or impartially tried the comfort and benefit of it. [c]If they knew this gift, this inestimable gift of God, instead of speaking against it, they would covet it earnestly as the best gift. " He that looks at a distance upon men dancing, would think them to be mad :" (It was Peter Martyr's comparison, in a sermon which had so good an influence upon the conversion of the Marquis of Vico.) " but let him come nearer them, and observe the regularity and harmony of all their motions and postures, and he will not only admire their order, but find in himself an inclination to join with them. So he that contents himself with a distant and transient view of the practice of piety, will perhaps take up hard thoughts of it; but a better acquaintance will rectify the mistake." When the spouse in the Canticles had given a description of her beloved to the daughters of Jerusalem, the same, who, before had scornfully asked, [d] *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* now as seriously enquires, *Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* The People of God are called his [e] *Hidden Ones,* and their Life is a [f] *hidden Life,* their [g] way *above;* and therefore it is that the world speaks evil of them, because it *knows them not,* 1 John 3. 1. They who *speak evil of* these *dignities, speak evil of those things which they know not,* as the Apostle speaks, Jude, v. 8, 10. How unjust then and unreasonable is the enmity and malice of the adversaries of religion, to condemn what they never inquired * into, and to load that with the vilest reproaches, which, for ought they know, merits the highest encomiums! And how excellent then are the ways of God, which none speak ill of but those that are unacquainted with them! while those that know them, witness to the goodness of them, and *Wisdom is justified of her Children,* Mat. 11. 19.

2. They speak against it, because they do not like it; and we know that ill-will never speaks well. Though they have little acquaintance with religion, yet they know this concerning it in general, that it is not agreeable † with the way of their hearts, which they are resolved to walk in, nor with the course of this world, which is the chart and compass they steer by, and from which they take their measures. They know this, that it lays a restraint on their appetites and passions, and consists much in the mortifying their beloved lusts and corruptions; and therefore they have a secret antipathy to it: [h]The *carnal mind,* which is *enmity against God,* is so against all who bear the image of God. Christ has bid his disciples to expect the hatred of the world, and not to marvel at it, John 15. 18, &c. They who hate to be themselves reformed, will never love those that are reformed: *out of the abundance* therefore *of the heart,* and the malignity that is there, it is no marvel if *the mouth speak;* where the root of bitterness is, it will bear gall and wormwood. The daring sinner that *stretches out his hand against God,* finds it too short to *reach* him; but [i] *say they, with our tongue we will prevail, our lips are our own.* The beast that made war with heaven, in the Apocalyptic vision, though he had ten horns, and those crowned, yet, is not described doing mischief with them, but *opening his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven;* Rev. 13. 5, 6. The poison of the serpent's seed is under their tongue, Rom. 3. 13.

3. They speak against religion because it speaks against them. They who have fellowship with the *unfruitful works of darkness,* hate the light which discovers them. Nor do any curse the rising-sun, but those who are scorched by it. Why were the Pharisees so exasperated against our Saviour, [k] but, because he spake his parables against them, and laid them open in their own colours? Why did the world hate him who so loved the world, [l] but because he *testified of it that its works are evil?* Why had Joseph's brethren such a spleen against him, but [m] because he was a witness against them, and brought to his father their evil report? Why did Ahab hate Micaiah, and call Elijah his enemy, [n] but because they were the faithful reprovers of his wickedness, and *never prophesied good concerning him, but evil?* Why did the inhabitants of the earth rejoice when the witnesses were slain, [o] but because those two prophets, by their plain and powerful preaching, *tormented them that dwelt upon the earth?* The everlasting Gospel is a testimony, either to us to convince us, or against us to condemn us; and then, no wonder, if those speak against it, who hate to be convinced by it, and dread to be condemned by it. [p] The Prophet complains of those that laid *snares for him*

[a] Acts 3. 15, 17. Luke 23. 34. [b] Job 21. 14. [c] John 4. 10.
[d] Cant. 5. 9. 6. 1. [e] Psal. 83. 3. [f] Col. 3. 3.
[g] Pro. 15. 24. Ps. 10. 5.

* *Quid iniquus quam ut oderint homines quod ignorant? Tunc enim meretur, quando cognoscitur an mereatur.—What is more unjust than for men to hate what they are ignorant of? First, let the merits of a cause be known, and then let sentence be pronounced.* Tertul. Apol. c. 1.

[h] Rom. 8. 7. 1 John 3. 13. [i] Psal. 12. 4. [k] Mat. 21. 45.
[l] John 7. 7. [m] Gen. 37. 2. [n] 1 Kin. 22. 8. 21. 20
[o] Rev. 11. 10. [p] Isa. 29. 21. & 58. 1.

† *Ante nos incipiunt odisse quam nosse, ne cognitos aut imitari possint, aut damnare non possint.—They commence their hatred before they commence their acquaintance, lest, should they commence an acquaintance with us, they should either be constrained to imitate us, or, at best, forbear condemnation.* Min. Fel. p. (*mihi*) 30.

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that reproveth in the gate; and why is it that faithful ministers are so much hated, but because their * business is to shew People their transgressions? If they would flatter sinners that flatter themselves in a sinful way, and cry peace to them to whom the God of heaven does not speak peace, they might avoid a great deal of reproach and censure; but they dare not do it. They are not to make a new Law and Gospel, but to preach that which is made; they have their rule in that caution given to the Prophet, (Jer. 15. 19.) *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* The hearts and lives of men must be brought to comply with the word of God; the word of God can never be made to comply with the humours and fancies of men. Ministers, as they would not for the world make the way to heaven any straiter or narrower than Christ has made it; so they dare not make it any broader or easier, nor offer life and salvation on any other terms than the Gospel has already settled. If they aim at [a] pleasing men, they cannot approve themselves the servants of Christ; and therefore are they so much spoken against. And the same is the reason why the most strict and serious Christians are so much spoken against, because their piety and devotion, their justice and sobriety, their zeal and charity, are standing reproofs to the wicked world, and condemn it, [b] as the faith and holy fear of Noah, condemned the infidelity and security of the old world. The Sodomites were vexed at Lot's godly conversation, as much as he was at their filthy conversation. [c] Wherefore does the *blood-thirsty* hate and revile the *upright*, while the *just seek his soul?* but for the same reason for which Cain hated Abel, [d] because *his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*

III. *Now for the application of this doctrine.*

Let us see what good use we may make of this observation concerning the wickedness of the wicked, in speaking so much against religion and godliness, and what is our duty in reference hereunto.

1. Let us admire the patience and forbearance of the God of Heaven, in that he bears so much and so long with those who thus speak against him and his holy religion. The affront hereby given him is very great and (we would think) intolerable; even hard speeches that reflect upon an infinite majesty, have in them a kind of infinite malignity. He hears and knows all that which is said against him, and against his truth and ways, and as a jealous God resents it. He has always power in his hands to punish the proudest of his enemies; nor would their immediate ruin be any loss to him: and yet, [e] sentence against these evil words and works is not executed speedily. Be astonished, O Heavens! at this, and wonder, O Earth! that these wretches who rebel against the beams of such light and glory, who spurn at the bowels of such love and grace, are not immediately made the visible monuments of divine wrath and vengeance; and, like Sodom and Gomorrah, set forth for an example! That the blasphemers and scoffers of these last days are not instantly struck dumb, struck dead. That he, who has so much said against him, does himself keep silence, and does not answer all these reproaches and contradictions (as he easily could) in thunder and lightning. Though his silence and forbearance are turned to his reproach, even, by those that have the benefit of it, who, therefore, think him altogether such an one as themselves, and take occasion from his patience to question his faithfulness, and challenge his justice, saying, [f] *Where is the promise of his coming?* Yet he bears, and his patience is stretched out even to long-suffering, because he is [g] *not willing that any should perish*, nor that any means should be left untried, to prevent their perishing. Therefore, he bears with sinners, because, this is the day of his patience, and of their probation. The [h] *Wrath of God is revealed from heaven* in the word of God, that we might be awed by faith more than in present providences, which would be an awe to sense. But there is a day coming, a dreadful day, when our [i] *God shall come*, and shall no longer *keep silence*; a day foretold in the early ages of the world, by [k] Enoch the Seventh from Adam, when judgment shall be executed upon ungodly sinners, *for all their hard speeches*, which day he will not anticipate, for *he knows it is coming*, Ps. 37. 13. It is agreeable to the regular course of justice, that all judgments be adjourned till the Judgment-Day, and all executions defered till Execution-Day: and, therefore, now he condescends to reason with those that speak against him, for their conviction, as he does by the prophet, (Ezek. 18, 25, &c.) where he fairly debates the case with those who said, *The Way of the Lord is not equal*; that every mouth may be stopped with an unanswerable argument before it be stopped with an irreversible sentence; and those who have spoken against him, may be sent [l] *speechless* to hell. He keeps silence now, because, when he does speak, he will be justified. When our Lord Jesus was here upon earth, with what an invincible patience did he endure the contradiction of sinners! When so many ill things were witnessed against him, he was silent to admiration, [m] answered not a word to all their unjust calumnies and accusations; but at the same time he *bound them over* to the judgment of the Great Day, by that awful declaration, (Mat. 26. 64.) *Hereafter ye shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power;*—[n] and still he *bears* with us in expectation of that same day. He does not take vengeance presently, because he has an eternity before him for the doing of it.

And, by the way, we may infer hence, that those, who would be like their heavenly Father, must bear

[a] Gal. 1. 10. [b] Heb. 11. 7. [c] Pro. 29. 10. [d] Joh. 3. 12. [e] Ecc. 8. 11.

* *Naturale est & odisse quem times; & quem metueris, infestare si possis.—It is natural for us to hate, and, if possible, to injure, the person whom we fear.* Min. Feb.

[f] 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. [g] 2 Pet. 3. 9. [h] Rom. 1. 18. [i] Ps. 50. 3. [k] Jude 14, 15. [l] Mat. 22. 12. Mat. 26. 63. [m] Joh. 19. 9. [n] Heb. 10. 13.

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reproach and contradiction patiently. When any thing is said against us, reflecting ever so little disparagement upon us, or our families, our resentments of it are very sensible, and we are apt to take it improperly; nay, and to say we *do well to be angry*, for it is not a thing to be endured: not to be endured! O think how much God bears with the contempt and reproach cast upon his great name, and that will surely qualify our resentments of any indignity done to our little names! Who are we, that we must not be spoken against? Or what are our sayings, that they must not be contradicted? Such affronts as these we should learn to bear, as David did when Shimei cursed him, [a] *So let him curse*; and as the Son of David did when his enemies reviled him, *Blessing them that curse us*, and *praying for them that thus persecute us, that we may be the Children of our Father who is in Heaven.* God adjourns his vindication to the Great Day, and then surely we may adjourn ours to that Day, as St. Paul does his, 1 Cor. 4. 5.

2. Let us acknowledge the power of Divine Grace, in keeping up the christian religion in the world, notwithstanding the universal contradiction and opposition it has met with. One would think, that a way thus spoken against every where, should have been long ere this lost and ruined, and the christian name cut off, to be no more in remembrance; [b] which its adversaries have so industriously endeavoured: [c] if it had been of men, it had certainly come to nought quickly, though they had let it alone; but being of God, it was to admiration victorious over all opposition. A sect, a cheat, could never have supported itself against so much contradiction; no human power or policy could have kept it up, nor any thing less than an almighty arm. The continuance of the christian religion in the world to this * day, is a standing miracle for the conviction of its adversaries, and the confirmation of the faith of those that adhere to it. When we consider what a mighty force was raised by the powers of darkness against christianity, when it was in its infancy; how many they were who spoke against it, learned men, great men; books were written, laws were made against it; those that spoke for it, how few were they! and how mean and despicable! the foolish things of the world, and the weak; [d] and, yet, we see the word of God mightily growing and prevailing: must we not needs say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?* The several false religions of the heathens, with their various superstitions and idolatries, though they gave very little opposition one to another, but agreed together well enough; yet having no foundation in truth, they all withered away, and dwindled to nothing; and after the mighty sway they had borne, and all means possible were used to support them, at length their day came to a fall, their oracles were silenced, their Altars were deserted, and the Gods themselves were famished, (Zeph. 2. 11.) and perished from the earth, according to that prediction, Jer. 10. 11. which is put into the mouths of the captive Jews, to retort upon their insulting enemies; and for that purpose is originally in the Chaldee dialect. We may ask triumphantly, not only, [e] *Where are the Gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the Gods of Sepharvaim, Henah, and Ivah,* those obscure and petty deities? But where are the Gods of Babylon and Egypt, Greece and Rome? the illustrious names of Saturn and Jupiter, Juno and Diana? Where are the Gods which our British and Saxon ancestors worshipped, before they received the light of the glorious Gospel? Are they not all forgotten, as dead men out of mind, and their names written in the dust? But Christ's holy religion, though for some ages it was utterly destitute of all secular supports and advantages, and was assaulted on all hands by the most vigorous attacks of its daring and most implacable enemies; yet it has strangely weathered its point, and is in being; and, thanks be to God, in some places in a flourishing state to this day; its cause is an opposed, but never a baffled cause. [f] Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight, a bush burning, and yet not consumed; and say, the Lord is in it of a truth: come and see the captain of our salvation riding forth in the chariot of the everlasting Gospel, [g] with his *crown* upon his head, and his bow in his hand, *conquering, and to conquer.*——That which was every where spoken against christianity, was like the viper which fastened upon St. Paul's hand; [h] it gave people occasion to think very ill concerning it, and to look for its speedy fall; as the barbarous people concerning him, whom they concluded to be a murderer, and expected that he should have swollen, or fallen down dead. But it has in all ages shaken those venomous beasts into the fire, and taken no harm, and so has proved its own divine original. Let us herein acknowledge the wisdom and power of our Lord Jesus, who has so firmly built his church [i] upon a rock, that the gates of Hell, that is, all its powers, and policies, and numbers, could never prevail against it. Mahomet, though he industriously adapted his religion to the sensual appetites of men, whose reason only, and not their lusts,* could object against it; yet he obtained no strength nor interest at all, till by a thousand artifices he had got the power of the sword, and with it forbad any, upon pain of death, to speak against him or his doctrine; charging his first followers, who were to propagate his religion, if they met with any that objected against it, not to dispute with them, but to *kill* them immediately: by which means that grand imposture, in a little time, got some footing in the world, and by the same barbarous and inhuman methods it has been supported now above a thousand years. And in like manner that great enemy of the church, represented in St. John's vision, maintains his interest by causing that *as many as would not worship the*

[a] 2 Sam. 16. 10. [b] Ps. 83. 3, 4. [c] Acts 5, 38. [d] Acts 19. 20.
* See this excellently enlarged upon by the learned Grotius, *de V. R. C.* l. 2.

[e] 2 Kings, 18. 34. [f] Exod. 3. 3, 4. [g] Rev. 6. 2.
[h] Acts 28. 3. [i] Mat. 16. 18.
* See the learned Dr. Humphrey Prideaux's excellent History of the Life of Mahomet.

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image of the beast, should be killed, Rev. 13. 15. Thus are errors and false religions propagated; strip them of these supports, and they fall to the ground of course: but, on the contrary, the christian religion was planted and preserved not only without, but against secular force, recommended and upheld by its own intrinsic truth and excellency, and that divine power which accompanied it. The preachers and professors of it *every where spoken against,* and yet every where getting ground, and strangely victorious, merely by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives unto the death. [a] *Thus is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*

2. Let us greatly lament the folly and wickedness of those who speak against Christ and his holy religion, and if we can do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help to undeceive them, and rectify their mistakes. Surely this is one of the abominations committed among us, for which we should be found among those that *sigh and cry,* (Ezek. 9. 4.) one of those instances of the pride of sinners for which our souls should *weep in secret,* Jer. 13. 17. This is that reproach of the solemn assembly which is such a burthen to all good men, Zeph. 3. 18. Our ears should tingle, and our hearts tremble to hear the reproach and contempt cast upon Christ and his religion, or to hear of it; and looking upon ourselves as nearly concerned in sacred things, we should be sensibly touched with the profanation of them.

To affect us herewith, let us consider,

(1.) The great dishonour hereby done to our God in the world. They that reflect upon his truths and ways, his word and ordinances, reflect upon him, he that touches these, touches the apple of his eye; if, therefore, we have any love to God, or concern for his honour, and have cordially espoused the interests of his kingdom, what is an affront to him, will surely be a grief to us. It cannot but be a very melancholy thought to every sensible soul, that the God who made the world is made so light of in the world; that he who does so much good to the children of men, has so little honour from them, nay, and has so much dishonour done him by them every day, [b] and *his name continually blasphemed;* that the Lord Jesus, who so loved the world, is so much hated and despised by the world. [c] The reproaches of them who thus reproach our master, if we be his faithful servants, we should feel as falling upon us. [d] And if he take what is said and done against his people, as said and done against himself, much more reason have they to find themselves aggrieved in that which is said and done against him. If we pray heartily that God's name may be hallowed, as we should do every day, we should grieve heartily that his name is dishonoured, as we see it is every day. And our resentments of the reproach cast upon God and religion, we should make an humble and pious remonstrance of before God in prayer, as King Hezekiah spread Rabshakeh's blasphemous letter before the Lord, with that tender and affectionate request, *Lord, bow down thine ear and hear: Open, Lord, thine eyes and see,* 2 Kings 19. 16. How pathetically does Joshua plead, (*ch.* 7. 9.) *What wilt thou do unto thy great name?* And with what a concern does the Psalmist, in the name of the church, insist upon this, Ps. 74. 10. *O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever* And, v. 18. *Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.* And how earnestly does he beg, v. 22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.* Thus should the honour of God and religion lie nearer our hearts than any other concern whatsoever.

(2.) Consider the miserable condition of those who presumptuously speak against God and religion. Though they may do it with an air of assurance, as if they ran no hazard; yet he that rolls this stone, it will certainly return upon him sooner or later. They that speak against religion speak against their own heads, [e] and their own tongues will at last fall upon them. We have reason to bewail their madness, and to pity, and pray for them, for they know not what they do. Miserable souls! How will they be deceived at last, when they shall find that [f] *God is not mocked!* And, that while they were studying to put contempt on religion, they were but preparing eternal shame and confusion for themselves! The Lord is a jealous God, and will not hold them guiltless that thus profane his name: Their wit, and learning, and figure in the world, may embolden them in their sin, and bear them up a while in an open defiance of all that is sacred, but nothing can prevent their utter ruin except a serious and sincere repentance; which is an unsaying, with shame and self-loathing, of all that which they have proudly spoken against God and godliness. They that pervert the right ways of the Lord, will certainly [g] fall therein; [h] and they that wrest the Scriptures, do it to their own destruction. Religion's Motto is, *Nemo me impune lacessit.—He who injures me, injures himself,* "It is dangerous playing with edge-tools." [i] Jerusalem will certainly be a burthensome stone to all people that burthen themselves with it. They that spurn at the rock of Salvation, will not only be unable to remove it, but will find it [k] a *stone of stumbling,* and a *rock of offence.* And we find those who ridiculed the word of the Lord, [l] *broken, and snared, and taken.* Let all those, therefore, that mourn in Sion, weep over those that will not weep for themselves; and look with pity and compassion upon those who look upon them with scorn and contempt.

(3.) Consider the mischief that is hereby done to the souls of others. They who thus err, their error remains not with themselves, but this poisonous and malignant breath infects others. Words spoken against religion [m] *eat as doth a canker*; and they who speak them, seldom perish alone in their iniquity, for [n] *many follow their pernicious ways.* Unwary souls are

[a] Rev. 12. 10, 11. [b] Isa. 52. 5. [c] Ps. 69. 9. [d] Mat. 25. 45. [e] Ps. 64. 8. [f] Gal. 6. 7. [g] Hos. 14. 9. [h] 2 Pet. 3. 16. [i] Zech. 12. 3. [k] 1 Pet. 2. 8. [l] Isa. 28. 13. [m] 2 Tim. 2. 17. [n] 2 Pet. 2. 2.

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easily beguiled, and brought to conceive rooted prejudices against that which they hear every where spoken against, and few have consideration and resolution enough to maintain a good opinion of that which they who set up for wits make it their business to cry down. [a] Sergius Paulus was a prudent man, and yet St. Paul saw him in danger of being turned away from the faith, by the subtle suggestions of Elymas the sorcerer, which therefore the Apostle resented with more than ordinary keenness. It is sad to think how many young people, who, perhaps, were well educated and hopeful, when they go abroad into the world, by conversing with those who lie in wait to deceive, have their minds insensibly vitiated and debauched, and, perhaps, they are made seven times more the children of hell than those that first seduced them. Under pretence of free-thought and fashionable conversation, and a generous disdain of preciseness and singularity, atheistical principles are imbibed, the restraints of conscience shaken off, brutish lusts not only indulged, but pleaded for, and serious godliness and devotion looked on with contempt; and thus the heart is impregnably fortified for Satan against Christ and his Gospel, *wrath* is *treasured up against the day of wrath*, and those who might have been the blessing, prove the plague of their age; which is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation to all who wish well to the souls of men, and to those, especially, who are desirous of the welfare of the rising generation.

4. Let us take heed that none of us do at any time, directly or indirectly, speak against the ways of religion and godliness, or make a confederacy with those that do so. [b] Submit to divine instructions given with a strong hand, not to walk in the way of those people who speak ill of religion. Take heed of embracing any notions which secretly tend to derogate from the authority of the holy Scriptures, or to diminish the honour of religion in the soul, or of accustoming yourselves to such expressions as treat not sacred things with that aweful regard which is due to them. Those were never reckoned wise men who would rather lose a friend than a jest; much less are they to be accounted so, who will rather lose the favour of their God. How can it be expected, that those, who, in their common converse make themselves merry with serious things, should at any time be serious in them, or experience the influence and comfort of them? It is not likely that those who make the word of God the subject of their jests, should ever make it the guide of their way, or find it the spring of their joys. Let us not chuse to associate with those who have light thoughts of religion, and are ready upon all occasions to speak against it. It is not without good reason, that among the many words with which St. Peter exhorted his new converts, this only is recorded, *Save yourselves from this untoward generation*, Acts 2. 40. [c] Those that listen to the *counsel of the ungodly*, and *stand in the way of sinners*, as willing to walk with them, will come at length (if Almighty Grace prevent not) to *sit in the seat of the scornful*. Let us therefore abide by that which Job and Eliphaz, even in the heat of dispute, were agreed on, that *the counsel of the wicked shall be far from us*; which protestation we have, Job 21. 16. and 22. 18. It is dangerous making friendship with those who have an enmity to serious godliness, lest we learn their way, and get a snare to our souls.

There are two common pretences, and seemingly plausible ones, under which those who speak against religion shelter themselves; but they are neither of them justifiable.

(1.) They pretend that it is only for argument sake that they object against religion, and pick quarrels with it, and (so little esteem they have of the thing called sincerity) they will not be thought to mean as they say. And are the great principles of religion become such moot-points, such matters of doubtful disputation, that it is indifferent which side of the question a man takes, and upon which he may argue, *pro* or *con—for or against*, at his pleasure? That grave and weighty * saying of a learned heathen is enough to silence this pretence, *Mala enim & impia consuetudo est, contra Deos disputandi, sive ex animo id sit, sive simulate—It is an evil thing to talk against religion, whether a man means as he says or no*, or (in the language of our age) whether he speak seriously, or only banter. Julian the apostate, who, before he threw off his disguise, frequently argued against christianity, pretended it was only for disputation sake. But *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*, and whence can such evil things come, but from an evil treasure there?

(2.) They pretend that it is not religion that they ridicule and expose to contempt, but some particular forms and modes of religious worship which they do not like. And this is one ill effect of the unhappy divisions among christians, that while one side has laboured to make the other contemptible, religion in general has suffered on all sides. To reprove what we think amiss with prudence and meekness, is well; but to reproach and make a jest of that which our fellow-christians look upon as sacred, and make a part of their religion, cannot be to any good purpose at all. To scoff at the mistakes or weaknesses of our brethren, is the way to provoke and harden them, but not to convince and reform them. They who think to justify this way of ridiculing those that differ from them, by the instance of Elijah's jeering the priests of Baal, perhaps [d] *know not what manner of spirit they are of*, no more than those disciples did who would have their intemperate heats countenanced by the example of that great prophet.

5. Let us who profess the christian religion be very cautious that we do not give occasion to any to speak against it. If there are those, in all places, who are industrious to cast reproaches upon religion, then we have need to walk circumspectly, and to look well

[a] Acts 13. 7, 8, 9, 10. [b] Isa. 8. 11, 12. [c] Ps. 1. 1.

[d] Luke 9. 55.

* *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. 2. *ad fin.*

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to our goings, that those who watch for our halting may have no occasion given them to blaspheme. It is certain, that though in religion there is nothing which may be justly spoken against; yet among those who profess it, there is too often found that which deserves to be taxed, and which cannot pass without just and severe reflections —— *Pudet hæc opprobia nobis—These reproaches are a disgrace to us*—Are there not those within the pale of the Church, through whom the name of God and his doctrine are blasphemed, [a] and *by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of.* Are there not those who wear Christ's livery, but are a * scandal to his family, [b] spots in the love-feasts, and a standing reproach to that worthy name by which they are called? Now though it is certainly very unjust and unfair to impute the faults of professors to the religion they profess, and to reproach christianity because there are those that are called christians who expose themselves to reproach; yet, it is, without question, the sin of those who give men occasion to do so. This was the condemnation in David's case, and entailed the sword upon his house, though the sin was pardoned, by which he had *given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,* 2 Sam. 12. 14. Let us therefore double our diligence and care, to give no offence either to Jew or Gentile, that religion, which has so often been wounded in the house of her friends, may never be wounded through our misconduct.

If we inquire (as we are concerned to do) what it is, that gives occasion of reflection upon religion, we shall find that the imprudence of those that profess it, gives some occasion, but their immoralities much more.

(1.) The imprudence of christians often turns to the reproach of christianity. There may be such overdoing, even in well-doing, as may prove undoing. When more stress is laid than ought to be upon some instances of religion, to the exclusion of others, and the exercises of devotion are either mistimed, or misplaced, or misproportioned, religion is hereby misrepresented, or looked upon to disadvantage. Rash and indiscreet zeal may give occasion to those who seek occasion to speak against all religious zeal. Therefore [c] *walk in wisdom toward them that are without.* Religion is a most sweet and pleasant and amiable thing: let not us, by our indiscretion, make it a task to ourselves, and a terror to others. The more the children of God [d] are children of wisdom, the more they justify it, and its ways. Christian prudence is very much the beauty and strength of christian piety. Though it will secure the welfare of our own souls if we walk in our integrity, yet, it is necessary, for the preserving the credit of our profession, that we walk in wisdom, that [e] *wisdom of the prudent* which is to *understand his way,* that [f] *wisdom* which is *profitable to direct.* [g] And *if any man lack* this *wisdom, let him ask it of God,* who *gives liberally,* and *upbraids us not* with our folly. Pray with David, (Ps. 27. 11.) *Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.* (Hebr. because of mine observers.) Our enemies are our observers, and will be ready to reproach our way, for the sake of the false steps we take in it, and therefore we have need to ponder the path of our feet, and let discretion guide and govern our zeal.

(2.) The immoralities of those who profess christianity turn much more to the reproach of that holy religion, when those who are called christians are griping and covetous, and greedy of the world, when they are false and deceitful, and unjust in their dealings, sour and morose, and unnatural to their relations, turbulent and unquiet in societies, when they are froward and passionate, proud and haughty, hard-hearted and oppressive, loose and intemperate; when they are found guilty of lying and cheating, drunkenness or uncleanness; when it appears that they keep up some secret haunts of sin, under the cloak and covert of a specious profession; when they who profess the christian faith, indulge themselves in those things that are contrary to the light and law even of natural religion: this is that, which opens the mouths of the adversaries to speak reproachfully of that religion, the profession of which is made to consist with such vile practices, which cannot possibly consist with the power of it. This makes people ready to say as that Mahometan Prince did, when the christians had broken their league with him, "O Jesus! are these thy christians?" Or, as the complaint was upon another occasion, *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelium—Either this is not gospel, or these are not to be called professors of the gospel.* [h] If ministers *give offence in any thing,* not they only, but their *ministry* will *be blamed.* Nay, if servants, and christians of the lowest rank and figure, be unfaithful and disobedient to the government they are under, the [i] *name of God, and his doctrine,* is likely to be *blasphemed.* Let us therefore who profess relation to the eternal God, and dependance upon the blessed Jesus, and a regard to the Holy Scriptures, as we value the reputation of our religion, [k] *walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.* Let us order our conversation so, in every thing, that we may [l] *adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.* While we are called by so good a name, let us not dare to do an evil thing. The disciples of Christ are as a [m] *City upon a hill,* and have many eyes upon them, and therefore have need to behave themselves with a great deal of caution, and to [n] *abstain from all appearance of evil.* Let us not do any thing that is unjust, or unbecoming us, nor allow ourselves in that which we know the Gospel we profess does by no means allow of, lest we be to answer another day for all the reproach of religion which we have occasioned: how light soever we

* The foulest reproaches of the primitive christians took rise from the vile practices of the Gnosticks, and other Pseudo-christians. Of which, Vid. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 4. c. 7.

[a] 2 Pet. 2. 2.
[b] Jude 12. [c] Col. 4. 5. [d] Luke 7. 35. [e] Pro. 14. 8.
[f] Ecc. 10. 10. [g] Jam. 1. 5. [h] 2 Cor. 6. 3. [i] 1 Tim. 6. 1.
[k] Col. 1. 10. [l] Tit. 2. 10. [m] Mat. 5. 14. [n] Thes. 5. 22.

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may make of this now, we shall find that it will greatly inflame the reckoning shortly, when God will assert the honour of his own name, and will be glorified upon those by whom he was not glorified. In consideration of this, let us see to it, that we [a] have our conversation honest among the adversaries of our religion, that they who speak against us as evil-doers, may, by our good works, which they shall behold, be brought to glorify God, and to entertain good thoughts of religion; or at least, [b] that *we may with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.* Our religion, I am sure, is an honour to us; let not us then be a dishonour to it.

6. If there be those every where that speak against religion and godliness, let us then as we have opportunity be ready to speak for it. Every christian should be both a witness and an advocate for his religion, and the rather because it is so much opposed and contradicted: next to our care not to be a shame to the gospel, should be our resolution not to be ashamed of the gospel: you are subpœned by the King of Kings to appear for him in the world; *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,* Isa. 43. 10. Do not betray this cause then by declining your testimony, how much soever you may be brow-beaten and confronted. Say with a holy boldness as Elihu, (Job 36. 2.) *Suffer me a little, and I will shew you that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.* You hear what is daringly said against God, how his holy name is trampled upon and abused, his truths contradicted, his word and ordinances vilified, and have you never a word to say for him? Is our Lord Jesus appearing for us in heaven, pleading our cause there, pleading it with his own blood, and shall not we be ready to appear for him on earth and plead his cause, though it were with the hazard of our blood? As it is then a time to keep silence, when we ourselves are spoken against, [c] *I as a deaf man heard not;* so it is then [d] *a time to speak* when God is spoken against, and the honour of our religion lies at stake: at such a time we must take heed, lest by a cowardly silence we wrong so just a cause, as if we were either ashamed or afraid to own it. Wisdom's children should take all occasions to justify wisdom, and vindicate her from the aspersions that are cast upon her. Read the doom of him that is ashamed of Christ and of his words in this adulterous generation, (Mark 8. 38.) *Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the Glory of his Father.* Not confessing Christ when we are called to it, is in effect denying him, and disowning relationship to him; [e] and they who do so, except they repent as Peter did, will shortly be denied and disowned by him. If we should, with an [f] angry countenance at least, drive away a backbiting tongue that reproaches our brother, much more a blasphemous tongue that reproaches our Maker. Should we hear a near relation, or a dear friend (in whose reputation it is natural for us to reckon ourselves sharers) spoken against and slandered) we would readily appear in his vindication; and have we no resentments of the contempt and contumely cast on religion? Can we sit by contentedly to hear God and Christ, and the Scripture and serious godliness reflected on, and have we nothing to say in their behalf? Common equity obliges us to be the patrons of a just, but wronged cause. And that we may not think ourselves discharged from this duty, by our inability to defend the truths and ways of God, and so make our ignorance and unskilfulness in the word of righteousness an excuse for our cowardice and want of zeal, we ought to take pains to furnish ourselves with a clear and distinct knowledge of the [g] *certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed.* We must labour to understand not only the truths and principles, but the grounds and evidences of our religion, that we may be able to [h] *give an answer* (ἀπολογίαν, an *apology*) *to every man that asks us a reason of the hope that is in us.* How industrious are the profane wits of the age to find out something to say against religion! and should not that quicken us to provide ourselves with the [i] *armour of righteousness both on the right hand and on the left,* aiming at the [k] *riches of the full assurance of understanding?* And if we do (as there is occasion) with humility and sincerity, and from a principle of zeal for God and his honour, appear in defence of religion and its injured cause, we may doubtless take encouragement from that promise, (Mat. 10. 19.) *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* God will own those that own him, and will not fail to furnish his faithful advocates with needful instructions, and many times ordains such [l] *strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings,* as strangely *stills the enemy and avenger.*

7. Let none of us ever think the worse of the way of religion and godliness for its being *every where spoken against,* nor be frightened hereby from walking in that way. The contempt cast on the practice of piety is with many an invincible objection against it; their good impressions, good purposes, and good overtures, are hereby crushed and brought to nothing: they have that within them which tells them, that the way of sobriety and serious godliness is a very good way, and they sometimes hear that word behind them saying, [m] *This is the way, walk ye in it;* but they have those *about them* that tell them otherwise, and thus the convictions of conscience are over-ruled and baffled by the censures and reproaches of men, whose praise they covet *more than the praise of God.*

But to take off the force of this objection, let us consider these four things:

(1.) Consider who they are that speak against religion and godliness, not only they who are mortal men, whom the [n] *moth shall eat up like a garment, men that shall die,* and the *sons of men, which shall be made as grass,* all whose thoughts will shortly perish with them, and therefore why should we *fear their reproach, or be afraid of their revilings?* Not only they who are fallible men, who may be mistaken, and whose judgment is by

[a] 1 Pet. 2. 12. [b] 1 Pet. 2. 15. [c] Ps. 38. 13. [d] Ecc. 3. 7. [e] Luke 12. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 10. [f] Pro. 25. 23. [g] Luke 1. 4. Ps. 8. 2. [h] 1 Pet. 3. 15. [i] 2 Cor. 6. 7. [k] Col. 2. 2. [l] Isa. 30. 21. [n] Isa. 51. 7, 8, 12.

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no means decisive; nor such as will bear us out: shall we put what men say in the scale against what God says? *Let God be true, and every man a liar.* We must not be judged hereafter, and therefore should not be ruled now, by the sentiments and opinions of men. Those who speak against religion are also for the most part bad men, men of unsettled heads, debauched consciences, and profligate lives. It is the fool, and none but he, that says in his heart, *There is no God.* The scoffers of the last days are men that walk after their own lusts, whose carnal fleshly interest retains them on that side. David was abused by the abjects, (Ps. 35. 15.) and the christians at Thessalonica, by *certain lewd fellows of the baser sort*, Acts 17. 5. Such as those are the men that make a mock at religion; and shall we be swayed and influenced in the greatest concerns of our immortal souls by such men as these? Shall those have the government of us, that have so little government of themselves? Shall the cavils and vain scoffs of those, who know not what it is to be serious, carry the day against the deliberate sentiments of all wise and good men, who have with one consent subscribed to the equity and goodness of religion's ways? If we chuse such as these for our leaders, surely the *blind lead the blind*, and we know the consequence.

(2.) Consider how trifling and frivolous that is which is commonly said against religion and godliness. The Devil made his first fatal assault upon mankind by lies and slanders, suggesting hard thoughts of God, and promising impunity in sin; and by the same wretched methods he still supports and carries on his interest in the world. They who speak against religion, make lies their refuge, and under falsehood they hide themselves. All those bold and daring things which are spoken against religion, are either groundless and unproved calumnies, or very unjust and unfair representations. Hence the enemies of religion are said to be [a] *absurd and unreasonable men;* men, who, while they cry up the oracles of reason, rebel against all the light and laws of it. Put all that together which is spoken against godliness, and weigh it in the balances of right reason, and you will write *Tekel* upon it, *weighed in the balances, and found wanting.* And, as if an over-ruling providence had forced the scoffers of these last days to confess their own infatuation, some of those who have been most sharp in their invectives against religion, have been no less free in their satires against reason itself, as if they were resolved to answer the character of Solomon's fool, whose [b] *wisdom fails him* so far, that *he saith to every one that he is a fool.*

(3.) Consider how much is to be said for religion, notwithstanding it is *every where spoken against.* Religion has reason on its side, its cause is a good cause; and it is the right way, whoever speaks against it. [c] "It is no disparagement" (as that excellent pen expresses it) "to be laughed at, but to deserve to be so." You have heard religion reproached, but did you ever find that it deserved to be so? Nay, on the contrary, have you not found that it very well deserves your best affections and services? Inquire of those who have made trial of it, consult the experiences of others: [d] *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?* [e] *Ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thine elders, and they will tell thee,* [f] *that the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding.* They will tell thee, [g] that religion's ways are *ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,* and that all the wealth and pleasure in this world is not worth one hour's communion with God in Jesus Christ. They will tell thee, that there are no truths so certain and weighty as divine truths, and that no statutes and judgments are so righteous as the divine law, which is holy, just, and good. They will tell thee, that real holiness and sanctification is the perfection of the human nature, as well as the participation of a divine nature; that a firm belief of the principles of religion is the greatest improvement of our intellectual powers, a strict adherence to its rules our surest guide in all our ways, and a cheerful dependance upon its promises, the fountain of better joys, and the foundation of better hopes, than any we can be furnished with in the things of sense and time. They will tell thee, that a life of serious godliness is incomparably the most sublime and honourable, the most sweet and comfortable life a man can live in this world; and that nothing does more answer the end of our creation, better befriend societies, or conduce more to our true interest in both worlds, than that holy religion which is *every where spoken against.*

(4.) Consider that the cause of religion and godliness, however it be spoken against and opposed, will infallibly be the prevailing cause at last. We are sensible of a mighty struggle in the world between the *seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent;* Michael and his angels on the one side, and the dragon and his angels on the other. Many there are who speak against religion, and are very vigorous in opposing it, and some, though but a few, who are speaking for it, contending for the faith, and striving against sin; now it is desireable to know which of these contesting interests will be victorious; and we may be assured that the cause of God and religion will certainly carry the day. Contradicted truths will be effectually cleared and vindicated; despised holiness will be honoured; mistakes rectified; reproaches rolled away; and every thing set in a true light. [h] *Then you shall return and discern* between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, which now it is not always easy to do. The day of the Lord is said to be in the *valley of decision,* (Joel 3. 14.) Because then and there will this great cause be decided, which has been so long depending, and a definitive sentence given, from which there will be no exception. [i] *Our God will* then *come, and will not keep silence;* whoever now speaks against religion, he will then speak for it, and will undoubtedly be [k] *justified when he speaks,* and *clear when he judgeth.* Particular parties and interests, as such, will wither and come to

[a] 2 Thess. 3. 2. [b] Ecc. 10. 3. [c] Archbp. Tillotson's Sermon on 2 Pet. 2. 3.
[d] Job 5. 1. [e] Deut. 32. 7. [f] Job 28. 28. [g] Pro. 3. 17.
[h] Mal. 3. 18. [i] Ps. 50. 3. [k] Ps. 51. 4.

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nothing; but catholic christianity, that is, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, in expectation of the blessed hope; this is good, and the goodness of it being founded on the unchangeable will of the eternal mind, it is eternally good, and no doubt will be eternally glorious, whatever is said against it. This, this is that gold and silver, and those precious stones, which will stand the test of the fire that shall *try every man's work*, (1 Cor. 3. 12, 13.) and will be [a]*found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

Assure yourselves (christians) there is a [b]*day of recompence for the controversy of* Sion coming, and it is at hand; [c]*Behold, the Judge standeth before the door.* Then vice and wickedness, which now appear so daring, so threatening, will be effectually and irrecoverably crushed; and such a fatal and incurable blow given to the serpent's head, that he shall never hiss, shall never spit his venom any more: then shall the *upright have the dominion*, (Ps. 49. 14.) and all the faithful soldiers of the Lord Jesus shall be called to [d]*set* their *feet upon the necks* of principalities and powers. Then atheists and blasphemers, the debauchees and profane scoffers of the age, will have their mouths stopped with an irresistible conviction; will have all their vile calumnies visibly confuted, their hearts filled with unspeakable horror, and their faces with everlasting shame: their refuge of lies will then be swept away, and [e]*rocks and mountains* called upon in vain to shelter them: [f]then shall *the righteous*, who are now trampled upon and despised, *shine as the sun in the firmament of their Father.* Wisdom and her children shall be first justified, and then glorified before all the world: and they who through grace have [g]*gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image*, shall solace themselves, and praise their Redeemer with everlasting songs of triumph. The dust that is now unjustly thrown upon them, will not only be wiped off, but will add to their glory,[h] and every reproach for the testimony of Jesus, will be a pearl in their crown. The righteous Judge of heaven and earth [i]*will* shortly *render to every man according to his work: To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality* in the other world, and (in pursuit of that) patiently bear disgrace and contempt in this, to them he will render *eternal life*, which will make them as happy as they can desire, far more happy than they can conceive. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but contradict it, and rebel against the light and laws of it, being resolved to obey unrighteousness, to them he will render, with a just and almighty hand, indignation and wrath; the effect of which will be such tribulation and anguish to the soul, as will make them feel eternally, what now they will not be persuaded to believe, that [k]*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;* for never any hardened their hearts against him and prospered. Brethren, [l]*These are the true sayings of God*, on the certainty of which we may venture our immortal souls.

They who speak and act so much against religion, design to run it down, and extirpate it, that the [m]*name of it may be no more in remembrance;* and perhaps you hear them sometimes boast of their success herein: if they can but handsomely (as they think) ridicule the sacred text, or banter any of the divine mysteries, or hector over a good man, they are ready to triumph, as if they had run down religion: run down religion! In the name of my great Master, I defy all the powers of hell and earth to run it down:* they may sooner run down the flowing tide, or the sun when he goes forth in his strength, than run down the least of the dictates of eternal truth, not one [n]iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground. Dagon will certainly fall before the Ark of the Lord; [o]and the rod of Aaron will swallow up the rods of the magicians. Do they talk of running down religion, and the Scriptures, and the ordinances of Christ? [p]*The virgin, the daughter of Sion, hath despised them, and laughed them to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at them;* and has therefore *put them to shame, because God hath despised them*, as it is said, Ps. 53. 5. [q]He that *sits in the Heavens* enjoying himself, *and* [r]*rides upon the Heavens* for the help of his people, derides their attempts against the kingdom of his Son, as vain and fruitless. *The Lord shall laugh at them, for he sees that his day is coming.* They have their day now, it is their hour and the power of darkness; but God will have his day shortly, and a glorious day it will be, when our Lord Jesus shall appear in all the power and grandeur of the upper world, to the everlasting terror and confusion of all his adversaries, and the everlasting joy and honour of all his faithful servants and soldiers: With the believing hopes and prospects of which day, let all those who heartily espouse and plead religion's righteous cause, comfort themselves and one another.

[a] 1 Pet. 1. 7. [b] Isa. 34. 8. [c] Jam. 5. 9. [d] Jos. 10. 24. [e] Rev. 6. 16. [f] Mat. 13. 43. [g] Rev. 15. 2. [h] Mat. 5. 11, 12. [i] Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9.

[k] Heb. 10. 31. [l] Rev. 19. 9. [m] Ps. 83. 4. [n] Mat. 5. 18. [o] Exod. 7. 12. [p] Isa. 37. 22. [q] Ps. 2. 4. [r] Deut. 33. 26.

* *Magna est veritas & prævalebit—Great is the truth, and it will prevail.*

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THE COMMUNICANT'S COMPANION:

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE RIGHT RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

To the Reader.

I HERE humbly offer you (christian readers) some assistance in that great and good work which you have to do, and are concerned to do well, when you attend the table of the Lord: a work wherein I have observed most serious people desirous of help, and willing to use the helps they have: which, I confess, was one thing that invited me to this undertaking.

I offer this service, with all due deference and respect to the many excellent performances of this kind, which we are already blessed with, done by far better hands than mine. Who, yet, have not so fully gathered in this harvest, but, that those who come after may gather up plentiful gleanings, without robbing their sheaves. *Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room;* room enough to enlarge upon a subject so copious, and of so great a compass, that it cannot be exhausted.

I do this also with a just sense of my own unworthiness and unfitness to bear the vessels of the Lord, and to do any service in his sanctuary. Who am I, and what is my father's house, that I should have the honour to be a door-keeper in the house of GOD, to shew his guests the way to his table; and that I should be employed thus to hew wood and draw water for the congregation of the Lord? I reckon it true preferment, and by the grace of God, his free grace, I am what I am. It is service which is its own recompence; work which is its own wages. In helping to feed others, we may feast ourselves; for our master has provided, that the mouth of the ox be not muzzled, when he treads out the corn. For my part, I would not exchange the pleasure of converse with the scriptures and divine things, for all the delight of the sons and daughters of men, and the peculiar treasure of kings and princes. It was a noble saying of the Marquis of Vico, "Let their money perish with them, who esteem all the wealth of this world worth one hour's communion with God in Jesus Christ."

In doing this, I hope I can truly say, my desire and design is to contribute something to the faith, holiness, and joy of those who in this solemn ordinance have given up their names to the Lord Jesus. And, if God by his grace will make this endeavour some way serviceable to that end, I have what I wish, I have what I aim at, and it will not be the first time that praise has been perfected, and strength ordained out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.

In this essay I have an eye particularly to that little handful of people among whom I have been (in much weakness) ministring in these holy things now seventeen years; during all which time, through the good hand of our God upon us, we have never once been disappointed of the stated solemnities either of our new moons, or our sabbaths. As I designed my Scripture Catechism, and the other little one that followed it, to be a present, and perhaps ere long it may prove my legacy to the young ones, the lambs of the flock; so I recommend this to the adult, and leave it with them, being desirous, that the sheep, we are charged to feed, may go in and out, and find pasture. And I earnestly wish, that both these may prove successful expedients to preserve some of those things they have been taught from being quite forgotten; and that, after my decease, they, and theirs will have those things always in remembrance.

And (lastly) I send this abroad under the protection and blessing of Heaven; with a hearty prayer to God to forgive what is mine; that is, whatever is amiss and defective in the performance; and graciously to accept what is his own; that is, whatever is good and profitable. Hoping that, if GOD pardon my defects and infirmities, my friends also will overlook them: And that, if he favourably accept my endeavours through Christ, they also will accept them: For truly it is the height of my ambition to approve myself

A faithful Servant
to Christ and Souls,
MATTH. HENRY.

Chester, June 21, 1704.

CHAP. I.

The Names by which this Ordinance is usually called.

IN discoursing of this great and solemn ordinance, which every serious christian looks upon with a peculiar regard and veneration, because I purpose, as God

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God shall enable me, to open, as well the doctrine as the duty of it, it will be proper enough, and, I hope, profitable, to take some of the several names by which it is known.

I. We call it "the Sacrament:" this is the name we commonly give it, but improperly, because it does not distinguish it from the ordinance of baptism, which is as much a sacrament as this; a sacrament which we have all received, are all bound by, and are concerned to improve, and live up to: but when we call this ordinance "the Sacrament," we ought to mind ourselves that it is a sacrament: That is, it is a sign, and it is an oath.

1. It is a sign, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace: for, *such* sacraments are designed to be. It is a parable to the eye; and in it God uses similitudes, as he did of old, by his servants the prophets; Hosea 12. 10. In it Christ tells us earthly things, (John 3. 12.) that thereby we may come to be more familiarly acquainted, and more warmly affected with spiritual and heavenly things. In it Christ speaks to us in our own language, and accommodates himself to the capacities of our present state. Man consists of body and soul; and the soul admits impressions, and exerts its powers by the body. Here is an ordinance, therefore, which consists of body and soul too; wherein Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are, in the instituted elements of bread and wine, set before us, and offered to us. We live in a world of sense, not yet in the world of spirits; and, because, we find it hard to look above the things that are seen, we are directed in a sacrament to look through them, to those things not seen, which are represented by them. That things merely sensible may not improve the advantage they have from our present state, wholly to engross our thoughts and cares; in compassion to our infirmity, spiritual things are in this ordinance made in a manner sensible.

Let us therefore rest contented with this sign, which Christ has appointed; in which he is *evidently set forth, crucified among us,* (Gal. 3. 1.;) and not think it can be any honour to him, or advantage to ourselves, but on the contrary, a dishonour to him, and an injury to ourselves, to represent by images and pictures, the same things which this ordinance was designed to be the representation of. If infinite Wisdom thought this sign sufficient, and most proper to affect the heart, and excite devotion, and stamp it accordingly with an institution; let us acquiese in it.

Yet let us not rest contented with the sign only, but converse by faith with the things signified; else we receive the grace of God in this appointment in vain; and sacraments will be to us, what parables were to them that were wilfully blind, blind us the more, Mark 4. 11, 12.. What will it avail us to have the shadow without the substance, the shell without the kernel, the letter without the spirit? As the body without the soul is dead, so our seeing and receiving bread and wine, if, therein, we see not and receive not Christ crucified, is dead also.

2. It is an Oath. That is the ancient signification of the word sacrament. The Romans called the oath which soldiers took to be true to their general, *Sacramentum militare:—a military oath.* And our law still uses it in this sense, *dicunt super Sacramentum suum, they say upon their oath*: so that, to take the sacrament, is to take an oath, a solemn oath, by which we bind our souls with a bond unto the Lord, Num. 30. 2. It is an oath of allegiance unto the Lord Jesus, by which we engage ourselves to be his dutiful and loyal subjects, acknowledging him to be our rightful Lord and Sovereign. It is as a freeman's oath, by which we enter ourselves members of Christ's mystical body, and oblige ourselves to observe the laws, and seek the good of that Jerusalem which is from above, that we may enjoy the privileges of that great charter by which it is incorporated. An oath is an appeal to God's knowledge of our sincerity and truth in what we assert, or promise; and in this ordinance we make such an appeal as St. Peter did, *Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee*; John 21. 17. An oath is an imprecation of God's wrath upon ourselves, if we deal falsely, and wilfully prevaricate: And something of that also there is in this sacrament; for, if we continue in league with sin, while we pretend to covenant with God, we *eat and drink judgment to ourselves,* 1 Cor. 11. 29.

Let us therefore, according to the character of a virtuous man, (Ecc. 9. 2.) fear this oath: not fear to take it; for it is our duty, with all possible solemnity, to devote ourselves to the Lord; but fear to break it; for oaths are not to be jested with: God has said it, and has sworn it by himself, (Isa. 45. 23.) *Unto me every tongue shall swear;* but he has said also, (Jer. 4. 2.) that we must swear to him *in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness;* and having sworn, we must perform it, Ps. 119. 106. If we come to this sacrament carelessly and inconsiderately, we incur the guilt of rash-swearing: If we go away from this sacrament, and walk contrary to the engagements of it, we incur the guilt of false-swearing. Even natural religion teaches men to make conscience of an oath; much more does the christian religion teach us to make conscience of this oath, to which God is not only a witness, but a party.

II. We call it the Lord's Supper, and very properly; for so the scripture calls it, 1 Cor. 11. 20. where the Apostle, reproving the irregularities that were among the Corinthians in the administration of this ordinance, tells them, *This is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*

1. It is a Supper. A supper is a stated meal for the body; this is so for the soul, which stands in as much need of its daily bread as the body does. Supper was then accounted the principal meal; this ordinance is so among Christ's friends, and in his family it is the most solemn entertainment. It is called a supper, because it was first instituted in the evening, and at the close of the Passover Supper; which, though it tie not us always to administer it about that time, because it would be inconvenient for religious assemblies; yet it signi-

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fies, (1.) That Christ now in the end of the world, in the declining part of its day, as the great evening-sacrifice, *has appeared to put away sin*, Heb. 9. 26. This glorious discovery was reserved for us, *upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. 10. 11. (2.) That comfort in Christ is intended for those only who dwell in God's house, who are night-lodgers there, and not only day-visitants; and for those only who have done the work of the day, in its day, according as the duty of every day required. They only that work with Christ, shall eat with him. (3.) That the chief blessings of the new covenant are reserved for the evening of the day of our life. The everlasting feast is a supper, designed for us when we have accomplished as a hireling our day, and come home at night.

2. It is the Lord's Supper, the Lord Christ's supper. The Apostle, in his discourse concerning this ordinance, (1 Cor. 11. 23, &c.) all along calls Christ the Lord, and seems to lay an emphasis on it. For as the ordaining of this sacrament was an act of his dominion, and as his churches' Lord he appointed it; so, in receiving this sacrament, we own his dominion, and acknowledge him to be our Lord. This also puts an honour upon the ordinance, and makes it look truly great, however to a carnal eye it have no form nor comeliness, that it is the Supper of the Lord. The sanction of this ordinance is the authority of Christ; the substance of this ordinance is the grace of Christ. It is celebrated in obedience to him, in remembrance of him, and for his praise. Justly it is called the Lord's Supper; for it is the Lord Jesus that sends the invitation, makes the provision, gives the entertainment. In it we feed upon Christ, for he is the *Bread of Life;* we feed with Christ, for he is our beloved, and our friend, and he it is that bids us welcome to his table. In it, Christ sups with us, and we with him. He does us the honour to sup with us, though he must bring his own entertainment along with him. He gives us the happiness of supping with him upon the dainties of Heaven, Rev. 3. 20.

Let our eye therefore be to the Lord, to the Lord Christ, and to the remembrance of his name in this ordinance. We see nothing here, if we see not the beauty of Christ; we taste nothing here, if we taste not the Love of Christ. The Lord must be looked upon as the *Alpha* and the *Omega, the beginning and the end*, and all in all in this solemnity. If we receive not Christ Jesus the Lord here, we have the supper, but not the Lord's supper.

III. We call it the Cummunion, the Holy Communion. And justly do we call it so: For,

1. In this ordinance we have communion with Christ our Head; *Truly our fellowship* is with him, 1 John 1. 3. He here manifests himself to us, and gives out to us his graces and comforts: we here set ourselves before him, and tender him the grateful return of love and duty. A kind correspondence between Christ and our souls is kept up in this ordinance; such as our present state will admit. Christ, by his Word and Spirit, abides in us; we, by faith and love, abide in him. Here, therefore, where Christ seals his word, and offers his Spirit, and where we exercise our faith, and have our love inflamed, there is communion between us and Christ.

This Communion supposes union; this fellowship supposes friendship; for *can two walk together except they be agreed?* Amos 3. 3. We must therefore in the bond of an everlasting covenant join ourselves to the Lord, and entwine interests with him, and then, pursuant thereto, concern him in all the concerns of our happiness, and concern ourselves in all the concerns of his glory; and this is communion.

2. In this ordinance we have communion with the Universal Church, even *with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. Hereby we profess, testify, and declare, that *we being many, are one bread and one body*, by virtue of our common relation to one Lord Jesus Christ, *for we are all partakers of that one bread*, Christ the bread of life, signified and communicated in the sacramental bread, 1 Cor. 10. 17. All true christians, though they are many, yet they are one, and we express our consent to, and complacency in that union, by partaking of the Lord's Supper. I say, though they are many, that is, though they are numerous, yet as a vast number of creatures make one world, governed by one Providence, so a vast number of christians make one church, animated by one spirit, the soul of that great body. Though they are various, far distant from each other in place, of distinct societies, different attainments, and divers apprehensions in lesser things, yet all meeting in Christ they are one. They are all incorporated in one and the same covenant, and stamped with one and the same image, partakers of the same new and divine nature, and all intitled to one and the same inheritance. In the Lord's Supper we are *made to drink into one spirit*, (1 Cor. 12. 13.) and therefore in attending on that ordinance, we are concerned not only to preserve, but to cultivate and improve christian love and charity; for what will this badge of union avail us, without the unity of the Spirit?

IV. We call it the Eucharist; so the Greek church called it, and we from them. It signifies a thanksgiving; and it is so called,

1. Because Christ in the institution of it, *gave thanks*, 1 Cor. 11. 24. It should seem that Christ frequently offered up his prayers in the form of thanksgivings, as John 11. 41. *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me;* and so he blessed the bread and the cup, by giving thanks over them; as the true Melchisedec, who, when he brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, blessed the most High God, Gen. 14. 18, 20. Though our Saviour, when he instituted the sacrament, had a full prospect of his approaching sufferings, with all their aggravations, yet he was not thereby indisposed for thanksgiving; for praising God is a work that is never out of season. Though the Captain of our salvation was now but girding on the harness, yet he gives thanks as though he had put it off; being confident of a glorious victory, in the prospect of which, even before he took the field, he did in this ordinance divide

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divide the spoils among his followers, and *gave gifts unto men*, Ps. 68. 18.

2. Because we in the participation of it, must give thanks likewise. It is an ordinance of thanksgiving, appointed for the joyful celebrating of the Redeemer's praises. The sacrifice of atonement Christ himself offered once for all, and it must not, it cannot be repeated; but sacrifices of acknowledgment christians must offer daily, that is, *the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, Heb. 13. 15. The cup of salvation must be a cup of blessing, with which, and for which, we must bless God, as the Jews were wont to do very solemnly at the close of the passover supper, at which time Christ chose to institute this sacrament, because he intended it for a perpetual thanksgiving, till we come to the world of praise.

Come therefore, and let us sing unto the Lord in this ordinance; let the high praises of our Redeemer be in our mouths, and in our hearts. Would we have the comfort, let him have the praise of the great things he has done for us: let us remember, that thanksgiving is the business of the ordinance, and let that turn our complaints into praises; for, whatever matter of complaint we find in ourselves, in Christ we find abundant matter for praise; and that is the pleasant subject which in this ordinance we should dwell upon.

V. We call it the Feast, the christian feast. *Christ our passover being sacrificed for us*, in this ordinance we keep the feast, 1 Cor. 5. 8. They who communicate are said to *feast with us*, Jude 12. This name, though not commonly used, yet is very significant: for it is such a supper as is a feast. Gospel preparations are frequently compared to a feast, as Luke 14. 16. The guests are many, the invitation solemn, and the provision rich and plentiful, and therefore fitly it is called a feast, a feast for souls. A *feast is made for laughter*, Ecc. 10. 19. so is this for spiritual joy; the wine here is designed to make glad the heart. A feast is made for a free conversation, so is this for communion between Heaven and Earth: at this banquet of wine, the golden scepter is held out to us, and this fair proposal made, *What is thy Petition, and it shall be granted thee?*

Let us see what kind of Feast it is.

1. It is a Royal Feast: A feast *like the feast of a King*, (1 Sam. 25. 36.) that is, a magnificent feast like that of King Ahashuerus, (Esther 1. 3, 4, 5.) a feast for all his servants, and designed, as that was, not only to shew his good-will to those whom he feasted, but to *shew the riches of his glorious Kingdom, and the honour of his excellent Majesty*. The treasures hid in Christ, even his unsearchable riches, are here set open, and the glories of the Redeemer illustriously displayed. He, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, here issues out the same orders that we find him giving, Rev. 19. 16, 17. *Come, gather yourselves together, to the supper of the Great God*, and that must needs be a great supper. The wisest of Kings introduces Wisdom herself, as a queen or princess making this feast, (Pro. 9. 1, 2.) *Wisdom hath killed her beasts, and mingled her wine*. At a royal feast the provision, we may be sure, is rich and noble, such as becomes a King to give, though not such as we beggars are to expect: the welcome also, we may be sure, is free and generous: Christ gives like a King.

Let us remember, that in this ordinance we *sit to eat with a Ruler*, with the Ruler of Rulers, and therefore must *consider diligently what is before us*, and observe decorum, Pro. 23. 1. He is a King that comes in to see the guests, (Mat. 22. 11.) and therefore we are concerned to behave ourselves well.

2. It is a Marriage Feast: It is a feast made by a King at the marriage of his son; so our Saviour represents it (Mat. 22. 2, 3.) not only to declare it exceeding rich and sumptuous, and celebrated with extraordinary expressions of joy and rejoicing, but because the covenant here sealed between Christ and his church, is a marriage covenant, such a covenant as makes two one, (Eph. 5. 31, 32.) a covenant founded in the dearest love, founding the nearest relation, and designed to be perpetual. In this ordinance, (1.) We celebrate the memorial of the virtual espousals of the church to Christ, when he died upon the cross, *to sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself*; Eph. 5. 26. That was the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart. (2.) The actual espousals of believing souls to Christ are here solemnized, and that agreement ratified, (Cant. 2. 16.) *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* The soul that renounces all other lovers which stand in competition with the Lord Jesus, and joins itself by faith and love to him only, is in this ordinance presented as a chaste virgin to him, 2 Cor. 11. 2. (3.) A pledge and earnest of the public and complete espousals of the church of Christ at his second coming, is here given: then the *marriage of the Lamb comes*, (Rev. 19. 7.) and we according to his promise, hereby declare that we look for it.

If we come to a marriage feast, we must not come without a wedding garment, that is, a frame of heart and a disposition of soul agreeable to the solemnity; conforming to the nature, and answering the intentions of the gospel, as it is exhibited to us in this ordinance. Holy garments, and garments of praise, are the wedding garments: put on Christ, put on the new man, these are the wedding garments. In these we must with our lamps in our hands, as the wise virgins, go forth with all due observance, to attend the royal bridegroom.

3. It is a Feast of Memorial, like the feast of the passover, of which it is said, (Exod. 12. 14.) *This day shall be unto you for a memorial, and you shall keep it a feast of the Lord——a Feast by an ordinance for ever.* The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, was a work of wonder never to be forgotten: the feast of unleavened bread was therefore instituted to be annually observed throughout all the ages of the Jewish church, as a solemn memorial of that deliverance, that the truth of it, being confirmed by this traditional evidence, might never be questioned, and that the remembrance of it, being frequently revived by this service, might never be lost by tract of time. Our redemption by Christ from sin and hell, is a greater work of wonder than that

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that was, more worthy to be remembered, and (yet the benefits that flow from it being spiritual) more apt to be forgotten; this ordinance was therefore instituted, (and instituted in the close of the Passover Supper, as coming in the room of it) to be a standing memorial in the church of the glorious achievements of the Redeemer's Cross, the victories obtained by it over the powers of darkness, and the salvation wrought by it for the children of light. Thus *the Lord hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,* Ps. 111. 4.

4. It is a Feast of Dedication. Solomon made such a feast for all Israel, when he dedicated the temple, (1 Kings 8. 65.) as his father David had done, when he brought the ark into the tabernacle, 2 Sam. 6. 19. Even the children of the captivity kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, Ezra 6. 16. In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper we dedicate ourselves to God as living temples, *Temples of the Holy Ghost,* separated from every thing that is common and profane, and entirely devoted to the service and honour of God in Christ; to shew that we do this with cheerfulness and full satisfaction; and, that it may be done with an agreeable solemnity, this feast is appointed for the doing of it, that we may, like the people of Israel, when Solomon dismissed them from his feast of dedication, go *to our tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord has done for* David *his servant, and for* Israel *his people.*

5. It is a Feast upon a Sacrifice. This methinks is as proper a notion of it as any other. It was the law and custom of sacrifices, both among the Jews, and in other nations, that when the peace-offering was slain, the blood sprinkled, the fat, and some select parts of it burnt upon the altar, and the priest had his share out of it, then the remainder was given back to the offerer, on which he and his family and friends feasted with joy. Hence we read of Israel after the flesh, eating the sacrifices, and so partaking of the altar, (1 Cor. 10. 18.) that is, in token of their partaking of the benefits of the sacrifice, and their joy therein. And this eating of the sacrifices was a religious rite expressive of their communion with God in and by the sacrifice.

Now (1.) Jesus Christ is the great and only sacrifice, who by being *once offered, perfected for ever them which are sanctified,* and this offering never needs to be repeated; that once was sufficient.

(2.) The Lord's Supper is a feast upon this sacrifice, in which we *receive the atonement,* as the expression is, Rom. 5. 11. that is we give consent to, and take complacency in, the method which infinite wisdom has taken of justifying and saving us, by the merit and mediation of the Son of God Incarnate. In feasting upon the sacrifice, we apply the benefit of it to ourselves, and ascribe the praise of it to God with joy and thankfulness.

6. It is Feast upon a Covenant. The covenant between Isaac and Abimelech, was made with a feast, (Gen. 26. 30, 31.) so was that between Laban and Jacob, (Gen. 31. 46, 54.) and their feasting upon the sacrifices was a federal rite, in token of peace and communion between God and his people. In the Lord's Supper we are admitted to feast with God, in token of reconciliation between us and him through Christ. Though we have provoked God, and been enemies to him in our minds by wicked works, yet he thus graciously provides for us, to shew that now he has reconciled us to himself, Col. 1. 21. His enemies hungering, he thus feeds them; thirsting, he thus gives them drink; which, if like *coals of fire heaped upon their heads,* it melt them into a compliance with the terms of his covenant, they shall thenceforth, as his own familiar friends, eat bread at his table continually, till they come to sit down with him at his table in his kingdom.

CHAP. II.

The Nature of this Ordinance.

WHEN the Jews, according to God's appointment, observed the passover yearly throughout their generations, it was supposed their children would ask them, *What mean ye by this service?* And they were directed what answer to give to that enquiry, Exod. 12. 26, 27. The question may very fitly be asked concerning our gospel passover, *What mean ye by this service?* We come together in a public and select assembly of baptized christians, under the conduct and presidency of a gospel minister; we take bread and wine, sanctified by the word and prayer, and we eat and drink together in a solemn religious manner, with an eye to a divine institution, as our warrant and rule in so doing: this we do often; this all the churches of Christ do, and have done in every age from the death of Christ down to this day, and we doubt not but it will continue to be done till time shall be no more: Now what is the true intent and meaning of this ordinance? What did Christ design it for in the institution, and what must we aim at in the observance of it?

It was appointed to be a commemorating ordinance, and a confessing ordinance; a communicating ordinance, and a covenanting ordinance.

I. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is a commemorating ordinance. This explication our Lord himself gave of it when he said, (Luke 22. 19.) *Do this in remembrance of me.* Εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν. *Do it for my memorial;* Do it *for a remembrance of me:* in this ordinance he has recorded his name for ever, and this is his memorial throughout all generations. We are to do this.

1. In remembrance of the Person of Christ, as an absent friend of ours.——It is a common ceremony of friendship, to lay up something in remembrance of a friend we have valued, which, we say, we keep for his sake, when he is gone, or is at a distance; as it is usual likewise to drink to one another, remembering such a friend that is absent. Jesus Christ is our Beloved, and our Friend; the best friend that ever souls had: he is now absent; he has left the world, and is gone to the father, and the heavens must contain him till the time of the restitution of all things. Now this ordinance is appointed

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appointed for a rememberance of him. We observe it in token of this, that though the blessed Jesus be out of sight, he is not out of mind. He that instituted this ordinance, did as it were engrave this upon it for a motto,

When this you see,
Remember me.

Remember him! Is there any danger of our forgeting him? If we were not wretchedly taken up with the world and the flesh, and strangely careless in the concerns of our souls, we could not forget him. But, in the consideration of the treachery of our memories, this ordinance is appointed to remind us of Christ.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget such a friend as Christ is? A friend that is our near and dear relation; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and not ashamed to call us brethren? A friend in covenant with us, who puts more honour upon us than we deserve, when he calls us his servants; and yet is pleased to call us Friends, John 15. 15.? A friend that has so wonderfully signalized his friendship and commended his love? He has done that for us, which no friend we have in the world did, or could do for us; he has laid down his life for us then, when the redemption of our souls was grown so precious, as otherwise to have ceased for ever. Surely we must forget ourselves, if ever we forget him, since our happiness is entirely owing to his kindness.

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget a friend; who though he be absent from us, is negociating our affairs, and is really absent for us? He is gone, but he is gone upon our business; as the forerunner, he is for us entered: he is gone to *appear in the presence of God for us,* as our advocate; is gone to *prepare a place for us,* as our agent. May we be unmindful of him, who is always mindful of us; and who, as the Great High-Priest of our profession, bears the names of all his spiritual Israel on his breast-plate, near his heart, within the veil?

Ought we not to remember, and can we ever forget a friend, who though he now be absent, will be absent but a while? We see him not, but we expect to see him shortly, when he will come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him; will come to receive us to himself, to share in his joy and glory. Shall we not be glad of any thing that helps us to remember him, who not only remembered us once in our low estate, but, having once remembered us, will never forget us? Shall not his name be written in indelible characters upon the tables of our hearts, who has *graven us upon the palms of his hands?* Surely we must continually remember our Judge and Lord, when behold, *The Lord is at hand,* and *the Judge standeth before the door.* Thus must we shew him forth till he comes; for he comes quickly.

2. We are to do this in remembrance of the death of Christ, as an ancient favour done us. This ordinance was instituted in the night wherein our master was betrayed, (that *Night of Observations,* as the first passover-night is called, Exod. 12. 42.) which intimates the special reference this ordinance was to have to that which was done that night and the day following. In it we are to know Christ and him crucified, (1 Cor. 2. 2.) and to remember his sufferings, to remember his bonds in a special manner. All the saints and all the churches could not see Christ upon the cross, therefore in this ordinance that great transaction is set before us, upon which the judgment of this world turned, (John 12. 31.) *Now is the Judgment of this World.*

Here we *remember* the dying of the Lord Jesus; that is,

(1.) We endeavour to preserve the memory of it in the church, and to transmit it pure and entire through our age, to the children which shall be created; that the remembrance of it may be ever fresh, and may not die in our hands. That good thing which was committed to us as a trust, we must thus carefully keep, and faithfully deliver down to the next generation; evidencing that we firmly believe and frequently think of Christ's dying for us, and desiring that those who shall come after us may do so too.

(2.) We endeavour to revive and excite the remembrance of it in our own hearts. The ordinance was intended to stir up our pure minds, (our impure minds we have too much reason to call them) *by way of remembrance,* as the expression is, 2 Pet. 3. 1. That giving so earnestly heed to the things that belong to the great Salvation, as the solemnity of this ordinance calls for, we may *not at any time let them slip,* or, if we do, we may in the use thereof speedily recover them, Heb. 2. 1, 3. The instituted images of Christ crucified are in this ordinance very strong and lively, and proper to make deep impressions of his grace and love upon the minds which are prepared to receive them, and such as cannot be worn out.

We see then what we have to do in our attendance upon this ordinance; we must remember the sufferings of Christ there, else we do nothing.

[1.] This supposes some acquaintance with Christ crucified; for we cannot be said to remember that which we never knew. The ignorant therefore, to whom the great things of the gospel are as a strange thing, which they are not concerned to acquaint themselves with, cannot answer the intention of this ordinance; but they offer the blind for sacrifice, not discerning the Lord's body, and the breaking of it. It concerns us therefore to cry after this knowledge, and to labour after a clearer insight into the mystery of our redemption by the death of Christ; for, if we be ignorant of this, and rest in false and confused notions of it, we are unworthy to wear the christian name, and to live in a christian nation.

[2.] It implies a serious thought and contemplation of the sufferings of Christ, such as is fed and supplied with matter to work upon, not from a strong fancy, but from a strong faith. Natural passions may be raised by the power of imagination representing the story of Christ's sufferings as very doleful and tragical, but pious and devout affections are best kindled by the consideration of Christ's dying as a propitiation for our sins, and the Saviour of our souls, and this is the object of

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of faith, not of fancy. We must here look unto Jesus, as he is lifted up in the Gospel, take him as the word makes him, and so behold him.

[3.] This contemplation of the sufferings of Christ must make such an impression upon the soul, as to work it into a fellowship with, and conformity to Christ in his sufferings. This was the knowledge and remembrance of Christ which blessed Paul was ambitious of, to *Know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings*, (Phil. 3. 10.) and we all by our baptism are in profession *planted together in the likeness of his death*, Rom. 6. 5. Then we do this in remembrance of Christ effectually, when we experience the death of Christ killing sin in us, mortifying the flesh, weaning us from this present life, weakening vicious habits and dispositions in us, and the power of Christ's Cross, both as a moral argument, and as the spring of special grace, *crucifying us to the world, and the world to us*, Gal. 6. 14. When, in touching the hem of his garment, we find (like that good woman, Mark 5. 27.) *Virtue comes out of him* to heal our souls, then we rightly remember Christ crucified.

II. It is a confessing ordinance. If the *heart believe unto righteousness*, hereby *confession is made unto salvation*, Rom. 10. 10. The Lord's Supper is one of the peculiarities of our holy religion, by the observance of which, the professors of it are distinguished from all others. Circumcision, which was the initiating ordinance among the Jews, by leaving its mark in the flesh, was a lasting badge of distinction; baptism, which succeeds it, leaves no such indelible character in the body: but the Lord's Supper is a solemnity by which we constantly avow the christian name, and declare ourselves not ashamed of the banner of the Cross, under which we were listed, but resolve to continue Christ's faithful servants and soldiers to our lives end, according to our baptismal vow.

In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper we are said to shew the Lord's death, 1 Cor. 11. 26. that is,

1. We hereby profess our value and esteem for Christ crucified. Καταγγέλλετε,—*ye shew it forth* with commendation and praise, so the word sometimes signifies. The Cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling-block, because they expected a Messiah in temporal pomp and power. It was *to the Greeks foolishness*, because the doctrine of man's justification and salvation by it was not agreeable to their philosophy. The wisdom of this world, and the princes of it, judged it absurd to expect salvation by one that died a captive, and honour by one that died in disgrace; and turned it to the reproach of christians, that they were the disciples and followers of one that was *hanged upon a tree* at *Jerusalem*. They who put him to such an ignominious death, and loaded him with all the shame they could put upon him, hoped thereby to make every one shy of owning him, or expressing any respect for him: but the wisdom of God so ordered it, that the Cross of Christ is that which above any thing else christians have cause to glory in, Gal. 6. 14. Such are the fruits, the purchases, the victories, the triumphs of the cross, that we have reason to call it our Crown of Glory, and Diadem of Beauty. The politicians thought it had been the interest of Christ's followers to have concealed their Lord's death, and that they should have endeavoured to bury it in forgetfulness; but instead of that, they appointed to shew forth their Lord's death, and to keep it in everlasting remembrance before angels and men.

This then we mean, when we receive the Lord's Supper; we thereby solemnly declare, that we do not reckon the Cross of Christ any reproach to christianity, and that we are so far from being ashamed of it, that, whatever constructions an unthinking, unbelieving world may put upon it, to us it is the *Wisdom of God, and the Power of God;* it is all our salvation, and all our desire. We think never the worse of Christ's holy religion, for the ignominious death of its great author; for we see God in it glorified, man by it saved; *Then is the offence of the Cross ceased;* then is the reproach of it rolled away for ever.

2. We hereby profess our dependance upon, and confidence in Christ crucified. As we are not ashamed to own him, so we are not afraid to venture our souls, and their eternal salvation, with him; believing him *able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him;* and as willing as he is able; and making confession of that faith. By this solemn rite, we deliberately and of choice put ourselves under the protection of his righteousness, and the influence of his grace, and the conduct and operation of his Holy Spirit. The concerns that lie between us and God, are of vast consequence; our eternal weal or woe depends upon the right management of them; now hereby we solemnly declare, that having laid them near our own hearts, in a serious care about them, we choose to lodge them in the Redeemer's hands by a judicious faith in him, which we can give a good reason for. God having declared himself well pleased in him, we hereby declare ourselves well pleased in him too: God having committed all Judgment to the Son, we hereby commit all our Judgment to him likewise, as the sole referree of the great cause, and the sole trustee of the great concern; *knowing whom we have believed, even one who is able,* and faithful *to keep* what we have committed to him *against that day,* that great day when it will be called for, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

This then we mean, when we receive the Lord's Supper: we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and own ourselves to be his subjects, and put ourselves under his government; we confess that he is a skilful physician, and own ourselves to be his patients, resolving to observe his prescriptions; we confess that he is a faithful advocate, and own ourselves to be his clients, resolving to be advised by him in every thing. In a word, in this ordinance we profess that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor of the Cross of Christ; in which his Gospel is all summed up, knowing it to be *the Power of God unto salvation, to all them that believe,* Rom. 1. 16. and having found it so to us.

III. It is a communicating ordinance. Here are not only gospel-truths represented to us, and confessed by us, but gospel-benefits offered to us, and accepted by us:

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us: for it is not only a faithful saying, but well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus died to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 15. This is the explication which the Apostle gives of this ordinance, (1 Cor. 10. 16.) *The cup of blessing which we bless*, that is, which we pray to God to bless, which we bless God with and for, and in which we hope and expect that God will bless us, it *is the communion* (Κοινωνια—*the communication*) *of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break is the communion*, or communication *of the body of Christ*, which was not only broken for us upon the Cross, when it was made an offering for sin; but it is broken to us, as the children's bread is broken to the children, in the everlasting gospel, wherein it is made the food of souls.

By the body and blood of Christ, which this ordinance is the communion of, we are to understand all those precious benefits and privileges, which were purchased for us by the death of Christ, and are assured to us upon the gospel-terms in the everlasting covenant. When the sun is said to be with us, and we say we have the sun, as in the day, as in the summer; it is not the body and bulk of the sun that we have, but his rays and beams are darted down upon us, and by them we receive the light, warmth, and influence of the sun; and thus the sun is communicated to us, according to the law of creation: so, in this ordinance, we are *partakers of Christ*, (Heb. 3. 14.;) not of his real body and blood; it is senseless and absurd, unchristian and inhuman to imagine so; but of his merit and righteousness for our justification, his spirit and grace for our sanctification. We must not dream of ascending up into heaven, or of going down to the deep, to fetch Christ into this ordinance, that we may partake of him: No, *the word is nigh thee*, and Christ in the word, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8.

Unworthy receivers, that is, those who resolve to continue in sin, because grace has abounded, partake of the guilt of Christ's body and blood, and have communion with those who crucified him; for, *as much as in them lies*, they *crucify him afresh*, Heb. 6. 6. What they do, speaks such ill thoughts of Christ, that we may conclude, if they had been at Jerusalem when he was put to death, they would have joined with those that cried, *Crucify him, Crucify him.*

But humble and penitent believers partake of the blessed fruits of Christ's death; his body and blood are their food, their physic, their cordial, their life, their all. All the riches of the gospel are virtually in them.

1. Christ, and all his benefits, are here communicated to us. Here is not only bread and wine set before us to be looked at, but given to us to be eaten and drank; not only Christ made known to us, that we may contemplate the mysteries of redemption, but Christ made over to us, that we may participate of the benefits of redemption. God, in this ordinance, not only assures us of the truth of the promise, but, according to our present case and capacity, conveys to us by his Spirit the good things promised: receive Christ Jesus the Lord, Christ and a pardon, Christ and peace, Christ and grace, Christ and Heaven: it is all your own, if you come up to the terms on which it is offered in the gospel.

Fountains of life are here broken up, wells of salvation are here opened; the stone rolled away from the well's mouth, and you are called upon to come and draw water with joy. The well is deep; but this ordinance is a bucket, by which it is easy to draw. Let us not forsake these living streams, for puddle water. *Breasts of consolation* are here drawn out to us, from which we may suck and be satisfied. These are wisdom's gates, where we are appointed to wait for wisdom's gifts; and we shall not wait in vain.

2. Christ, and all his benefits, are here to be received by us. If we do indeed answer the intention of the ordinance, in receiving the bread and wine, we accept the offer that is made us: "Lord, I take thee at thy word; be it unto thy servant according to it." We hereby interest ourselves in Christ's mediation between GOD and Man, and take the benefit of it, according to the tenour of the everlasting gospel. Christ, in this ordinance, is graciously condescending to shew us the print of the nails, and the mark of the spear, to shew us his pierced hands, his pierced side, those tokens of his love and power as redeemer; we, by partaking of it, comply with his intentions, we consent to him, and close with him, saying as Thomas did, (John 20. 28.) *My Lord, and my God!* None but Christ. None but Christ.

We here, likewise, set ourselves to participate of that spiritual strength and comfort, which through grace flow into the hearts of believers, from their interest in Christ crucified. The gospel of Christ here solemnly exhibited, is meat and drink to our souls; it is bread, that strengthens man's heart, and is the staff of life; it is wine, that makes glad the heart, and revives the spirit. Our spiritual life is supported and maintained, and the new man enabled for its work and conflicts, by the spiritual benefits which here we communicate of, as the natural life, and the natural body is by our necessary food. From the fulness that is in Christ crucified, we here derive grace for grace; grace for gracious exercises, as the branches derive sap from the root, and as the lamps derive oil from the olive-tree, (Zech. 4. 11, 12. John 1. 16.;) and so, like healthy growing Children, *are nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine*, (1 Tim. 4. 6.) till we are *come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* Thus it is our communion with, and communicating Christ's body and blood.

IV. It is a Covenanting Ordinance. *This Cup*, our Saviour tells us, (that is, this ordinance) *is the New Testament*, (Luke 22. 20.;) not only pertaining to the New Testament, but containing it: it has the whole New Testament in it, and is the sum and substance of it. The word διαθηκη signifies both a *testament*, and a *covenant*: in general, it is an instrument, by which a right passes and is conveyed, and a title to some good thing given. The gospel-revelation of God's grace and will, is both a *testament* and a *covenant*; and the Lord's Supper has a reference to it, as both.

1. It is the New Testament. The everlasting gospel

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pel is Christ's last will, by which he has given and bequeathed a great estate to his family on earth, with certain precepts and injunctions, and under certain provisoes and limitations. This will is become of force by *the death of the Testator*, (Heb. 9. 16, 17.) and is now unalterable: it is proved in the court of Heaven, and administation given to the Blessed Spirit, who is as the executor of the will; for of him the testator said, (John 16. 14.) *He shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you.* Christ having purchased a great estate by the merit of his death; by his testament, he left it all to his poor relations who have need enough of it, and for whom he bought it; so that all those who can prove themselves related to Christ, by their being born from above, (John 3. 3.) their partaking of a divine nature, (2 Pet. 1. 4.) and their doing the will of God, (Mat. 12. 50.) may claim the estate by virtue of the will, and shall be sure of a present maintenance, and a future inheritance out of it.

The Lord's Supper is this New Testament, it is not only a memorial of the testator's death, but is the seal of the testament. A true copy of it, attested by this seal, and pleadable, is hereby given into the hands of every believer, that he may have strong consolation. The general record of the New Testament, which is common to all, is hereby made particular.

(1.) The charge given by the will is hereby applied and enforced to us. The Testator has charged us to remember him, has charged us to follow him whithersoever he goes: he has charged us to love one another, (John 13. 34.) and the estate he has left us is so devised, as not to give any occasion to quarrel, but rather to be a bond of union. He has charged us to espouse his cause, serve his interest, and concern ourselves in his concernments in the world, to seek the welfare of the great body, and all the members of it. He has likewise charged us to expect and prepare for his second coming: his word of command is, *Watch.* Now in the Lord's Supper we are reminded of this charge, and bound afresh faithfully to observe whatsoever Christ has commanded, as the Rechabites kept the command of their father, Jer. 35. 6, 8.

(2.) The legacies left by the will are hereby particularly consigned to us; paid in part, and the rest secured to be paid when we come to age, even at the time appointed by the testator. What is left for us is not only sufficient to answer the full intention of the will, enough for all, enough for each, but it is left in good hands, in the hands of the Spirit of truth, who will not deal unfaithfully with us; for, as Christ tells us, (John 14. 17.) *We know him.* Nay, Christ himself is risen from the dead, to be the overseer of his own will, and to see it duly executed, so that we are in no danger of losing our legacies, unless by our own default. These are good securities, and what we may with abundant satisfaction rely upon; and yet our Lord Jesus, *more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immortality of his counsel, has confirmed it by an Oath* (by a sacrament, which is his oath to us, as well as our's to him) *that by all those immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation,* who have ventured our all in the New Testament, Heb. 6. 17, 18.

2. It is the New Covenant——Though GOD is our Sovereign Lord and Owner, and we are in his hand as the clay in the hands of the potter, yet, he condescends to deal with us about our reconciliation and happiness in the way of a covenant, that they which are saved may be the more comforted, and they which perish may be rendered the more inexcusable. The tenor of this covenant is, (Acts 16. 31.) *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Salvation is the great promise of the covenant, believing in Christ the great condition of the covenant. Now this cup is the covenant, that is, it is the seal of the covenant. There seems to be an allusion to that solemnity which we read of, Exod. 24. 7, 8. *Moses* read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people, and the people declared their consent to it, saying, *All that the Lord hath said we will do, and will be obedient;* and then Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, part of it having before been sprinkled on the altar, and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words.* Thus the covenant being made by sacrifice, (Ps. 50. 5.) and the blood of the sacrifice being sprinkled both upon the altar of God, and upon the representatives of the people, both parties did, as it were, interchangeably put their hands and seals to the articles and agreement. So the blood of Christ having satisfied for the breach of the covenant of innocency, and purchased a new treaty, and being the sacrifice by which the covenant is made, is fitly called *The Blood of the Covenant.* Having sprinkled this blood upon the altar in his intercession, when by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, he does in this sacrament sprinkle it upon the people; as the Apostle explains this mystery, Heb. 9. 12,—20. A bargain is a bargain, though it be not sealed, but the sealing is the ratification and perfection of it. The internal seal of the covenant, as administered to true believers, is *the Spirit of Promise,* (Eph. 1. 13.) *whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption,* Eph. 4. 30. But the external seals of the covenant, as administered in the visible church, are the sacraments, particularly this of the Lord's Supper. Sealing ordinances are appointed to make our covenant with God the more solemn, and consequently the more affecting, and the impressions of it the more abiding. The covenant of grace is the covenant *never to be forgotten,* (Jer. 5. 50.) This ordinance therefore was instituted to assure us that God never will forget it, and to assist us that we never may forget it. It is the seal of the new covenant, that is,

(1.) God does in and by this ordinance seal to us to be to us a God. This article of the covenant is inclusive of all the rest, in giving himself to us, to be our's, he gives us all things, for he is God all-sufficient. This is the grant, the royal grant, which the Eternal God here seals, and delivers to true believers, as his act and deed. He gives himself to them, and empowers

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powers them to call him their's. What God is in himself, he will be to them for their good. His wisdom is their's, to counsel and direct them; his power is their's, to protect and support them; his justice is their's, to justify them; his holiness is their's, to sanctify them; his goodness their's, to love and supply them: his truth is the inviolable security of the promise; and his eternity the perpetuity of their happiness. He will be to them a father, and they shall be his sons and daughters, dignified by the privileges of adoption, and distinguished by the Spirit of adoption. Their maker is their husband, and he has said, that he is married to them, and rejoices in them as the bridegroom in his bride, Isa. 62. 4, 5. The Lord is their Shepherd, and the sheep of his pasture shall not want. He is the portion of their inheritance in the other world, as well as of their cup in this; he has prepared for them a city, and therefore is not ashamed to be called their God, Heb. 11. 16. compare Luke 20. 37.

(2.) We do in and by this ordinance seal to him, to be to him a people. We accept the relation by our voluntary choice and consent, and bind our souls with a bond, that we will approve ourselves to him in the relation. We hereby resign, surrender, and give up our whole selves, body, soul and spirit, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, covenanting and promising that we will by his strength serve him faithfully, and walk closely with him in all manner of Gospel obedience all our days. Claiming the blessings of the covenant, we put ourselves under the bonds of the covenant. *O Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant*; wholly and only, and for ever thine. And this is the meaning of this service.

CHAP. III.

An Invitation to this Ordinance.

PLENTIFUL and suitable provision is made in this ordinance, out of the treasures of the Redeemer's grace; and ministers, as servants, are sent to bid to the feast; to invite those whom the master of the feast has designed for his guests, and to hasten those who are invited to this *Banquet of Wine*, alluding to Esth. 6. 14.) Wisdom has sent forth her maidens on this errand, and they have words put into their mouths, (Luke 14. 17.) *Come, for all things are now ready*: This is our message.

I. We are to tell you *all things are ready, now* ready: *He that hath an ear, let him hear* this. All things are now ready in the gospel feast, that are proper for, or will contribute to the full satisfaction of an immortal soul, that knows its own nature and interest, and desires to be truly and eternally happy, in the love and favour of its Creator.

I. *All Things are ready*; all things requisite to a noble feast. Let us a little improve the metaphor.

(1.) There is a house ready for the entertainment of the guests, the Gospel Church, Wisdom's House, which she has *built upon seven pillars*, Pro. 9. 1. God has set up his tabernacle among men, and the place of this tent is enlarged, and made capacious enough, so that, though the table has been replenished with guests, yet *there is room*, Luke 14. 22.

(2.) There is a table ready spread in the word and ordinances, like the table in the temple on which the shew-bread was placed, a loaf for every tribe. The Scripture is written, the canon of it completed, and in it a full declaration made of God's good-will towards men; which he that runs may read.

(3.) There are lavers ready for us to wash in; as at the marriage feast in Cana, there were six water-pots set for purification, (John 2. 6.) lest the sense of pollutions contracted should deter us from the participation of these comforts. Behold, there is a fountain opened, (Zech. 13. 1.) come and wash in it, that being purged from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus, you may with humble confidence compass God's altar.

(4.) There are servants ready to attend you; and those are the ministers, whose work it is to direct you to the table, and to *give to every one their portion of meat in due season; rightly dividing the word of truth.* They are not masters of the feast, but only stewards, and *your servants for Christ's sake*, 2 Cor. 4. 5.

(5.) There is a deal of company already come; many have accepted the invitation, and have found a hearty welcome; why then should your place be empty? Let the communion of saints invite you into communion with Christ.

(6.) A blessing is ready to be craved. He is ready, that is, to bless the sacrifice, 1 Sam. 9. 13. The great High-Priest of our profession, ever living to intercede for us, and attending continually to this very thing, is ready to command a blessing upon our spiritual food.

(7.) The Master of the feast is ready to bid you welcome: as ready as the father of the prodigal was to receive his repenting, returning son, whom he saw *when he was yet a great way off*, Luke 15. 20. God's ear is open to hear, his hand open to give, Isa. 65. 24.

(8.) The provision is ready for your entertainment: *All things are ready.* [1.] For our justification. Divine justice is satisfied, an everlasting righteousness is brought in; an act of indemnity has passed the royal assent, and a pardoning office is erected, where all that can make it appear that they are interested in the general act, may sue out their particular charter of pardon. There is a plea ready, an advocate ready; *Behold, he is near that justifieth us*, Isa. 50. 8. [2.] For our Sanctification. There is a *fulness of grace* in Christ, from which we may *all receive.* The word of grace is ready as the means; the Spirit of grace is ready as the author: every thing ready for the mortifying of sin, the confirming of faith, and our furtherance in holiness. [3.] For our Consolation. A well of living water is ready, if we can but see it; peace is left us for a legacy, which we may claim if we will; promises are given for our support, which, if we have not the benefit of, it is our own fault. There is something in the New Covenant to obviate every grief, every challenge, every fear, if we will use it. [4.] For our Salvation, ready to be revealed, 1 Pet. 1. 5. Angels upon the wing are ready

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to convoy us; Jesus, standing at the Father's right hand, is ready to receive us; the many mansions are ready prepared for us. *All things are ready.*

2. All things are now ready, just now; for, *Behold, now is the accepted time,* 2 Cor. 6. 2.

(1.) All things are now readier than they were under the law. Grace then lay more hid than it does now, when life and immortality are brought to so clear a *light by the gospel.* Christ in a sacrament, is much readier than Christ in a sacrifice.

(2.) All things are now readier than they will be shortly if we trifle away the present season. Now the door of mercy stands open, and we are invited to come and enter; but it will shortly be shut. Now the golden scepter is held out, and we are called to come and touch the top of it; but it will be otherwise, when the days of our probation are numbered and finished, and he that now says, *Come for a blessing,* will say, *Depart with a curse.*

II. We must call you to come: this is now the call, *Come, Come.* The Spirit says, *Come;* and the bride says, *Come;* Rev. 22. 17. Come to Christ in the first place, and then come to this ordinance. *All things are ready;* be not you unready.

This exhortation must be directed to three sorts of persons. 1. Those who are utterly unmeet for this ordinance, must be exhorted to qualify themselves, and then come. 2. Those who, through grace, are in some measure meet for this ordinance, must be exhorted speedily to enter themselves. 3. Those who have entered themselves, must be exhorted to be constant in their attendance upon it.

1. I must apply myself to those, who by their ignorance, profaneness, irreligion, or reigning worldliness, put a bar in their own way, and may not be admitted to this ordinance. If these lines should fall under the eye of any such, let them know that I have a message to them from God, and I must deliver it, *whether they will hear, or whether they forbear.*

Dost thou live a carnal wicked life, in the service of sin and satan, without fear, and without God in the world? *Light is come into the world;* and dost thou *love darkness rather,* not knowing, nor desiring to know the way of the Lord, and the judgment of thy God? Art thou a drunkard, a swearer, a sabbath-breaker? Art thou an adulterer, a fornicator, or unclean person? Art thou a liar, a deceiver, a railer, or a contentious person? Art thou a mere drudge to the world, or a slave to any base lust? Does thy own conscience tell thee, *Thou art the Man;* or would it not tell thee so, if thou wouldest suffer it to deal faithfully with thee?

(1.) Know then, that thou hast no part nor lot in this matter; while thou continuest thus, thou art not an invited guest to this feast, the servants dare not bid thee welcome, for they know the Master will not, but will ask thee, *Friend, how comest thou in hither? What hast thou to do to take God's covenant,* and the seal of it, *into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction?* Read that Scripture, and hear God speaking to thee in it, Ps. 50. 16, &c. *It is not meet to take the Childrens' Bread and cast it to dogs.* Thou art forbidden to touch these sacred things with thine unhallowed hands; for what communion has Christ with Belial? If thou trust thyself upon this ordinance, while thou continuest under such a character, instead of doing honour to the Lord Jesus, thou puttest a daring affront upon him, as if he were altogether such a one as thyself: instead of fetching in any true comfort to thine own soul, thou dost but aggravate thy guilt and condemnation; thy heart will be more hardened, thy conscience more seared, Satan's strong-holds more fortified, and thou eatest and drinkest judgment to thyself, *not discerning the Lord's Body,* not putting a difference between this bread and other bread, but *trampling under foot the blood of the covenant,* as a profane and common thing.

(2.) Know also, That thy condition is very miserable while thou debarrest thyself from this ordinance, and art as polluted put from this priesthood. How light soever thou mayest make of it, this is not of thy whoredoms, this is not of thy miseries a small matter, that thou shuttest thyself out of covenant and communion with the God that made thee, and in effect disclaimest any interest in the Christ that bought thee, as if thou hadst taken the Devil's words out of their mouths, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?* And if thou persist in it, so shall thy doom be, thou thyself hast decided it. If now it be as nothing to thee to be separated from the sheep of Christ, and excluded from their green pastures, yet it will be something shortly, when thou shalt accordingly have thy place among the goats, and thy lot with them for ever. Thou thinkest it no loss now to want the Cup of Blessing; because thou preferrest the Cup of Drunkenness before it: but what dost thou think of the Cup of Trembling, that will ere long be put into thy hand, if thou repent not? Thou hast no desire to the wine of the love of God, but chusest the puddle-water of sensual pleasures rather; but canst thou *drink of the wine of the wrath of God,* which shall be *poured out without mixture, in the presence of the Lamb?* Rev. 14. 10. Thou thinkest thyself easy and happy, that thou art not under the bonds and checks of this ordinance; but dost not thou see thyself extremely miserable, whilst thou hast no right to the blessings and comforts of this ordinance? If there were not another life after this, thou mightest have some colour for blessing thyself thus in thy own wicked way, (and yet, if so, I should see no cause to envy thee;) but, wretched soul, *What wilt thou do in the day of visitation?* Thou that joinest thyself with the sinners in Zion, and chusest them for thy people; *Canst thou dwell with devouring fire? Canst thou inhabit everlasting burnings?* Isa. 33. 14. May God, by his grace, open thine eyes, and give thee to see thy misery and danger before it be too late.

(3.) Yet know, That though thy condition is very sad, it is not desperate. Thou hast yet space given thee to repent, and grace offered thee: O refuse not that grace; slip not that space. Leave thy sins, and turn to God in Christ: cast away from thee all thy transgressions; make thee a new heart; begin a new life: forsake the foolish and live; live to some purpose, and go in the way of understanding; and then, in Wisdom's

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dom's name, I am to tell thee, that, notwithstanding all thy former follies, thou art welcome to her house, welcome to her table; freely welcome *to eat of her bread, and to drink of the wine which she hath mingled*, Pro. 9. 4, 5, 6. Now at least, now at last *in this thy day, know the things that belong to thy peace.* Be wise for thyself, wise for thine own soul; and cheat not thyself into thine own ruin.

Poor Sinner! I pity thee; I would gladly help thee. The Lord pity thee, and help thee! He will, if thou wilt pity thyself, and help thyself. Wilt thou be persuaded by one that wishes thee well, to exchange the service of sin, which is perfect slavery, for the service of God, which is perfect liberty? To exchange the base and sordid pleasures of a sensual life, which level thee with the beasts, for the pure and refined pleasures of a spiritual and divine life, which will raise thee to a communion with the Holy Angels? I am confident, thou wilt quickly find it a blessed change. *Awake, shake thyself from the dust, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck*, Isa. 52. 2. Give up thyself in sincerity to Jesus Christ, and then come and feast with him: thou shalt then have in this ordinance the pledges of his favour, assurances of thy reconciliation to him, and acceptance with him; and all shall be well, for it shall end everlastingly well.

2. I must next apply myself to those, who having competent knowledge in the things of God, and making a justifiable profession of Christ's holy religion, cannot be denied admission to this ordinance, and yet deny themselves the benefit and comfort of it. Such are hereby exhorted, without further delay, solemnly to give up their names to the Lord Jesus, in and by this sacrament. Hear Hezekiah's summons to the passover, (2 Chron. 30. 8.) *Yield yourselves unto the Lord; give the hand unto the Lord*, so the Hebrew phrase is: join yourselves to him in the bond of the covenant, and then exchange the ratifications; *enter into the sanctuary.* First, *Give your own selves unto the Lord*, and then confirm the surrender by the solemnity of this ordinance.

(1.) Let me address this exhortation to young people, who were in their infancy baptized into the christian faith, and have been well educated in the knowledge of God, and of his ways, and are now grown up to years of discretion; are capable of understanding what they do, of discerning between their right hand and their left in spiritual things, and of chusing and refusing for themselves accordingly; and who have had some good impressions made upon their souls by divine things, and some good inclinations toward God, and Christ, and Heaven: such are invited to the table of the Lord, and called upon to come; for *all things are now ready*, and it is not good to delay.

You that are young, will you now be prevailed with to be serious, and resolved for God? You now begin to act with reason, and to put away childish things: you are come to be capable of considering, and you are thinking how you must live in this world! O that I could prevail with you to think first how you may live for another world! I am not persuading you to come rashly and carelessly to the Lord's table, as when you were little children you went to church for fashion's sake, and because your parents took you with them: but I am persuading you now, in the days of your youth, from a deep conviction of your duty and interest, and a serious concern about your souls and eternity, intelligently, deliberately, and with a fixed resolution to join yourselves unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and then to come and seal that covenant at his table. You are now come to the turning time of life, to those years when ordinary people fix for their whole lives: I beg of you, for Christ's sake, and for your own precious souls sake, that now you will turn to God, and fix for him, and set your faces Heavenwards.

Come, and let us reason together a little; and I beseech you to reason with yourselves.

[1.] Are you not by Baptism given up unto the Lord? Are not the vows of God already upon you? Is not your baptism your honour? Is it not your comfort? It is so: but you are unworthy of that honour, unworthy of that comfort, if when you arrive to a capacity for it, you decline doing that for yourselves, which was done for you when you were baptised. How can you expect that your parents dedication of you to God then, should avail you any thing, if you do not now make it your own act and deed? Might not your backwardness to confirm the covenant, by this solemn taking of it upon yourselves, be construed an implicit renunciation of it, and be adjudged a forfeiture of the benefit of it? I believe, that you would not for a world disclaim your baptism, nor disown the obligation of it: you will not, I am confident, you will not throw off your christianity, nor join with those that say, *We have no part in David, no inheritance in the Son of David.* Come then, and ratify your baptism; either let those articles be cancelled, or, now you are of age, come and seal them yourselves. Either stand to the bargain, or say you will not: either be Christians complete, Christians by your own consent, or not Christians at all. The matter is plain: the bonds of both the sacraments are the same; you are under the bonds of the one, which I know you dare not renounce. therefore come under the bonds of the other. Consider; take advice; speak your minds.

[2.] How can you dispose of yourselves better now in the days of your youth, than to give up yourselves unto the Lord? These are your chusing days; you are now chusing other settlements, in callings, relations, and places of abode; why should you not now chuse this settlement in the service of God, which will make all your other settlements comfortable? Chuse you therefore this day whom you will serve, God or the world, Christ or the flesh; and be persuaded to bring the matter to a good issue: determine the debate in that happy resolve which the people of Israel came to, when they said, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. 21. Why should not he, who is the first and the best, have the first and the best of your days? which, I am sure, you cannot bestow better, and which it is both your duty and interest to bestow thus.

[3.] What will you get by delaying it? You intend, some time or other, solemnly to give up yourselves unto

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unto the Lord in this ordinance, and you hope then to receive the benefit and comfort of it; but the tempter tells you, it is all in good time; and you dismiss your convictions, as Felix did Paul, (Acts 24. 25.) with a promise that *at a more convenient season* you *will send for* them. You are ready to say, as the people did, (Hag. 1. 2.) *The time is not come, the time that the Lord's House should be built.* You think you must build your own first; and what comes of those Delays? Satan, ere you are aware, gets advantage by them, and cozens you of all your time, by cozening you of the present time. Your hearts are in danger of being hardened; the Spirit of grace may hereby be provoked to withdraw, and strive no more; and what will become of you, if death surprise you before your great work be done?

[4.] What better provision can you make for a comfortable life in this world, than by doing this great work betimes? You are setting out in a world of temptations, more than you think of; and how can you better arm yourselves against them, than by coming up to that fixed resolution, which will silence the Tempter, with, *Get thee behind me, Satan?* When Naomi saw that Ruth was stedfastly resolved, she left off speaking to her. The counsel of the ungodly will not be so apt to court you to the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful, when you have vowed yourselves set out in the way of God, and seated already at the table of the Lord. You are launching forth into a stormy sea; and this will furnish you with a blast: your way lies through a vale of tears, and therefore you have need to be well stocked with comforts: and where can you stock yourselves better, than in an ordinance, which seals all the promises of the New Covenant, and conveys all the happiness included in them.

And how shall I gain this point with young people? Will they be persuaded betimes to resolve for God and Heaven? *Remember thy Creator,* remember thy Redeemer, *in the days of thy youth;* and then it is to be hoped thou wilt not forget them, nor will they forget thee, when thou art old.

Let me address this exhortation to those, whose inclinations are good, and their conversation blameless; but their desires are weak, and their affections cool and indifferent, and therefore they keep off from this ordinance. This is the character of very many; who are honest, but they want zeal and resolution enough to bring them under this engagement. They can give no tolerable reason why they do not come to the sacrament; it may be they have bought a piece of ground, or a yoke of oxen: their hands are full of the world; and they are too busy, they are unsettled, or not settled to their minds; and this makes them uneasy, and they hope that therefore they may be excused: but the true reason is, they are slothful and dilatory, and the things that remain are ready to die: they cannot find in their hearts to take pains, the pains they know they must take in a work of this nature; they are not willing to be bound to that strictness, care and watchfulness, which this sacrament will oblige them to; they will be as they are, and make no advances: they have *hid their hands in their bosom, and it grieves them to bring it to their mouth again;* that is, they will not be at the pains to feed themselves, Pro. 26. 15.

What shall we say to rouse these sluggards; persuade them to press forward in their profession, *forgetting the things that are behind,* and not resting in them? Hear, ye Virgins, who slumber and sleep and let your lamps lie by neglected: hear the cry; *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!* cometh in this ordinance, to espouse you to himself; stir up yourselves, and go ye forth to meet him. Hear, ye servants, ye slothful servants, your master's voice; *How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard?* Is it not high time to awake out of sleep, and apply thyself more closely and vigorously to the business of a christian? Is it not far in the day with thee, perhaps the sixth hour, or further on; dinner-time; and yet, hast thou no appetite to this spiritual feast, to which thou art invited? thou hast lost a great deal of time already; should not thou now think of redeeming time for thy soul and eternity? And how can that be better done, than by improving such advantageous opportunities as sacraments are? Hear that call to careless and trifling professors, as if thou thyself wert called by name in it, (Eph. 5. 14.) *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

First, Consider what an affront you put upon the Lord Jesus, while you live in the neglect of this ordinance. You contemn his authority, who has given this command to all his disciples, (and among them you reckon yourselves) *Do this in remembrance of me.* And is it nothing to live in the omission of a known duty, and in disobedience to an express precept? Is the law of Christ nothing with you? If you know to do good, and do it not, is it not sin? Is not this as much an ordinance of Christ, as the word and prayer? You would not live without them; nor would you be yourselves, or suffer your children to be without baptism; why then is this neglected? You arraign Christ's Wisdom: he instituted this ordinance for your spiritual good, your strength and nourishment; and you think you need it not, you can do as well without it. This appointment you think might have been spared; that is, you think yourselves wiser than Christ. You likewise hereby put a great slight upon the grace and love of Christ, which have made such rich provision for you, and given you so kind an invitation to it.

This is excellently well urged in the public form of invitation to the Holy Communion, which warns those who are profligate to keep away, in these words: "If any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or in malice or envy, or in any other grievous crime; repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table; lest after the taking of that holy Sacrament, the Devil enter into you, as he entered into Judas, and fill you full of all iniquities, and bring you to the destruction both of body and soul."

And the other exhortation stirreth up those who are negligent, in these words: "Ye know how grievous and

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and unkind a thing it is, when a man hath prepared a rich feast, decked his table with all kind of provision, so that there lacketh nothing but the guests to sit down; and yet they who are called, (without any cause) most unthankfully refuse to come: which of you, in such a case, would not be moved? Who would not think it a great injury and wrong done unto him? Wherefore, most dearly beloved in Christ, take ye good heed lest ye, withdrawing yourselves from this holy supper, provoke God's indignation against you. It is an easy matter for a man to say, I will not communicate, because I am otherwise hindered with worldly business: but such excuses are not so easily accepted and allowed before God. If any man say, I am a grievous sinner, and therefore am afraid to come: wherefore then do ye not repent and amend? When God calleth you, are ye not ashamed to say ye will not come? When ye should return to God, will ye excuse yourselves, and say you are not ready? Consider earnestly with yourselves, how little such feigned excuses will avail before God. They that refused the feast in the gospel because they had bought a farm, or would try their yokes of oxen, or because they were married, were not excused, but counted unworthy of the heavenly feast."

Secondly, Consider, what an injury you hereby do to your own souls. You know not what you lose while you live in the neglect of this ordinance. If you be deprived of opportunities for it, that is an affliction, but not a sin, and in such a case, while you lament the want of it, and keep up desires after it, and improve the other helps you have, you may expect that God will make up the want some other way; though we are tied to ordinances, God is not: but if you have opportunities for it, and yet neglect it; and when it is to be administered, turn your backs upon it, you serve your souls so as you would not serve your bodies; for you deny them their necessary food, and the soul that is starved is as certainly murdered as the soul that is stabbed, and its blood shall be required at thy hands. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, yet thou deniest thine own soul that which would nourish and cherish it, and thereby shewest how little thou lovest it. If thou didst duly attend on this ordinance, and improve it aright, thou wouldest find it of unspeakable use to thee for the strengthening of thy faith, the exciting of holy affections in thee, and thy furtherance in every good word and work. So that, to thy neglect of it, thou hast reason to impute all thy weakness, and all the strength and prevalency of thy temptations, all the unsteadiness of thy resolutions, and all the unevenness of thy conversation. How can we expect the desired end, while we persist in the neglect of the appointed means?

Think not to say within yourselves, we are not clean, surely we are not clean, therefore we come not to the feast; if you are not, why are you not? Is there not a fountain opened? Have you not been many a time called to wash you and make you clean? You are unready, and therefore you excuse yourselves from coming; but is not your unreadiness your sin? And will one sin justify you in another? Can a man's offence be his defence? You think you are not serious enough, nor devout enough, nor regular enough in your conversations to come to the sacrament; and perhaps you are not, but why are ye not? What hinders you? Is any more required to fit you for the sacrament, than is necessary to fit you for heaven? And dare you live a day in that condition, in which if you die, you will be rejected and excluded as unmeet for heaven? Be persuaded therefore to put on the wedding-garment, and then come to the wedding feast. Instead of making your unreadiness an argument against coming to this ordinance, make the necessity of your coming to this ordinance, an argument against you unreadiness. Say not, I am too light and airy, too much addicted to sports and pleasures, am linked too close in vain and carnal company, or plunged too deep in worldly care and business, and therefore I must be excused from attendance, for this is to make ill worse: but say rather, it is necessary that I come to the Lord's Supper, and come in a right manner; my soul withers and languishes, dies and perishes if I do not, and therefore I must break off this vain and sensual course of life, which unfits me for and indisposes me to that ordinance; therefore I must disentangle myself from that society, and disentangle myself from that incumbrance whatever it is which cools pious affections, and quenches that coal. Shake off that, whatever it is, which comes between you, and the comfort and benefit of this ordinance. Delay no longer in a matter of such vast moment, but speedily come to this resolution, (Ps. 119. 115.) *Depart from me ye evil doers*, and evil doings, *for I will keep the commandments of my God.*

Thirdly, Let me address this exhortation to those whose desires are strong toward the Lord, and toward the remembrance of his name in this ordinance; but they are timorous, and are kept from it by prevailing fears. This is the case of many, who, we hope, *fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant;* but they *walk in darkness, and have no light*, (Isa. 50. 10.) who follow Christ, but they follow him trembling. Ask them why they do not come to this sacrament, and they will tell you they dare not come, they are unworthy; they have no faith, no comfort in God, no hope of heaven; and therefore if they should come, they should *eat and drink judgment to themselves.* They find not in themselves that fixedness of thought, that flame of pious and devout affections, which they think should be; and because they cannot come as they should, they think it better to stay away. What is said for the conviction and terror of hypocrites and presumptuous sinners, notwithstanding our care to distinguish between the precious and the vile, they misapply to themselves, and so the *heart of the righteous is made sad*, which should not be made sad. We are commanded to *strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; to say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not*, Isa. 35. 3, 4. But wherewith shall we comfort such, whose souls many times refuse to be comforted? If we tell them of the infinite mercy and goodness of God, the merit and righteousness of Christ, the precious promise of the covenant, their jealous hearts reply, all this is nothing

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nothing to them; the Lord they think has forsaken them, their God has forgotten them, and utterly separated them from his people: *As vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to those heavy hearts*, Pro. 25. 20.

But O ye of little of faith, who thus doubt, would you not be made whole? Would not you be strengthned? Is it not a desirable thing to attain to such a peace and serenity of mind, that you may come with a humble, holy boldness to this precious ordinance?

For your help then, take these two cautions.

1. Judge not amiss concerning yourselves. As it is a damning mistake common among the children of men, to think their spiritual state and condition to be good, when it is very bad, for, *there is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing*; so it is a disquieting mistake, common among the children of God, to think their spiritual state and condition to be bad, when it is very good, for there is that *maketh himself poor, and yet hath great riches*, Pro. 13. 7. But it is a mistake, which I hope by the grace of God may be rectified; and though a full assurance is rarely attained to, and we ought always to keep a godly jealousy over ourselves, and a holy fear, lest we seem to come short; yet such good hope through grace, as will enable us to rejoice in God, and go on chearfully in our work and duty, is what we should aim at, and labour after, and which we ought not to deny ourselves the comfort of, when God by his grace hath given us cause for it. Whenever there is such a serious concern about the soul and another world as produces a holy fear, even that gives ground for a lively hope.

You think you have no grace, because you are not yet perfect; but, why should you look for that on earth, which is to be had in heaven only? A child will at length be a man, though as yet he *think as a child, and speak as a child.* Blessed Paul himself had not yet attained, nor was already perfect. Gold in the ore is truly valuable, though it be not yet refined from its dross. *Despise not the Day of small Things*, for God doth not, Zech. 4. 10. Deny not that power and grace which hath brought you out of the land of Egypt, though you be not yet come to Canaan.

You think you have no grace because you have not that sensible joy and comfort which you would have; but those are spiritually enlightened, who see their own deformity, as well as those who see Christ's beauty. The child that cries, is as sure alive as the child that laughs. Complaints of spiritual burthens are the language of the new nature, as well as praises for spiritual blessings.

Drooping Soul! Thou art under grace, and not under the law, and therefore judge of thyself by the measure of grace, and not by that of the law. Thou hast to do with one that is willing to make the best of thee, and will accept the willingness of the spirit, and pardon the weakness of the flesh. Take thy work before thee therefore, and let not the penitent humble sense of thy own follies and corruptions eclipse the evidence of God's graces in thee, nor let thy diffidence of thyself shake thy confidence in Christ. Thank God for what he has done for thee; let him have the praise of it, and then thou shalt have the joy of it. And this is certain, either thou hast an interest in Christ, or thou mayest have. If thou doubt therefore whether Christ be thine, put the matter out of doubt, by a present consent to him; I take Christ to be mine, wholly, only, and for ever mine; Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms.

2. Judge not amiss concerning this ordinance. It was instituted for your comfort, let it not be a terror to you; it was instituted for your satisfaction, let it not be your amazement. Most of the messages from heaven which we meet with in scripture, delivered by angels, began with *Fear not*, and particularly that to the woman who attended Christ's sepulchre, (Mat. 28. 5.) *Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus.* And do not ye seek him? Be not afraid then. Chide yourselves for, chide yourselves out of these disquieting fears, which steal away your spear, and your cruise of water, (1 Sam. 26. 12.) and rob you both of your strength and of your comfort.

You say you are unworthy to come; so were all that ever came, not worthy to be called children, nor to eat of the childrens' bread; in yourselves there is no worthiness, but is there none in Christ? Is not he worthy? And is not he yours? Have you not chosen him. Let faith in his mediation silence all your fears, and dismiss their clamours with that, *But do thou answer, Lord, for me.*

You say you dare not come, lest you should eat and drink judgment to yourselves; but ordinarily, those that most fear that, are least in danger of it. That dreadful declaration was not intended to drive men from the sacrament, but to drive them from their sins. Can you not say, that through grace you hate sin, you strive against it; you earnestly desire to be delivered from it; then certainly your league with it is broken; though the Canaanites be in the Land, you do not make marriages with them; come then and seal the covenant with God, and you shall be so far from eating and drinking judgment to yourselves, that you shall eat and drink life and comfort to yourselves.

You dare not come to this sacrament, yet you dare pray, you dare hear the word; I know you dare not neglect either the one or the other, and what is this sacrament, but the doing the same thing by a visible sign, which is and ought to be done in effect by the word and prayer; nor ought we to put such an amazing distance between this and other ordinances. If we pray in hypocrisy, our *prayers are an abomination:* if we hear the word and reject it, it is *a savour of death unto death;* shall we therefore not pray, nor hear? God forbid. Commanded duty must be done: appointed means must be used; that which unfits and hinders us must be removed, and we must in sincerity give up ourselves to serve God; do as well as we can, and be sorry we can do no better; and then *having a High-Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, we may *come boldly to the throne of grace*, and to this table of grace.

You say that your faith is weak, your pious affections are cool and low, your resolutions unsteady, and

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and therefore you keep away from this ordinance; that is, as if a man should say he is sick, and therefore he will take no physic; he is empty, and therefore he will take no food; he is faint, and therefore he will take no cordials: this ordinance was appointed chiefly for the relief of such as you are; for the strengthening of faith, the inflaming of holy love, and the confirming of good resolutions: in God's name therefore, use it for those purposes; pine not away in thy weakness, while God has ordained thee strength: perish not for hunger, while there is bread enough in thy Father's house, and to spare; die not for thirst, while there is a well of water by thee.

3. This chapter must conclude with an exhortation to those who have *given up their names to the Lord in this ordinance*, and sometimes sealed their covenant with God in it, but they come very seldom to it, and allow themselves in the neglect and omission of it. Frequent opportunities they have for it, stated meals provided for them, the table spread and furnished. Others come and they are invited, but time after time they let it slip, and turn their backs upon it, framing to themselves some sorry excuse or other to shift it off.

Shall I desire such to consider seriously,

(1.) How powerful the engagements are which we lie under, to be frequent and constant in our attendance on the Lord in this ordinance. It is plainly intimated in the institution, that the solemnity is to be often repeated; for it is said, *Do this as often as ye drink it in remembrance of me*. Baptism is to be administred but once, because it is the door of admission, and we are but once to enter by that door; but the Lord's supper is the table in Christ's family, at which we are to *eat Bread continually*, alluding to 2 Sam. 9. 13. The law of Moses prescribed how often the passover must be celebrated, under very severe penalties: but the gospel being a dispensation of greater love and liberty, only appoints us to observe its passover often, and then leaves it to our own ingenuity and pious affections, to fix the time, and consider how often. If a deliverance out of Egypt merited an annual commemoration, surely our redemption by Christ, merits a more frequent one, especially since we need not to go up to Jerusalem to do it. If this *Tree of Life*, which *bears more than twelve manner of fruits, yieldeth her fruit to us every Month*, (Rev. 22. 2.) I know not why we should neglect it any month. Where there is the truth of grace, this ordinance ought to be improved, which, by virtue of the divine appointment, has a moral influence upon our growth in grace. The great master of the family would have none of his children missing at meal-time.

While we are often sinning, we have need to be often receiving the seal of our pardon; because, though the sacrifice be perfect, and *able to perfect for ever them which are sanctified*, so that it needs never to be repeated; yet the application of it being perfect, *ad modum recipientis—as to the mode of reception*, has need to be often made afresh; the *Worshippers, though once purged*, having still *conscience of sins* in this defective state, (Heb. 10. 2.) they must often have recourse to the fountain opened for the purging of their consciences from the pollutions contracted daily by dead works, to serve the living God, Heb. 9. 14. Even he who is washed thus needs to wash his feet, or he cannot be easy, John 13. 10.

While we are often in temptation, we have need to be often renewing our covenants with God, and fetching strength from heaven for our spiritual conflicts. Frequent fresh recruits, and fresh supplies, are necessary for those that are so closely besieged, and so vigorously attacked by a potent adversary. He improves all advantages against us, therefore it is our wisdom not to neglect any advantage against him, and particularly not this ordinance.

While we are often labouring under great coldness and deadness of affection toward divine things, we need often to use those means which are proper to kindle that holy fire, and keep it burning. We find by sad experience, that our coal from the altar is soon quenched, our thoughts grow flat and low, and unconcerned about the other world, by being so much conversant with this; we have therefore need to be often celebrating the memorial of Christ's death and sufferings, than which nothing can be more affecting to a christian, nor more proper to raise and refine the thoughts: it is a subject that more than once has made disciples hearts burn within them, Luke 24. 32.

Much of our communion with God is kept up by the renewing of our covenant with him, and the frequent interchanging of solemn assurances. It is not superfluous, but highly serviceable both to our holiness and our comfort, often to present ourselves to God as living sacrifices alive from the dead. It is a token of Christ's favour to us, and must not be slighted, that he not only admits, but invites us often to repeat this solemnity, and is ready again to seal to us, if we be but ready to seal to him. Jonathan therefore caused David to swear again, because he loved him, 1 Sam. 20. 17. And an honest mind will not startle at assuranees. Fast bind, fast find.

(2.) Consider how poor the excuses are with which men commonly justify themselves in this neglect. They let slip many an opportunity of attending upon the Lord in this ordinance; why do they?

Perhaps they are so full of worldly business, that they have neither time nor a heart for that close application to the work of a sacrament which they know is requisite: the shop must be attended, accounts must be kept, debts owing them must be got in, and debts they owe must be paid: it may be some affair of more than ordinary difficulty and importance is upon their hands, which they are in care about the issue of, and till that be over, they think it not amiss to withdraw from the Lord's supper. And is this thy excuse, weigh it in the balances of the sanctuary then, and consider; is any business more necessary than thy doing of thy duty to God, and the working out of thine own salvation? Thou art careful and troubled about many things, but is not this the *one thing needful*, to which every thing else should be obliged to give way? Dost not thou think thy worldly business would prosper and succeed the better, for thy care about the main matter? If it were left at the bottom of the

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hill while thou comest hither to worship, mightest thou not return to it with greater hopes to speed in it? And dost thou not spare time from thy business for things of much less moment than this? Thou wilt find time, as busy as thou art, to eat and drink, and sleep, and converse with thy friends, and is not the nourishment of thy soul, is not repose in God, and communion with him, much more necessary? I dare say, thou wilt own it is.

If indeed thou canst not allow so much time for solemn secret worship in preparation for this ordinance, and reflection upon it, as others do, and as thou thyself sometimes hast done, and wouldest do, yet, let not that keep thee from the ordinance: thy heart may be in heaven, when thy hands are about the world; and a serious christian may, through God's assistance, do a great deal of work in a little time. If the hours that should be thus employed, be trifled away in that which is idle and impertinent, it is our sin; but if they be forced out of our hands by necessary and unavoidable avocations, it is but our affliction, and ought not to hinder us from the ordinance. The less time we have for preparation, the more close and intent we should be in the ordinance itself, and so make up the loss. A welcome guest never comes unseasonably to one that always keeps a good house.

But if indeed thy heart is so set upon the world, so filled with the cares of it, and so eager in the pursuits of it, that thou hast no mind to the comforts of this ordinance, no spirit nor life for the business of it, surely thou hast left thy first love, and thou hast most need of all to come to this ordinance for the recovery of the ground thou hast lost. Dost thou think that the inordinacy of thine affections to the world will be a passable excuse for the coldness of thine affection to the Lord Jesus? Make haste, and get this matter mended, and conclude that thy worldly business then becomes a snare to thee, and thy concern about it is excessive and inordinate, and an ill symptom, when it prevails to keep thee back from this ordinance.

Perhaps some unhappy quarrels with relations or neighbours, some vexatious law-suit they are engaged in, or some hot words that have past, are pleaded as an excuse for withdrawing from the communion. They are not in charity with others, or others are not in charity with them, and they have been told, (and it is undoubtedly true) that it is better to stay away, than come in malice; but then the malice is so far from being an excuse for the staying away, that really, the staying away is an aggravation of the malice. The Law in this case is very express, *If thy Brother hath aught against thee*, that is, if thy conscience tell thee that thou art the party offending, do not therefore leave the altar, but *leave the gift before the altar*, as a pawn for thy return, and *go first and be reconciled to thy brother*, by confessing thy fault, begging his pardon, and making satisfaction for the wrong done, *and then* be sure to *come and offer thy gift*, Mat. 5. 24. But on the other hand, if ye have aught against him, and if thou be the party offended, then forgive. Lay aside all uncharitable thoughts, angry resentments, and desire of revenge, and be in readiness to confirm and evidence your love to those who have injured you; and then, if they will not be reconciled to you, yet, your being reconciled to them, is sufficient to remove that bar in your way to this ordinance. In short, strife and contention, as far as it is our fault, must be truly repented of, and the sincerity of our repentance evidenced by amendment of life, and then it needs not hinder us; as far as it is our cross, it must be patiently borne, and we must not be disturbed in our minds by it, and then it needs not hinder us. And that law-suit which cannot be carried on without malice and hatred of our brother, had better be let fall, whatever we lose. Law is costly indeed, when it is followed at the expence of love and charity.

But *(Lastly,)* if the true reason of your absenting yourselves so often from the Lord's Supper be, that you are not willing to take that pains with your own hearts, and to lay that restraint upon yourselves both before and after, which you know you must if you come; if indeed you are not willing to have your thoughts so closely fixed, your consciences so strictly examined, and your engagements against sin so strongly confirmed, as they will be by this ordinance: if this be your case, you have reason to fear that the things which remain are ready to die, and your works are not found filled up before God. It is a sad sign of spiritual decay, and it is time for thee to remember whence thou art fallen, and to repent, and do thy first works. Time was when thou hadst a dear love to this ordinance, when thou longedst for the returns of it, and it was to thee more than thy necessary food: such was the kindness of thy youth, such the love of thine espousals, but it is otherwise now: do you now sit loose to it? Are you indifferent whether you enjoy the benefit of it or no? Can you contentedly live without it? You have reason to fear lest you are of those who are drawing back to perdition. Having *begun in the Spirit*, will you now *end in the flesh?* What iniquity have you found in this ordinance, that you have thus forsaken it? Has it been as a barren wilderness to you, or as waters that fail? If ever it were so, was it not your own fault? Return therefore ye backsliding children, be persuaded to return; return to God, return to your duty, to this duty; be close and constant to it as you were formerly, for, I dare say, *then it was better with you than now*, Hos. 2. 7.

Those who by the grace of God do still keep up a love for this ordinance, should contrive their affairs so, as (if possible) not to miss any of their stated opportunities for it. Thomas, by being once absent from a meeting of the disciples, lost all that joyful sight of Christ which the rest then had. It is good to have a *nail in God's Holy Place*, Ezra 9. 8. Blessed are they that dwell in his house, not those who only sojourn there as a wayfaring man, who turns aside to tarry but for a night, but those who take it for their home, their rest for ever.

Yet, if God by his providence prevent our enjoyment of an expected opportunity of this kind at any time, though we must lament it as an afflictive disappointment, and take that occasion to humble ourselves for our former

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former unprofitableness, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, that though God has tied us to ordinances, he has not tied himself to them, but by his grace can make providences work instead of them, for the good of our souls. It is better to be like David under a forced absence from God's altars, and have our hearts there, (Ps. 84. 1, 2.) than to be like Doeg, present under a force detained before the Lord, (1 Sam. 21. 7.) and the heart going after covetousness. It is better to be lamenting and longing in the want of ordinances, than loathing in the fulness of them.

CHAP. IV.

Helps for Self-Examination before we come to this Ordinance.

HOW earnestly soever we are in pressing people to join themselves to the Lord in this ordinance, we would not have them to be *rash with their mouths*, nor *hasty to utter any thing before God*, Ecc. 5. 2. It must be done, but it must be done with great caution and consideration. Bounds must be set about the mount on which God will descend, and we must address ourselves to solemn services with a solemn pause. It is not enough that we seek God in a due ordinance, but we must seek him in a due order, (1 Chro. 15. 13.) that is, we must *stir up ourselves to take hold on him*, Isa. 64. 7. *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*, Amos 4. 12. Those who labour under such an habitual indisposition to communion with God, and are liable to so many actual discomposures as we are conscious to ourselves of, have need to take pains with their hearts, and should with a very serious thought and steady resolution, engage them to approach unto God.

Now the duty most expressly required in our preparation for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is that of Self-Examination. The Apostle, when he would rectify the abuses which had sullied the beauty of this sacrament in the church of Corinth, prescribes this great duty as necessary to the due management of it, and preservative against sharing in the guilt of such corruptions; (1 Cor. 11. 28.) *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:* he who desires the Lord's Supper (to allude to that of the Apostle, 1 Tim. 3. 3.) desires a good work, but as it follows there, v. 10. *Let these also first be proved*, let them *prove their ownselves*, (2 Cor. 13. 5.) and so let them come; so upon that condition, so with that preparation, (as Ps. 26. 6.) *I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar:* In this method we muss proceed.

Let a man examine himself—δοκιμαζέτω—The word signifies either to *prove* or to *approve*; and appoints such an approbation of ourselves, as is the result of a strict and close probation, and such a probation of ourselves, as issues in a comfortable approbation, according to the tenor of the new covenant. It is so to prove ourselves, as to approve ourselves to God in our integrity; *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;* so as to appeal to God's inquiry, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*, Ps. 26. 2.

To examine ourselves, is to discourse with our own hearts; it is to converse with ourselves, a very rational, needful, and improving piece of conversation. When we go about this work, we must retire from the world, sit alone and keep silence, we must retire into our own bosoms, and consider ourselves, reflect upon ourselves, inquire concerning ourselves, enter into a solemn conference with our own souls, and be anxious concerning their state. Those who are ignorant and cannot do this, or careless and secure, and will not do it, are unmeet for this ordinance.

Shall I illustrate this by some similitudes?

1. We must examine ourselves as metal is examined by the touchstone, whether it be right or counterfeit. We have a shew of religion, but are we what we seem to be? Are we current coin, or only washed over, as *a potsherd covered with silver dross?* Pro. 26. 23. Hypocrites are reprobate silver, Jer. 6. 30. True Christians, when they are tried, come forth as gold, Job 23. 10. The word of God is the touchstone by which we must try ourselves; can I through grace answer the characters which the scripture gives of those whom Christ will own and save? It is true, that the best coin has an allay, which will be allowed for in this state of imperfection; but the question is, Is it sterling? Is it standard? Though I am conscious to myself there are remainders of a baser metal; yet, is love to God the predominant principle? Are the interests of Christ the prevailing interests in my soul above those of the world and the flesh? I bear God's image and superscription, is it of God's own stamping? Is it upon an honest and good heart? It is a matter of great consequence, and in which it is very common, but very dangerous to be imposed upon, and therefore we have need to be jealous over ourselves. When we are bid to *try the spirits*, (1 John 4. 1.) it is supposed we must begin with our own, and try them first.

2. We must examine ourselves as a malefactor is examined by the magistrate, that we may find out what we have done amiss. We are all criminals, that is readily acknowledged by each of us, because it is owned to be the common character, *All have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God;* we are all prisoners to the Divine Justice, from the arrests of which we cannot escape, and to the processes of which we lie obnoxious: being thus in custody, that we may not be judged of the Lord, we are commanded to *judge ourselves*, 1 Cor. 11. 31. We must inquire into the particular crimes we have been guilty of, and their circumstances, that we may discover more sins, and more of the evil of them than at first we were aware of. Dig into the wall, as Ezekiel did, (ch. 8. 8.) and see the secret abominations of your own hearts; look further as he did, (v. 13, 15.) and you will see more and greater. The heart is deceitful, and has many devices, many evasions, to shift off convictions; we have therefore need to be very particular and strict in examining them, and to give them that charge which Joshua gave to Achan, when he had him under examination; (Josh. 7. 19.) *Give*

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glory unto the God of Israel, and make confession unto him; tell me now what hast thou done, hide it not from me.

3. We must examine ourselves as a copy is examined by the original, to find out the Errata, that they may be corrected. As christians we profess to be the epistles of Christ, (2 Cor. 3. 3.) to have his law and love transcribed into our hearts and lives; but we are concerned to inquire whether it be a true copy, by comparing ourselves with the Gospel of Christ, whether our affections and conversation be conformable to it, and such as become it. How far do I agree with it, and where are the disagreements? What mistakes are there, what blots, and what omissions? That what has been amiss may be pardoned, and what is amiss may be rectified. In this examination, faith must read the original, and then let conscience read the copy, and be sure that it reads true, because there will shortly be a review.

4. We must examine ourselves as a candidate is examined that stands for preferment. Inquiry is made into his fitness for the preferment he stands for. We are candidates for Heaven, the highest preferment, to be with our God, King, and Priest. We stand for a place at the wedding-feast: have we on the wedding-garment? Are we made meet for the inheritance? What knowledge have we? What grace? Are we skilled in the mystery we make profession of? What improvement have we made in the school of Christ? What proficiency in divine learning? What testimonials have we to produce? Can we shew the seal of the Spirit of promise? Have we a ticket? If not, we shall not be welcome.

5. We must examine ourselves as a wife is examined for the levying of a fine for the confirming of a covenant. It is a common usage of the law: a covenant is to be ratified between God and our souls in the Lord's supper; do we freely and cheerfully consent to that covenant? Not merely through the constraint of natural conscience, but because it is a covenant highly reasonable in itself, and unspeakably advantageous to us. Am I willing to make this surrender of myself unto the Lord? Am I freely willing? Not because I cannot help it, but because I cannot better dispose of myself: we must examine ourselves as Joshua examined the people, whether they would chuse to serve the Lord or no? (Josh. 24. 15, &c.) And the product of the inquiry must be a fixed resolution, like their's, v. 21. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

6. We must examine ourselves as a wayfaring man is examined concerning his business. Our trifling hearts have need to be examined as vagrants, whence they come, whither they go, and what they would have? We are coming to a great ordinance, and are concerned to inquire what is our end in coming? What brings us hither? Is it only custom or company that draws us to this duty, or is it a spiritual appetite to the dainties of Heaven? Our hearts must be catechized as Elijah was, (1 Kin. 19. 9.) *What dost thou here, Elijah?* That we may give a good account to God of the sincerity of our intentions in our approach to him, we ought before we come, to call ourselves to an account concerning them.

More particularly, to examine ourselves, is to put serious questions to ourselves, and to our own hearts; and to prosecute them till a full and true answer be given to them. These six questions (among others) it is good for each of us to put to ourselves in our preparation to the Lord's Supper, both at our first admission, and in our after approaches to it. What am I? What have I done? What am I doing? What progress do I make? What do I want? And what shall I resolve to do?

I. Inquire, What am I? It needs no inquiry, but it calls for serious consideration, that I am a reasonable creature, lower than the angels, higher than the brutes, capable of knowing, serving and glorifying God in this world, and of seeing and enjoying him in a better. I am made for my creator, and am accountable to him: this I am, God grant that I may not have such a noble and excellent being in vain! But here this question has another meaning; all the children of men, by the fall of the first Adam, are become sinners; some of the children of men by the grace of the second Adam, are become saints; some remain in a state of nature, others are brought into a state of grace; some are sanctified, others unsanctified: this is a distinction which divides all mankind, and which will last when all other divisions and subdivisions shall be no more; for according to this, will the everlasting state be determined. Now when I ask, What am I? The meaning is, which of these two do I belong to? Am I in the favour of God, or under his wrath and curse? Am I a servant of God, or a slave to the world and the flesh? Look forwards, and ask, Whither am I going! To Heaven or Hell? If I should die this night, (and I am not sure to live till to-morrow) whither would death bring me? Where would death lodge me? In endless light, or in utter darkness? Am I in the narrow way that leads to life, or in the broad way that leads to destruction? I am called a christian, but am I a christian indeed? Have I a nature answerable to the name?

It highly concerns us all to be strict and impartial in this inquiry; what will it avail us to deceive ourselves? God cannot be imposed upon, though men may. It is undoubtedly true, if we be not saints on earth, we shall never be saints in heaven. It is not a small thing which I am now persuading thee to inquire about; no, it is thy life, thy precious life, the life of thy soul, thine eternal life which depends upon it. Multitudes have been deceived in this matter, whose way seemed right, but the end of it proved the ways of death: and after they had long flattered themselves in their own eyes, they perished at last, with a lie in their right-hand. We also are in danger of being deceived, and therefore have need to be jealous over ourselves with a godly jealousy; and being told that many who eat and drink in Christ's presence, will be disowned and rejected by him in the great day, we have each of us more reason to subject ourselves than the disciples had, and to ask, *Lord, is it I?*

But it especially concerns us to insist upon this inquiry, when we draw near to God in the Lord's Supper. It is children's bread that is there prepared; am I a child?

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child? If not, I have no part nor lot in the matter: I am there to seal a covenant with God, but if I never made the covenant, never in sincerity consented to it, I shall put the seal to a blank, nay, to a curse.

Therefore that I may discover in some measure, what my spiritual state is, let me seriously inquire:

1. What choice have I made? Have I chosen God's favour for my felicity and satisfaction, or the pleasures of sense, and the wealth of this world? Since I came to be capable of acting for myself, and discerning between my right-hand and my left, have I made religion my deliberate choice? Have I chosen God for my portion, Christ for my master, the Scripture for my rule, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home and everlasting rest? If not, how can I expect to have what I never chose? If my covenant with the world and the flesh (which certainly amounts to a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell,) be still in force, and never yet broken, never yet disannulled; what have I to do to take God's covenant, and the seal of it, into my mouth? But if I have refused Satan's offers of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, and given the preference to the gospel-offer of a kingdom in the other world, and the glory of that; I have reason to bless the Lord, who gave me that counsel, (Ps. 16. 7.) and to hope, that he who has directed me to chuse the way of truth, will enable me to stick to his testimonies, Ps. 119. 30, 31.

2. What change have I experienced? When I ask, am I a child of wrath, or a child of love? I must remember that I was by nature a child of wrath; now, can I witness to a change? though I cannot exactly tell the time and manner, and steps of that change; yet *one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see,* John 9, 25. Though in many respects it is still bad with me, yet, thanks be to God, it is better with me than it has been. Time was when I minded nothing but sport and pleasure, or nothing but the business of this world; when I never seriously thought of God and Christ, and my soul, and another world; but now it is otherwise: now I see a reality in invisible things, I find an alteration in my care and concern; and now I ask more solicitously, *What shall I do to be saved?* than ever I asked, *What shall I eat, or what shall I drink, or wherewithal shall I be cloathed?* Time was, when this vain and carnal heart of mine had no relish at all of holy ordinances, took no delight in them, called them a task and a weariness: but now it is otherwise; I love to be alone with God, and though I bring little to pass, yet I love to be doing in his service. If I have indeed experienced such a change as this, if this blessed turn be given to the bent of my soul; Grace, Free-grace, must have the glory of it, and I may take the comfort of it. But if I have not found any such work wrought in my heart, if I am still what I was by nature, vain, and carnal, and careless; if Jordan run still in the old channel, and was never yet driven back before the ark of the covenant; I have reason to suspect the worst by myself. If all go one way, without struggle or opposition, it is to be feared it is not the right way.

3. What is the bent of my affections? the affections are the pulse of the soul: if we would know its state, we must observe how that pulse beats. How do I stand affected to sin? Do I dread it as most dangerous, loath it as most odious, and complain of it as most grievous? Or do I make a light matter of it, as the madman who casts firebrands, arrows and death, and says, Am not I in sport? Which lies heavier; the burthen of sin, or the burthen of affliction? And which am I most desirous to be eased of? What do I think of Christ? How do I stand affected to him? Do I love him and prize him, as *the fairest of ten thousand* in himself, and the fittest of twenty thousand for me? Or has he, in mine eyes, no form nor comeliness; and is he no more than another beloved? How do I stand affected to the word and ordinances? Are God's tabernacles amiable with me; or are they despicable? Am I in God's service as in my element; as one who calls it a delight? Or am I in it, as under confinement, and as one that calls it a drudgery? How do I stand affected to good people? Do I love the Image of Christ where ever I see it; though it be in rags, or though not in my own colour? Do I honour them that fear the Lord, and chuse his people for my people in all conditions? Or do I prefer the gaieties of the world, before the beauties of holiness? How do I stand affected to this world? Is it under my feet, where it should be; or in my heart, where Christ should be? Do I value it, and love it, and seek it with a prevailing concern? Or do I look upon it with a holy contempt and indifference? Which have the greater command over me; and which, in my account, have the most powerful and attractive charms, those riches, honours, and pleasures that are worldly; or those that are spiritual and divine?—How do I stand affected to the other world? Do I dread eternal misery in a world of spirits, more than the greatest temporal calamities here in this world of sense? Do I desire eternal Happiness in a future state, more than the highest contentments and satisfactions this present state can pretend to? Or are the things of the other world, though sure and near, looked upon as doubtful and distant, and consequently little? By a close prosecution of such enquiries as these, with a charge to conscience in God's name, to make a true answer to them, we may come to know ourselves.

2. What is the course and tenor of our conversations? The *tree is known by its fruits.* Do I work the works of the flesh, or bring forth the fruits of the spirit? The Apostle gives us instances of both, (Gal. 5. 19. 23.) Be not deceived yourselves, neither let any man deceive you; *He that doth righteousness, is righteous,* (1 John 3, 7.) and the surest mark of uprightness, is, *keeping ourselves from our own iniquity,* 2 Sam. 22. 24. Do I allow myself in any known sin, under the cloak of a visible profession? Dare I, upon any provocation, swear or curse, or prophane God's holy name, and therein speak the language of his enemies? Dare I, upon any allurement, to please my appetite, or please my company, drink to excess, and sacrifice my reason, honour and conscience, to that base

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base and brutish lust? Dare I defile a living temple of the Holy Ghost by adultery, fornication, uncleanesss, or any act of lasciviousness? Dare I tell a lie for my gain or reputation? Dare I go beyond, or defraud my brother in any matter; cheat those I deal with, or oppress those I have the advantage against? Dare I deny relief to the poor that really need it, when it is in the power of my hand to give it? Dare I bear malice to any, and study revenge? If so, I must know that these *are not the spots of God's children,* Deut. 32. 5. If this be the life I live, I am certainly a stranger to the life of God. But if, upon search, my own heart tells me, that I keep myself pure from these pollutions, and *herein exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God, and towards man:* If I have respect to all God's commandments, and make it my daily care in every thing to frame my life according to them, and to keep in the fear of God every day, and all the day long; and wherein I find I am defective, and come short of my duty, I repent of it, and am more watchful and diligent for the future; I have reason to hope, that though I have not yet attained, neither am already perfect, yet there is a good work begun in me, which shall be performed unto the Day of Christ.

Thus we must examine our spiritual state; and that the trial may come to an issue, we must earnestly pray to God to discover us to ourselves, and must be willing to know the truth of our case; and the result must be this:

(1.) If we find cause to fear that our spiritual state is bad, and that we are unsanctified and unregenerate; we must give all diligence to get the matter mended. If our state be not good, yet, thanks be to God, it may be made good: *There is hope in Israel concerning this thing.* Rest not therefore in thy former faint purposes and feeble efforts; but consider more seriously than ever the concerns of thy soul: pray more earnestly than ever for the sanctifying Grace of God: put forth thyself more vigorously than ever, to improve that grace: resolve more firmly than ever to live a holy life, and depend more closely than ever upon the merit and strength of Jesus Christ; and I hope thou wilt soon experience a blessed change.

(2) If we find cause to hope that our spiritual state is good, we must take the comfort of it, and give God the praise; and not hearken to the tempter, when he would disturb our peace, and hinder our progress by calling it in question. Though we must always abase ourselves, and be jealous over ourselves; yet we must not derogate from the honour of God's grace, nor deny its works in us. God keep us all both from deceiving ourselves with groundless hopes, and from disquieting ourselves with groundless fears.

II. Inquire, What have I done? We come to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, to receive the remission of our sins, according to the tenor of the new covenant. Now, one thing required of us, in order to peace and pardon, is, That we *confess our sins; if we* do that, *God is faithful and just to forgive them;* 1 John 1. 9. But if we *cover them,* we cannot *prosper,* Pro. 28. 13. Not that we can by our confessions inform God of any thing he did not know before; as earthly princes are informed by the confession of criminals; but thus we must give glory to God, and take shame to ourselves, and strengthen our own guard against sin for the future. In the confession of sin, it is requisite that we be particular. The High-Priest, on the day of atonement, must confess over the scape-goat, *all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, and all their sins,* Lev. 16. 21. It is not enough to say as Saul, *I have sinned,* (1 Sam. 15, 30.) but we must say as David, *I have sinned, and done this evil,* Ps. 51. 4. As Achan, *I have sinned, and thus and thus have I done,* Josh. 7. 20. A broken heart will hereby be more broken, and better prepared to be bound up: a burthened conscience will hereby be eased, as David's was, when he said, *I will confess,* Ps. 32. 3, 4, 5. Commonly, the more particular and free we are in confessing our sins to God, the more comfort we have in the sense of the pardon. Deceit lies in generals.

It is therefore necessary, in order to a particular confession of sin, that we *search and try our ways,* (Lam. 3. 40.) that we examine our consciences, look over their records, reflect upon the actions of our life past, and call seriously to mind wherein we have offended God in any thing. The putting of this question, is spoken of as the first step towards repentance, (Jer. 8. 6.) *No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?* For want of this inquiry duly made, when men are called to return, they baffle the call with that careless question, (Mal. 3. 7.) *Wherein shall we return?* Let us therefore, set ourselves to look back, and remember our faults this day: it is better to be minded of them now, when the remembrance of them will open to us a door of hope, than be minded of them in Hell, where, *Son remember,* will aggravate an endless despair. We ought to be often calling ourselves to account; in the close of every day, of every week, the day's work, the week's work should be reviewed. It is one of the richest of Pythagoras's golden verses, wherein, though a heathen, he advises his pupil, every night before he sleep, to go over the actions of the day, and revolve them three times in his mind, asking himself seriously these questions:

Πῆ παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον οὐκ ἐτελέσθη:

—*Wherein have I transgressed? What have I done? What duty has been omitted?* The oftener it is done, the easier it is done: even reckonings make long friends. But it is especially necessary that it be done before a sacrament. Former reflections made, ought then to be repeated, and with a particular exactness: We must consider what our ways have been since we were last renewing our covenants with God at his table, that we may be humble for the follies we have returned to, since God spoke peace to us, and may be more particular and steady in our resolution for the future.

To give some assistance in this inquiry, I shall ask a few questions:

1. How have I employed my thoughts? Has God been

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been in all my thoughts? It is well if he has been in any. When I awake, am I still with him? Or am not I still with the world and the flesh? when I should have been contemplating the glory of God, the love of Christ, and the great things of the other world; has not my heart been, with the fool's eyes in the ends of the earth, *following after lying vanities, and forsaking mine own mercies?* How seldom have I thought seriously, and with any fixedness, of spiritual and divine things? I set myself sometimes to meditate, but I soon break off abruptly; and this treacherous heart starts aside like a broken bow, and nothing that is good is brought to any head. But how have vain thoughts and wild thoughts lodged within me, gone out and come in with me, lain down and risen up with me, and crowded out good thoughts? Has not the *imagination of the thought of mine heart* been *evil, only evil,* and that *continually?* Gen. 8. 21.

2. How have I governed my passions? Have they been kept under the dominion of religion and right reason; or have they not grown intemperate and headstrong, and transgressed due bounds? Have not provocations been too much resented, and made too deep an impression? Has not my heart many a time been hot within me, too hot, so that its heat has consumed the peace of my own mind, and the love I owe my brother? Has not anger rested in my bosom? Have not malice and uncharitableness, secret enmities and antipathies, been harboured there, where love and peace should have reigned and given law?

3. How have I preserved my purity? Have I possessed my vessel in sanctification and honour; or am I not conscious to myself of indulging the lust of uncleanness? If, by the Grace of God, I have kept my body pure; yet, has not my spirit been defiled by impure thoughts and affections? I have made a covenant with mine eyes, not to look and lust; but have I made good that covenant? Have I, in no instance, transgressed the laws of chastity in my heart, and modesty in my behaviour? Let this inquiry be made with a strict guard upon the soul; lest that, which should not be named among christians, be thought of without that just abhorrence and detestation which becomes saints.

4. How have I used my tongue? It was designed to be my glory; but has it not been my shame? Has not much corrupt communication proceeded out of my mouth, and little of that which is good, which might either manifest grace, or minister grace? Have not I sometimes spoke unadvisedly, and said that in haste, which at leisure I could have wished unsaid! Have not I said that, by which God's great name has been dishonoured, or my brother's good name reproached, or my own exposed? If, for every idle word that I speak, I must give account to God; I had best call myself to account for them; and I shall find innumerable of these evils compassing me about.

5. How have I spent my time? So long as I have lived in the world, to what purpose have I lived? What improvement have I made of my days, for doing or getting good? It is certain that I have lost time; have I yet begun to redeem it, and to repair those losses? How many hours have I spent, that might have been spent much better? There is a duty which every day requires; but how little of it has been done in its day?

6. How have I managed my worldly calling? Have I therein abode with God; or have I not, in many instances of it, wandered from him? Have I been just and fair in all my dealings, and spoken the truth from my heart? Or have I not sometimes dealt deceitfully in bargaining, and said that which bordered upon a lie? Has not fleshly wisdom governed me more, than that simplicity and godly sincerity which becomes an Israelite indeed? Have I no wealth gotten by vanity; no unjust gain; no blot of that kind cleaving to my hand?

7. How have I received my daily food? Have I never transgressed the law of temperance in meat and drink, and so made my table my snare? Have not God's good gifts been abused to luxury and sensuality; and the body, which, by the sober use of them should have been fitted, by the excessive use of them unfitted to serve the soul in the service of God? Have not I *eaten to myself,* and *drank to myself,* (Zech. 7. 6.) when I should have eaten and drank *to the glory of God?*

8. How have I done the duty of my particular relations? The Word of God has expressly taught me my duty as a husband, a wife, a parent, a child, a master, a servant; but have I not in many things failed of my duty? Have not I carried myself disrespectfully to my superiors, disdainfully to my inferiors, and disingenuously to my equals? Have I given to each that which is just and right, and rendered to all their dues? Have I been a comfort to my relations; or have I not caused grief?

9. How have I performed my secret worship? Have I been constant to it, morning and evening; or have I not sometimes omitted it, and put it by with some frivolous excuse? Have I been conscientious in it, and done it with an eye to God; or have I not kept it up merely as a custom, and suffered it to degenerate into a formality? Have I been lively and serious in secret prayer and reading; or have I not rested in the outside of the performance, without any close application and intention of mind in it?

10. How have I laid out what God has given me in the world? I am but a steward; have I been faithful? Have I honoured the Lord with my substance, and done good with it; or have I wasted and misapplied my Lord's goods? Has God had his due, my family and the poor their due, out of my estate? What should have been consecrated to piety and charity; has it not been either sinfully spared, or sinfully spent?

11. How have I improved the Lord's day, and the other helps I have had for my soul? I enjoy great plenty of the means of grace; have I grown in grace in the use of those means; or have I not received the grace of God therein in vain? Have I *called the Sabbath a delight, holy of the Lord, and honourable;* or have

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have I not snuffed at it, and said, *When will the Sabbath be over?* How have I profited by sermons and sacraments, and the other advantages of solemn assemblies? Have I received and retained the good impressions of holy ordinances; or have I not lost them, and let them slip?

12. How have I borne my afflictions? When Providence has crossed me, and frowned upon me; what frame have I been in, repining, or repenting? Have I submitted to the will of God in my afflictions, and patiently accepted the punishment of my iniquity; or have I not striven with my maker, and quarrelled with his disposals? When mine own foolishness has perverted my way, has not my heart fretted against the Lord? What good have I gotten to my soul by my afflictions? What inward gain by outward losses? Has my heart been more humbled and weaned from the world? Or have I not been hardened under the rod, and trespassed yet more against the Lord?

Many more such queries might be adduced, but these may suffice for a specimen. Yet it will not suffice to put these questions to ourselves, but we must diligently observe what return conscience, upon an impartial search, makes to them. We must not do as Pilate did, when he asked our Saviour, *What is Truth?* but would not stay for an answer, (John 18. 38.) No; we must take pains to find out what hath been amiss, and herein must accomplish a diligent search.

(1.) As far as we find ourselves not guilty, we must own our obligations to the Grace of God, and return thanks for that Grace, and let the testimony of conscience for us be our rejoicing. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.*

(2.) As far as we find ourselves guilty, we must be humbled before God for it, mourn and be in bitterness at the remembrance of it, cry earnestly to God for the pardon of it, and be particular in our resolutions, by God's grace, to sin no more. Pray, as Job is taught, *That which I see not, teach thou me;* and promise, as it follows there, *Wherein I have done iniquity, I will do no more,* Job 34. 32.

III. Inquire, What am I doing? When we have considered what our way has been, it is time to consider what it is. *Ponder the path of thy feet,* Pro. 4. 26.

1. What am I doing in the general course of my conversation? Am I doing any thing for God, for my soul, for eternity; any thing for the service of my generation; or am I not standing all the day idle? It is the law of God's house, as well as of our's; *He that will not labour, let him not eat,* 2 Thes. 3. 10. If I find that, according as my capacity and opportunity is, through the grace of Christ, I am going on in the way of God's commandments, this ordinance will be comforting and quickening to me; but if I give way to spiritual sloth and slumber, and do not mind my business, let this shame me out of it, and humble me for it. How unworthy am I to eat my master's bread, while I take no care to do my master's work?

2. What am I doing in this approach to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper? I know what is to be done; but am I doing it? Do I apply myself to it in sincerity, and with a single eye; in a right manner, and for right ends? Am I by repentance undoing that which I have done amiss? And am I, by renewing my covenants with God, doing that better, which I have formerly done well? Am I joining myself unto the Lord, with purpose of heart to cleave to him unto the end? It is the preparation for the passover: am I doing the work of that day in its day? Am I purging out the old leaven, *buying such things as I have need of against the feast, without money and without price?* Am I engaging my heart to approach unto God; or am I thinking of something else? Am I slothful in this business; or do I make a business of it?

Here it is good to examine, whether, beside the common and general intentions of this ordinance, there be not something particular, which I should more especially have in my eye in my preparation for it. Do I find my heart at this time more than usually broken for sin, and humbled at the remembrance of it? Let me then set in vigorously with those impressions, and drive that nail. Or is my heart in a special manner affected with the love of Christ, and enlarged in holy wonder, joy, and praise? Let its outgoings that way be quickened, and those thoughts imprinted deep and improved; so of the like.

IV. Inquire, *What progress do I make?* If upon examination there appear some evidences of the truth of grace, I must then examine my growth in grace; for grace, if it be true, will be growing: that *well of water* will be *springing up;* and *he that hath clean hands will be stronger and stronger.* There is a spiritual death, or at least some prevailing spiritual disease, where there is not some improvement and progress towards perfection.

By what measures then may I try my growth in grace?

1. Do I find my practical judgment more settled and confirmed in its choice of Holiness and Heaven? If so, it is a sign I am getting forward. We cannot judge of ourselves by the pangs of affection, those may be more sensible and vehement at first, and their being less so afterwards, ought not to discourage us: the fire may not blaze so high as it did, and yet may burn better and stronger. But do I see more and more reason for my religion? Am I more strongly convinced of its certainty and excellency, so as to be able better than at first to *give a reason of the hope that is in me?* My first love was able to call religion a comfortable service, was my after light better able to call it a reasonable service? I was extremely surprised when at first *I saw men as trees walking,* but am I now better satisfied, when I begin to see all things more clearly, Mark 8. 24, 25. Am I through God's grace better rooted, or am I through my own folly still as *a reed shaken with the wind.*

2. Do I find my corrupt appetites and passions more manageable? Or, are they still as violent and headstrong as ever? Does the house of Saul grow weaker and weaker, and its struggles for the dominion less frequent

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frequent and more feeble? If so, it is a good sign that the house of David grows stronger and stronger. Though these Canaanites are in the land, yet if they do not make head as they have done, but are under tribute, then the interests of Israel are gaining ground. Do I find that my desires toward those things that are pleasing to sense, are not so eager as they have been, but the body is kept under more, and brought into subjection to grace and wisdom, and is it not so hard a thing to me as it has been sometimes to deny myself? Do I find that my resentments of those things which are displeasing to the flesh, are not so deep and keen as they have been? Can I bear afflictions from a righteous God, and provocations from unrighteous men, with more patience, and better composure and command of myself than I could have done? Am I not so peevish and fretful, and unable to bear an affront or disappointment, as sometimes I have been? If so, surely he who has begun the good work, is carrying it on: but if nothing be done toward the suppressing of these rebels, toward the weeding out of these roots of bitterness which spring up and trouble us, though we lament them, yet, we do not prevail against them, it is to be feared that we stand still or go back.

3. Do I find the duties of religion more easy and pleasant to me? Or am I still as unskilful and unready in them as ever? Do I go dexterously about a duty, as one that understands it, and is used to it, as a man that is master of his trade goes on with the business of it? Or do I go awkwardly about it, as one not versed in it? When God says, *Seek ye my face*, do I, like the child Samuel, run to Eli, and terminate my regards in the outside of the service, or do I, like the man David, cheerfully answer, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*, and so *enter into that within the vail*. Though on the one hand there is not a greater support to hypocrisy than a formal and customary road of external performances; yet, on the other hand there is not a surer evidence of sincerity and growth, than an ever constant steady course of lively devotion, which by daily use becomes familiar and easy, and (by the new nature) natural to us. A growing Christian takes his work before him, and sings at it.

4. Do I find my heart more weaned from this present life, and more willing to exchange it for a better? Or am I still loath to leave it? Are thoughts of death more pleasing to me than they have been, or are they still as terrible as ever? If through grace we are raised above the fear of death, by reason of which many weak and trembling christians are *all their life-time subject to bondage*, and can truly say, we *desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better*, it is certain we are gaining ground, though we have not yet attained.

If upon search we find, that we make no progress in grace and holiness, let the ordinance of the Lord's Supper be impowered for the furtherance of our growth, and the removal of that, whatever it is, which hinders it: If we find we thrive, though but slowly, and though it is not so well with us as it should be, yet through grace it is better with us than it has been, and that we are not always babes, let us be encouraged to abound so much the more. Go and prosper, the Lord is with thee, while thou art with him.

V. Inquire, What do I want? A true sense of our spiritual necessities is required to qualify us for spiritual supplies. The hungry only are filled with good things. It concerns us therefore when we come to an ordinance, which is a spiritual market, to consider what we have occasion for, that we may know what to lay hold on, and may have an answer to that question which will be put to us at the banquet of wine, *What is thy petition, and what is thy request?* Or that which Christ put to the Blind Men, Mat. 20. 32. *What will ye that I should do unto you:*

Grace and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, are inclusive of all the blessings we can desire, and have in them enough to supply all our needs: since, therefore, we must ask and receive, that our joy may be full, it concerns us to inquire what particular grace and comfort we need, that we may by faith and desire, reach forth toward that in a special manner.

1. What Grace do I most want? Wherein do I find myself most defective, weak, and exposed? What corruption do I find working most in me? The grace which is opposite to it, I most need. Am I apt to be proud or passionate? humility and meekness then are the graces I most want. Am I apt to be timorous and distrustful? faith and hope then are the graces I most want. What temptations am I most frequently assaulted with? Which way does Satan get most advantage against me; by my constitution, calling, or company? There I most want help from heaven, and strength to double my guard. Am I in danger of being drawn by my outward circumstances to intemperance, or deceit, or oppression, or dissimulation? Then sobriety, justice and sincerity, are the graces I most want.——What is the nature of the duties I am most called out to, and employed in? Are they such as oblige me to stoop to that which is mean? Then self-denial is the grace I most want. Are they such as oblige me to struggle with that which is difficult and discouraging? Then courage and wisdom are the graces I most want. Whatever our wants are, there are promises in the new covenant adapted to them; which, in this ordinance, we must in a particular manner apply to ourselves, and claim the benefit of, and receive as sealed to us. If we cannot bethink ourselves of particular promises suited to our case, yet there is enough in the general ones: *I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*, Ezek. 36. 27. *I will put my law in your hearts*, (Heb. 8. 10.) *and my fear*, (Jer. 32. 40.) and many of the like. And we know who has said, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. 1.

2. What comfort do I most want? What is the burthen that lies most heavy? I must seek for support under that burthen. What is the grief that is most grieving? I must seek for a balance to that grief. The guilt of sin is often disquieting to me: O for the comfort of a sealed pardon! The power of corruption

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corruption is very discouraging; O for the comfort of victorious grace! I am often tossed with doubts and fears about my spiritual state, as if the Lord had *utterly separated me from his people*, and I were *a dry tree*, Isa. 56. 3. O for the comfort of clear and unclouded evidences! I am sometimes tempted to say, *The Lord hath forsaken me; my God hath forgotten me*, Isa. 49. 14. O that he would seal to my soul that precious promise, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. But my greatest trouble arises from the sense of my own weakness, and bent to backslide, and I am sometimes ready to make that desperate conclusion, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul*, 1 Sam. 27. 1, O that I might have the comfort of that promise (Jer. 32. 40.) *I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* There is in the covenant of grace a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady, comforts suited to every distress and sorrow; but, that we may have the benefit of them, it is requisite that we *know every one his own sore, and his own grief*, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. 6. 29. that we may spread it before the Lord, and may apply to ourselves that relief which is proper for it, and *from the fullness which is in* Jesus Christ *may receive, and grace for grace*; grace for all occasions, John 1. 16.

Here it may be of use to take cognizance even of our outward condition, and inquire into the cares and burthens, the crosses and necessities of it; for even against these there is comfort provided in the new covenant, and administered in this ordinance. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is:* when Christ was inviting his disciples to come and dine with him, he asked them first, *Children, have ye any meat?* John 21. 5. 12. Christ's inquiry into our affairs directs us to make known before him in particular the trouble of them. Let every care be cast upon the Lord in this ordinance, lodged in his hands, and left with him, and let our own spirits be eased of it, by the application of that general word of comfort to this particular case, whatever it is, *He careth for you*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. What is the concern I am most thoughtful about, relating to myself, my family, or friends? Let that way be committed to the Lord, and to his wise and gracious conduct and disposal, and then let my thoughts concerning it be established. What is the complaint I make most feelingly? Is it of a sickly body, disagreeable relations, a declining estate, the removal of those by death that were very dear? Whatever it is, spread it before the Lord as Hezekiah did Rabshakeh's letter, (2 Kings 19. 14.) and allow no complaint that is not fit to be spread before him.

When God came to renew his covenant with Abraham, and to tell him that he was his shield and his exceeding great reward; Abraham presently puts in a remonstrance of his grievance, *Behold, to me thou hast given no seed*, Gen. 15, 1. 2. 3. Hannah did so when she came up to worship, (1 Sam. 1. 11.) And we also must bring with us such a particular sense of our afflictions, as will enable us to receive and apply the comforts here offered us, and no more. Holy David observed how his house was with God, and that it was not made to grow, when he was taking the comfort of this, that however it were, *God had made with him an everlasting covenant*, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

VI. Inquire, *What shall I resolve to do?* This question is equivalent to that of Paul, (Acts 9. 6.) *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* We come to this ordinance solemnly to engage ourselves against all sin, and to all duty, and therefore it is good to consider what that sin is which we should particularly covenant against: and what that duty which we should most expressly oblige ourselves to. Though the general covenant suffice to bind conscience, yet, a particular article will be of use to remind conscience, and to make the general engagement the more effectual. It is good to be particular in our pious resolutions, as well as in our penitent reflections.

For our assistance herein, let us inquire,

1. Wherein have we most missed it hitherto? Where we have found ourselves most assaulted by the subtilty of the tempter, and most exposed by our own weakness, there we should strengthen our defence, and double our guard. What is the sin that has most easily beset me, Heb. 12, 1. ἐυπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν, *the well circumstanced sin;* that is it which I must more particularly resolve against in the strength of the grace of God. What is the duty I have most neglected, have been most backward to, and most careless in? To that I must most solemnly bind my soul with this bond.

2. Wherein we may have the best opportunity of glorifying God? What can I do in my place for the service of God's honour, and the interests of his kingdom among men? *The liberal deviseth liberal things*, and so the pious deviseth pious things, that he may both engage and excite himself to those liberal pious things in and by this ordinance. What is the talent I am intrusted with the improvement of? My Lord's goods I am made a steward of. What is it that is expected from one in my capacity? What fruit is looked for from me? That is it that I must especially have an eye to in my covenants with God; to that I must bind my soul, for that I must fetch in help from heaven, that having sworn, I may perform it.

CHAP. V.

Instructions for renewing our covenant with God in our preparation for this Ordinance.

IT is the wonderful condescension of the God of Heaven, that he has been pleased to deal with man in the way of a covenant, that, on the one hand, we might receive strong consolations from the promises of the covenant, which are very sweet and precious; and on the other hand, might lie under strong obligations from the conditions of the covenant, which, on this account, have greater cogency in them than mere precepts, that we ourselves have consented to them, and that we have therein consulted our own interest and advantage.

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The ordinance of the Lord's Supper being a seal of the covenant, and the solemn exchanging of the ratifications of it, it is necessary to make the covenant before we pretend to seal it. In this order therefore we must proceed, first, give the hand to the Lord, and then enter into the sanctuary; first, in secret consent to the covenant, and then, solemnly testify that consent: this is like a contract before marriage. They who *ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward,* must *join themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant,* Jer. 50. 5. The covenant is mutual, and in vain do we expect the blessings of the covenant, if we be not truly willing to come under the bonds of the covenant. We must *enter into covenant with the Lord our God, and into his oath,* else he does not establish us this day for *a people unto himself,* (Deut. 29. 12. 13,) we are not owned and accepted, as God's people, though we come before him as his people come, and sit before him as his people sit, if we do not in sincerity *avouch the Lord for our God,* Deut. 26. 17, 18. In our baptism this was done for us, in the Lord's Supper we must do it for ourselves, else we do nothing.

Let us consider then in what method, and after what manner, we must manage this great transaction.

I. In what method we must renew our covenant with God in Christ, and by what steps we must proceed.

1. We must repent of our sins by which we have rendered ourselves unworthy to be taken into covenant with God. Those who would be exalted to this honour, must first humble themselves. God *layeth his beams in the waters,* Ps. 104. 3. The foundations of spiritual joy are laid in the waters of penitential tears. Therefore, this sealing ordinance sets that before us, which is proper to move our godly sorrow; in it we look on him whom we have pierced, and if we do not mourn, and be not in bitterness for him, surely our hearts are as hard as a stone, yea, harder than a piece of the nether mill-stone, Zech. 12. 10. Those who join themselves to the Lord, must go weeping to do it; so they did, Jer. 50. 4. 5. That comfort is likely to last, which takes rise from deep humiliation, and contrition of soul for sin. Those only who *go forth weeping, bearing this precious seed,* shall *come again rejoicing* in God as theirs, and *bringing the sheaves* of covenant blessings and comforts *with them,* Ps. 126. 5, 6. Let us therefore begin with this.

(1.) We have reason to bewail our natural estrangement from this covenant: when we come to be for God, we have reason to be affected with sorrow and shame, that ever we were for any other; that ever there should have been occassion for our reconciliation to God, which supposes that there had been a quarrel. Wretch that I am, ever to have been a stranger, an enemy to the God who made me; at war with my creator, and in league with the rebels against his crown and dignity. O the folly and wickedness and misery of my natural estate. My first father an Amorite, and my mother a Hittite, and myself a transgressor from the womb, alienated from the Life of God, and cast out in my pollution. Nothing in me lovely, nothing amiable, but a great deal loathsome and abominable. Such as this was my nativity, my original, Ezek. 16. 3.

(2.) We have reason to bewail our backwardness to come into this covenant. Well may I be ashamed to think how long God called, and we refused, how often he stretched forth his hand, before we regarded; how many offers of mercy we slighted, and how many kind invitations we stood out against; how long Christ stood at the door and knocked, before we opened to him; and how many frivolous excuses we made to put off this necessary work. What a fool I was to stand in mine own light so long? How ungrateful to the God of love, who waited to be gracious? How justly might I have been for ever excluded this covenant, who so long neglected that great salvation? *Wherefore I abhor myself.*

(3.) We have reason to bewail the disagreeableness of our hearts and lives to the terms of this covenant, since first we professed our consent to it. In many instances we have dealt foolishly, it is well if we have not dealt falsely in the covenant. In our baptism we are given up to Christ to be his, but we have lived as if we were our own; we then put on the christian livery, but we have done little of the christian's work; we were called by Christ's name to take away our reproach? But how little have we been under the conduct and government of the spirit of Christ? Since we became capable of acting for ourselves, perhaps we have oft renewed our covenant with God, at his table, and upon other occasions, but we have *despised the oath, in breaking the covenant, when lo, we had given the hand,* Ezek. 17. 18. Our performances have not answered the engagements that we have solemnly laid ourselves under. Did we not say, and say it with the blood of Christ in our hands, that we would be the faithful servants of the God of Heaven? We did, and yet, instead of serving God, we have served divers lusts and pleasures; we have made ourselves slaves to the flesh, and drudges to the world, and this has been our manner from our youth up. Did we not say, *We would not transgress,* (Jer. 2. 20.) we *would not offend any more?* (Job 34. 31.) We did, and yet our transgressions are multiplied, and in many things we offend daily. Did we not say we would walk more closely with God, more circumspectly in our conversation, we would be better in our closets, better in our families, better in our callings, every way better? We did, and yet we are still vain, and careless, and unprofitable; all those good purposes have been to little purpose: this is a lamentation, and it should be for a lamentation. Let our hearts be truly broken for our former breach of covenant with God, and then the renewing of our covenant will be the recovery of our peace, and that which was broken shall be bound up, and made to rejoice.

2. We must renounce the Devil, the world, and the flesh, and every thing that stands in opposition to, or competition with the God to whom we join ourselves by covenant. If we will indeed deal sincerely in our covenanting with God, and would be accepted of him therein, our *covenanting with death must be disannulled, and our agreement with Hell must not stand,* Isa. 28. 18. And all these foolish sinful bargains, which were, in-

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deed, null and void from the beginning, by which we had alienated ourselves from our rightful owner, and put ourselves in possession of the usurper, must be revoked and cancelled, and our consent to them drawn back with disdain and abhorrence. When we take an oath of allegiance to God in Christ, as our rightful King and Sovereign, we must therein abjure the tyranny of the rebellious and rival powers. *O Lord our God, other Lords beside thee have had dominion over us,* while sin has reigned in our mortal bodies, in our immortal souls, and every lust has been a Lord; but now we are weary of that heavy yoke, and through God's grace it shall be so no longer, for, henceforth, *by thee only will we make mention of thy name,* Isa. 26. 13.

The covenant we are to enter into is a marriage-covenant, *Thy maker* is to be *thy husband,* (Isa. 54. 5.) and thou art to be betrothed to him, (Hos. 2. 19.) and it is the ancient and fundamental law of that covenant, that, all other lovers be renounced, all other beloved ones forsaken; and the same is the law of this covenant; (Hos. 3. 3.) *Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee:* Quitting all others, we must cleave to the Lord only: lovers and crowned heads will not endure rivals: on these terms, and no other, we may covenant with God, (1 Sam. 7. 3.) *If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods, and Ashtaroth,* else it is not a return to God.

(1.) We must renounce all subjection to Satan's rule and government. Satan's seat must be overturned in our hearts, and the Redeemer's throne set up there upon the ruins of it. We must disclaim the Devil's power over us, cast off that iron yoke, and resolve to be received by him no more, and led captive by him at his will no more. We must quit the service of the citizen of that country, and feed his swine no longer, feed upon his husks no more, that we may return to our father's house, where there is *bread enough and to spare.* We must renounce the treacherous conduct of the evil spirit, that we may put ourselves under the gracious guidance of the holy and good Spirit. All that turn to God, must turn from the power of Satan, (Acts 26. 18.) For *what Communion hath Christ with Belial?* Our covenant with God engages us in a war with Satan; for the controversy between them is such, as will by no means allow us to stand neuter.

(2.) We must renounce all compliance with the wills and interests of the flesh. The body, though near and dear to the soul, yet must not be allowed to have dominion over it. The liberty, sovereignty, and honour of the immortal spirit, by which we are allied to the upper world, that world of spirits, must be asserted, vindicated, and maintained against the usurpation and encroachments of the body, which is of the earth earthly, and by which we are allied to the beasts that perish. The elder too long has served the younger, the nobler has served the baser, it is time that the yoke should be broken from off it's neck, and that part of man should rule under Christ, whose right it is. The servants on horseback must be dismounted, the lusts of the flesh denied, and its will no longer admitted to give law to the man, and the princes who have walked like servants upon the earth, must be raised from their debasement, and made to inherit the throne of Glory; the dictates (I mean) of right reason, guided by revelation, and consulting the true interests of the better part, must have the commanding sway and empire in us, (Ecc. 10. 7. 1 Sam. 2. 8.) We must never more make it our chief good to have the flesh pleased, and the desires of it gratified; nor ever make it our chief business to make provision for the flesh, that we may fulfil the lusts of it. Away with them, away with them; crucify them, crucify them; for like Barrabas, they are robbers, they are murderers, they are enemies to our peace; we will not have them to reign over us, no, no, we know them too well; we have no King but Jesus.

(3.) We must renounce all dependence upon this present world and conformity to it. If we enter into a covenant which ensures a happiness in the other world, and therefore look with a holy concern, we must disclaim the expectations of happiness in this world, and therefore look upon this with a holy contempt. God and Mammon, God and Gain, these are contrary the one to the other; so that if we will be found loving God, and cleaving to him, we must despise the world, and sit loose to it, Mat. 6. 24. We must so far renounce the way of the world, as not to govern ourselves by it, and take our principles and measures from it; for we must not be *conformed to this world,* (Rom. 12. 2.) nor walk *according to the course* of it, Eph. 2. 2. We must so far renounce the men of the world, as not to incorporate ourselves with them, nor chuse them for our people, because though we are in the world, we are not of the world, nor have we received the spirit of the world, but Christ has chosen and called us out of it, John 15. 19. We must so far renounce the wealth of the world, as not to portion ourselves out of it, nor lay up our treasure in it; nor to take up with the things of this world as our *good things,* (Luke 16. 25.) as *our consolation,* (Luke 6. 24.) as *our reward,* (Mat. 6. 2.) as the *penny we agree for,* Mat. 20. 13. For in God's favour is our life, and not in the smiles of this world. The Lord make us cordial in thus renouncing these competitors, that we may be found sincere in covenanting with God in Christ.

3. We must receive the Lord Jesus Christ as he is offered to us in the Gospel. In renewing our covenants with God, it is not enough to enter our dissent from the world and the flesh, and to shake off Satan's yoke, but, we must enter our consent to Christ, and take upon us his yoke. In the everlasting Gospel, both as it is written in the Scripture, and as it is sealed in this sacrament, salvation by Christ, that great salvation is fairly tendered to us, to us who need it, and are undone for ever without it; we then come into covenant with God, when we accept of this salvation, with an entire complacency and confidence in those methods which infinite wisdom has taken of reconciling a guilty and obnoxious world to himself, by the mediation of his own son, and a cheerful compliance with those methods for ourselves, and our own salvation. Lord, I take

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take thee at thy word; be it unto thy servant according to that word, which is so *well ordered in all things, and so sure.*

We must accept the salvation in Christ's way, and upon his terms, else our acceptance is not accepted.

(1.) By a hearty consent to the Grace of Christ, we must accept the salvation in his own way, in such a way, as for ever excludes boasting, humbles man to the dust, and will admit no flesh to glory in his presence: Such a way, as (though it leave the blood of them that perish upon their own heads,) lays all the crowns of them who are saved, at the feet of free grace. This method we must approve of, and love this salvation, not going about to establish our own righteousness, as if by pleading, Not Guilty, we could answer the demands of the covenant of innocency, and so be justified and saved by it; but *submitting to the righteousness of God,* by faith, Rom. 3. 22. All the concerns that lie between us and God, we must put into the hands of the Lord Jesus, as the great Mediator, the great Manager; we must be content to be nothing, that the Lord only may be exalted, and Christ may be *all in all.* God has declared more than once by a voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased*: To consent to Christ's Grace, and accept of salvation in his way, is to echo back to that solemn declaration, "This is my Beloved Saviour, in whom I am well pleased." The Lord be well pleased with me in him, for out of him I can expect no favour.

(2.) By a hearty consent to the government of Christ, we must accept the salvation on his own terms. When we receive Christ, we must receive an entire Christ; for, *Is Christ divided?* A Christ to sanctify and rule us, as well as a Christ to justify and save us; for he is *a Priest upon his throne,* and the *council of peace is between them both,* Zech. 6. 13. What God has joined together, let not us think to put asunder. He saves his people from their sins, not in their sins; and is the author of eternal redemption to those only that obey him. That very *Grace of God which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly* and fleshly *lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world,* Tit. 2. 11, 12. Life and peace are to be had on these terms, and no other; and are we willing to come up to these terms? will we receive Christ and his law, as well as Christ and his love? Christ and his cross as well as Christ and his crown? "Lord, I will," (says the believing soul;)" "Lord, I do;" *My Beloved is mine, and I am his,* to all the intents and purposes of the covenant.

4. We must resign and give up ourselves to God in Christ. God in the covenant makes over, not only his gifts and favours, but, himself to us, [*I will be to them a God*] what he is in himself, he will be to us, a God All-sufficient; so we in the covenant must offer up not only our services, but ourselves, our own selves, our whole selves, *body, soul, and spirit,* to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the obligations of our baptism, as those who are bound to be to him a people. This surrender is to be solemnly made at the Lord's table, and sealed there, it must therefore be prepared and made ready before. Let us see to it, that it be carefully drawn up, without exception or limitation, and the heart examined whether a free and full consent be given to it. We must first *give our own selves unto the Lord,* (2 Cor. 8. 5.) and I know not how we can dispose of ourselves better. *By the mercies of God,* which are inviting, and very encouraging, we must be wrought upon to *present our bodies and souls* to God a *living sacrifice* of acknowledgment, not a dying sacrifice of atonement, which if it be *holy* shall be *acceptable,* and it is *our reasonable service,* Rom. 12. 1. Thus he who covenants with God, is directed to say, *I am the Lord's,* and for the greater solemnity of the transaction, to *subscribe with his hand to the Lord,* Isa. 44. 5. Not that we do, or can hereby transfer or convey to God any right to us which he had not before: he is our absolute Lord and owner, and has an incontestable sovereignty over us, and property in us, as he is our Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer: but hereby we recognize and acknowledge his right to us. We are his already by obligation, more his than our own: but, that we may have the benefit and comfort of being so, we must be his by our own consent. More particularly,

(1.) To resign ourselves to God, is to dedicate and to devote ourselves to his praise. It is not enough to call ourselves by his name, and associate among those who do so, to take away our reproach, but we must consecrate ourselves to his name, as living temples. *Corban, It is a gift,* a gift to God, all I am, all I have, all I can do is so; it is a dedicated thing, which it is sacrilege to alienate. All the powers and faculties of our soul, all the parts and members of our bodies, we must, *as those that are alive from the dead,* freely yield unto God as *instruments of righteousness,* to be used and employed in his service for his glory, Rom. 6. 13. All our endowments, all our attainments, all those things which we call accomplishments, must be accounted as talents, which we must trade with for his honour. All being of him, and from him, all must be to him, and for him. Our tongues must not be our own but his, in nothing to offend him, but to speak his praise, and plead his cause, as there is occasion: our time is not our own, but as a servant's time, to be spent according to our master's directions, and some way or other to our master's glory, every day being in this sense *our Lord's Day:* Our estates not our own, to be spent or spared by the directions of our lusts, but to be used as God directs; God must be honoured with our substance, (Pro. 3. 9.) and *our merchandize and our hire must be holiness to the Lord,* Isa. 23. 18. Our interest not our own, with it to seek our own glory, but to be improved in seeking and serving God's glory: that is, God's glory must be fixed and aimed at as our highest and ultimate end, in all the care we take about our employments, and all the comfort we take in our enjoyments. *As good Stewards of the manifold Grace of God,*

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God, we must have this still in our eye, *That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11. By this pious intention common actions must be sanctified, and done after a godly sort, (3 John 6.) our giving up of ourselves to be to God a people, is thus explained, (Jer. 13. 11.) it is *to be to him, for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.*

(2.) To resign ourselves to God, is to subject and submit ourselves to his power: to the sanctifying power of his Spirit, the commanding power of his Law, and the disposing power of his Providence. Such, as this, is the subjection we must consent to, and it has in it so much of privilege and advantage, as well as duty and service, that we have no reason to stumble at it.

[1.] We must submit ourselves to the sanctifying power of God's Spirit. We must lay our souls as soft wax under this seal, to receive the impressions of it, as white paper under this pen, that it may write the law there. Whereas we have resisted the Holy Ghost, quenched his motions, and striven against him when he has been striving with us, we must now yield ourselves to be led and influenced by him, with full purpose of heart in every thing to follow his conduct, and comply with him. When Christ in his Gospel breathes on us, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, (John 20. 22.) my heart must answer, "Lord, I receive him, I bid him welcome into my heart, though he come as a *Spirit of judgment*, and a *Spirit of burning*, as a *Refiner's fire*, and *Fuller's soap*, yet *blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* Let him come and mortify my lusts and corruptions, I do not desire that any of them should be spared; let them die, let them die by the sword of the Spirit, Agag himself not excepted, though he comes delicately. Let every thought within, even the *inward thought*, (Ps. 49. 11.) be *brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ*, 2 Cor. 10. 5. Let the blessed Spirit do his whole work in me, and fulfil it with an Almighty Power."

[2.] We must submit ourselves to the commanding power of God's Law. The Law as it is in the hand of the Mediator, is God's instrument of government; if I yield myself to him as a subject, I must in every thing be observant of, and obedient to that Law; and now I covenant to be so, in all my ways to walk according to that rule. All my thoughts and affections, all my words and actions, shall be under the direction of the Divine Law, and subject to it's check and restraint. God's judgments will I lay before me, and have respect to all his commandments; by them I will be always ruled, over-ruled. "Let the word of the Lord come" (as a good man once said) and if I had six hundred necks, I would bow them all to the authority of it." Whatever appears to me to be my duty, by the Grace of God I will do it, how much soever it interfere with my secular interest; whatever appears to me to be a sin, by the Grace of God I will avoid it, and refrain from it, how strong soever my corrupt inclination may be to it. *All that the Lord shall say to me I will do, and will be obedient.*

[3.] We must submit ourselves to the disposing power of God's Providence This must be the rule of our patience and passive obedience, as the former of our practice and active obedience. All my affairs relating to this life, I cheerfully submit to the Divine disposal; let them be directed and determined as infinite Wisdom sees fit, and I will acquiesce. Let the Lord save my soul, and then, as to every thing else, let him do with me and mine as seemeth good unto him; I will never find fault with any thing that God does. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt;* I know I have no wisdom of my own; I am a fool, if I lean to my own understanding, and therefore I will have no will of my own: *Father, thy will be done.* The health of my body, the success of my calling, the prosperity of my estate, the agreeableness of my family, the continuance of my comforts, and the issue of any particular concern my heart is upon, I leave in the hands of my Heavenly Father, who knows what is good for me, better than I do for myself: if in any of these I be crossed, by the grace of God I will submit, without murmuring or disputing: all is well that God does, and therefore welcome the will of God in every event. While he is mine, and I am his, nothing shall come amiss to me.

5. We must resolve to abide by it as long as we live, and to live up to it. In our covenanting with God, there must be not only a present consent, "Lord, I do take thee for mine, I do give up myself to thee to be thine;" but this must be ripened into a resolution for the future, *with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord*, Acts 11. 23. We must lay hold on Wisdom, so as to retain her, (Pro. 3. 18.) and chuse the way of truth, so as to stick to it, Ps. 119. 30, 31. The nail in the Holy Place must be well clenched, that it may be *a nail in a sure place*, Isa. 22. 23. Many a pang of good affections, and many a hopeful turn of good inclinations, come to nothing for want of resolution. It is said of Rehoboam, (2 Chro. 12. 14.) that *he did evil*, because *he prepared not*, or, *he fixed not his heart* (so the word is in the margin) *to seek the Lord.* The heart that is unfixed, is unprepared. Joshua took pains with the people, to bring them up to that noble resolution, (Josh. 24. 21.) *Nay, but we will serve the Lord;* and we should not be content, till we also are in like manner resolved, and firmly fixed for God and duty, for Christ and Heaven. This is the *preparation of the Gospel of Peace*, wherewith our *feet must be shod*, Eph. 6. 15.

Let us inquire what that resolution is, which is an entire dependance upon the grace of Christ, to which we should come up in our covenanting with God.

(1.) We must come up to such a settled resolution, as does not reserve a power of revocation for ourselves The covenant is in itself a perpetual covenant, and as such we must consent to it; not, as servants hire themselves, by the year, or to be free at a quarter's warning; not, as apprentices bind themselves for seven years, to be discharged at the expiration of that term: but, it must be a covenant for life, a covenant for eternity, a covenant never to be forgotten; and in this beyond even the marriage-covenant, for that is made with this proviso, "till death us do part;" but death itself must not part us and Christ. Our covenant must be made like that servant's who loved his master, and would not go

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go out free: our ears must be nailed to God's door-post, and we must resolve to *serve him for ever*, Exod. 21. 5, 6. A power of revocation reserved, is a defeasance of the covenant: it is no bargain, if it be not for a perpetuity, and if we consent not to put it past recal.

Let not those who are young, and under tutors and governors, think to discharge themselves of these obligations, when they come to be of age, and to put them off with their childish things: no; you must resolve to adhere to it, as Moses did, when you come to years, Heb. 11. 24. As children are not too little, so grown people are not too big, to be religious. You must resolve to live under the bonds of this covenant, when you come to live of yourselves, to be at your own disposal, and to launch out ever so far into this world. Your greatest engagements in care and business, cannot disengage you from these. Whatever state of life you are called to, you must resolve to take your religion with you into it.

Let not those who are in the midst of their days think it possible, or desirable, to out-live the binding force of this covenant. If now we should set out in the way we should go, it must be with a resolution, if we live to be old, how wise and honourable soever old age be, yet, then, we will *not depart from it*, (Pro. 22. 6.) as knowing that the *hoary hairs are* only *a crown of glory, when they are found* (as having been long before fixed) *in the way of righteousness*, Pro. 16. 31.

(2.) We must come up to such a strong resolution, as will not yield to the power of temptation from the enemy. When we engage ourselves for God, we engage ourselves against satan, and must expect his utmost efforts to oppose us in our way, and to draw us out of it. Against these designs we must therefore arm ourselves, resolving to *stand in the evil day, and having done all*, in God's name, *to stand* our ground, (Eph. 6. 13.) saying to all that, which would either divert or deter us from prosecuting the choice we have made, as Ruth did to Naomi, when she was stedfastly resolved, (Ruth 1. 16.) *Intreat me not to leave* Christ, *or to turn from following after him*; for, *whither he goes* I will follow him, though it be into banishment; *where he lodges*, I will lodge with him, though it be in a prison; for death itself shall never part us.

We must resolve, by God's grace, never to be so elevated or enamoured with the smiles of the world, as by them to be allured from the paths of serious godliness; for our religion will be both the safety and the honour of a prosperous condition, and will sanctify and sweeten all the comforts of it to us.

And we must in like manner resolve never to be so discouraged and disheartened by the frowns of the world, as by the force of them to be robbed of our joy in God, or by the fear of them to be driven from our duty to God. We must come to Christ, with a steady resolution to abide by him all weathers: *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. None of these things move me.*

6. We must rely upon the righteousness and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ in all this. Christ is the mediator of this peace, and the guarantee of it, the Surety of this better Covenant, that blessed Days-man, who has laid his hand upon us both; who has so undertaken for God, that in him all God's promises to us are *Yea, and Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. and unless he undertake for us too, how can our promises to God have any strength or stability in them? When therefore we enter into covenant with God, our eye must be to Christ as the *Alpha* and *Omega* of that covenant. When God had *sworn by himself*, that *unto him every knee should bow, and every tongue shall swear*, (Isa. 45. 23.) immediately it follows, v. 24. *Surely shall one say*, every one that bows and swears to God, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength*; in the Lord Jesus is all my sufficiency for the doing of this well. In making and renewing our covenant with God, we must take instructions from that of David, Ps. 71. 19. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.*

(1.) We must depend upon the strength of the Lord God for assistance, and for the working of all our works in us, and for us. In that strength we must go, go forth and go on, as those that know we can do nothing that is good of ourselves; our own hands are not sufficient for us; but we *can do all things through Christ strengthening us*, Phil. 4. 13. Our work then goes on, and then only, when we are *strengthened with all might by his Spirit*. This way we must look for spiritual strength, as Nehemiah did, (ch. 6. 9.) *Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.* On this strength we must stay ourselves; in this strength we must engage ourselves, and put forth ourselves, and with it we must encourage ourselves.

We cannot make this covenant, but in the strength of Christ, nor make it at all. Nature, corrupt nature, inclines to the world and the flesh, and cleaves to them: without the influences of special grace, we should never move towards God, much less resolve for him. We cannot do it well, but in Christ's strength, and in a dependance upon that. If, like Peter, we venture on our own sufficiency, and use those forms of speech which import a reliance on the divine grace, only as words of course, and do not by faith trust to that grace, and derive from it; we forfeit the aids of it; our covenant is rejected as presumptuous, and shall not avail us. Promises made in our own strength, betray us, and do not help us; like the house built on the sand.

We cannot keep this covenant when it is made, but in the strength of Christ; for, we stand no longer than he by his grace upholds us; we go no further, than he by his grace not only leads us, but carries us. His promises to us are our security, not our's to him: *from his fulness*, therefore, *we* must expect to *receive Grace for Grace*; for it is not in ourselves, nor, is it to be had any where but in him. We then, that are principals in the bond, knowing ourselves insolvent, must put him in as surety for us. He is willing to stand; and without him, our bond will not be taken. We are too well known to be trusted; for, *all men are liars*; and *the heart is deceitful above all things.* Go to Christ therefore with that address, (Ps. 119. 122.) *Be surety for thy servant*

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servant for good. (Isa. 38. 14.) *I am oppressed; undertake for me.*

(2.) We must depend upon the righteousness of Christ; make mention of that, even of that only, for acceptance with God in our covenanting with him. We have nothing in us, to recommend us to God's favour; no righteousness of our own, wherein to appear before him: we have, by sin, not only forfeited all the blessings of the covenant, but incapacitated ourselves for admission into it. By Sacrifice, therefore, by a sacrifice of atonement, sufficient to expiate our guilt, and satisfy the demands of injured justice, we must make a covenant with God. And there is none such but that *one offering*, by which Christ has *perfected for ever them which are sanctified.* That is the blood of the covenant, which must be sprinkled upon our consciences when we join ourselves to the Lord, (Exod. 24. 8.) that everlasting righteousness, which Messiah the Prince has brought in, must be the cover of our spiritual nakedness, our wedding-garment to adorn our nuptials, and the foundation on which we must build all our hopes to find favour in the sight of the Lord.

I shall not here draw up a form of covenanting with God; both because such may be found drawn up by far better hands than mine, as Mr. Baxter's, Mr. Allen's, and others; and, because a judicious christian may, out of the foregoing heads, easily draw up one for himself.

II. After what manner we must renew our covenant with God, that we may therein please God, and experience the good effect of it in our own souls.

1. We must do it intelligently. Blind promises will produce lame performances, and can never be acceptable to the seeing God. Ignorance is not the mother of this devotion. Satan indeed puts out men's eyes, and so brings them into bondage to him, and leads them blindfold; for he is *a thief and a robber*, that *comes not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way;* and therefore to him we must not open. But the grace of God takes the regular way of dealing with reasonable creatures, opening the understanding first, and then bowing the will: this is *entering in by the Door*, as *the Shepherd of the Sheep* does, John 10. 1, 2. In this method, therefore, we must see that the work be done. We must first acquaint ourselves with the tenor of the covenant, and then consent to the terms of it. Moses read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people, (Exod. 24. 7.) and then sprinkled upon them the blood of the covenant, v. 8. And we must take the same method; first peruse the articles, and then sign them. That faith which is without knowledge, is not the faith of God's elect.

2. We must do it considerately. We need not take time to consider whether we should do it or no; the matter is too plain to bear that debate: but, we must seriously consider what we do, when we go about it. Let it be done with a solemn pause, such as Moses put Israel upon, when he said, (Deut. 29. 10, 12.) *Ye stand this Day all of you before the Lord your God; that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath.* Consider how weighty the transaction is, that it may be managed with due seriousness, and of what consequence it is, that it be done well; for it is to be hoped, that if it be once well done, it is done for ever. We must sit down and count the cost; consider the restraints this covenant will put upon the flesh, the loss and expence we may sustain by our adherence to it, the hazards we run, and the difficulties we must reckon upon, if we will be faithful unto death; and in the view of these consent to the covenant; that hereafter, when tribulation and persecution arises because of the word, we may not say, "This was what we did not think of." Do it deliberately, therefore, and then it will not be easily undone. The rule in vowing is, *Be not rash with thy mouth, neither let thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God*, Eccl. 5. 2. It is the character of the virtuous woman, that *she considers a field, and buys it.* And it has been thought a dictate of prudence, though it seem a paradox; "Take time, and you will have done the sooner." Many, that without consideration have put on a profession, when the wind has turned, have in like manner, without consideration, thrown it off again. "Light come, light go." Those, therefore, that herein would prove themselves honest, must prove themselves wise.

3. We must do it humbly. When we come to covenant with God, we must remember what we are, and who he is with whom we have to do, that the familiarity we are graciously admitted to, may not beget a contempt of God, or a conceit of ourselves; but rather, the more God is pleased to exalt us, and condescend to us, the more we must honour him, and abase ourselves. Abraham fell on his face, in a deep sense of his own unworthiness, when God said, *I will make my covenant between me and thee*, and began to talk with him concerning it, (Gen. 17. 2, 3.) and afterwards, when he was admitted into an intimate communion with God, pursuant to that covenant, he drew near, as one that knew his distance, expressing himself with wonder at the favour done him, (Gen. 18. 27.) *Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.* When the covenant of royalty was confirmed to David, and God regarded him according to the estate of a man of high degree, he sits down as one astonished at the honour conferred on him, and humbly expresses himself thus: *Who am I, O Lord God; and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* 1 Chro. 17. 16, 17. Thus must we cast ourselves down at the footstool of God's throne, if we would be taken up into the embraces of his love. *He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.*

4. We must do it cheerfully; for here, in a special manner, *God loves a cheerful giver*, and is pleased with that which is done, not of constraint, but willingly. In our covenanting with God, we must not be actuated by *a spirit of bondage and fear*, but by *a spirit of adoption, a spirit of power and love, and a sound mind*, Rom. 8. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 7. We must join ourselves to the Lord, not only because it is our duty, and that which we are bound to, but because it is our interest, and that by which we shall be unspeakable gainers: not with reluctance and regret, and with a half-consent extorted from us; but with an entire satisfaction, and the full consent of

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of a free spirit. Let it be a pleasure to us to think of our interest in God as our's, and our engagement to him as his; a pleasure to us to think of the bonds of the covenant, as well as of the blessings of the covenant. Much of our communion with God (which is so much the delight of all that are sanctified) is kept up by the frequent recognition of our covenant with him; which we should make, as those who like our choice too well to change; and as the men of Judah did, when *they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with trumpets: And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire,* 2 Chro. 15. 14, 15. Christ's soldiers must be volunteers, not pressed men, and we must repeat our consent to him with such joy and triumph, as appears in that of the spouse (Cant. 5. 16.) *This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.*

5. We must do it in sincerity: This is the chief thing required in every thing wherein we have to do with God; *Behold, he desires truth in the inward parts.* When God took Abraham into covenant with himself, this was the charge he gave him. *Walk before me, and be thou perfect,* that is, upright, for uprightness is our gospel perfection. Writing the covenant and subscribing it, signing and sealing it, may be proper expressions of seriousness and resolution in the transaction, and of use to us in the review; but, if, herein we *lie unto God with our mouth,* and *flatter him with our tongue,* as Israel did, (Ps. 78. 36.) though we may put the cheat upon ourselves and others, yet we cannot impose upon him; *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* If we only give the hand unto the Lord, and do not give our hearts to him, whatever our pretensions, professions, and present feelings of devotion may be, we are but *as a sounding brass, and tinkling cymbal.* What will it avail us to say, we covenant with God, if we still keep up our league with the world and the flesh, and have a secret antipathy to serious godliness? dissembled piety is no disguise before God, but is hated as double iniquity. It is certain, that thou hast no part nor lot in the matter (whatever thou mayest claim) if *thy heart be not right in the sight of God,* Acts 8. 21. I know no religion but sincerity: Our vows to God are nothing, if they be not bonds upon the soul.

CHAP. VI.

Helps for Meditation and Prayer in our Preparation for the Ordinance.

MEDITATION and prayer are the daily exercise and delight of a devout and pious soul. In meditation we converse with ourselves; in prayer we converse with God; and what converse can we desire more agreeable, and more advantageous? They who are frequent and serious in these holy duties at other times, will find them the easier and the sweeter on this occasion; the friends we are much with, we are most free with: but, if, at other times we be not so close and constant to them as we should be, we have the more need to take pains with our own hearts, that we may effectually engage them in these services, when we approach the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Enter into thy closet, therefore, and shut the door against diversions from without: be not shy of being alone. The power of godliness withers and declines, if secret devotion be either neglected or negligently performed. Enter into thy heart also, and do what thou canst to shut the doors of that against distraction from within. Compose thyself for the business, and summon all that is within thee to attend on it; separate thyself from the world and the thoughts of it: leave all its cares at the bottom of the hill, as Abraham did his servants, when he was going up into the Mount to worship God, (Gen. 22. 5.) and then set thyself about thy work; gird up thy loins, and trim thy lamp. Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.

1. We must set ourselves to meditate on that which is most proper for the confirming of our faith, and the kindling of pious and devout affections in us. Good thoughts should be often in our minds, and welcome there; so should our souls often breathe towards God in pious ejaculations that are short and sudden: but as good prayers, so good thoughts must sometimes be set, and solemn. Morning and evening they must be so, on the Lord's day also, and before the Lord's Supper.

Meditation is thought engaged, and thought inflamed.

1. It is Thought engaged; in it the heart fastens upon, and fixes to a select and certain subject with an endeavour to dwell and enlarge upon it: not matters of doubtful disputation, or small concern, but those things which are of greatest certainty and moment: and since few of the ordinary sort of christians can be supposed to have such a treasury of knowledge, such a fruitfulness of invention, and so great a compass and readiness of thought, as to be able to discourse with themselves for any time upon any one subject, so closely, methodically, and pertinently as one would wish; it may be adviseable either to fatsen upon some portion of Scripture, and to read that over and over with a closeness of observation and application; or to recollect some profitable sermon lately heard, and think that over; or to make use of some books of pious meditations, or practical discourses (which blessed be God we have great plenty and variety of in our own tongue) and not only read them, but descant and enlarge upon them in our minds, still giving liberty to our own thoughts to expatiate, as they are able; but borrowing help from what we read, to reduce them when they wander, and to furnish them with matter when they are barren. In the choice of helps for this work, wisdom and experience are profitable to direct, and no rule can be given to fit all capacities and all cases: the end may be attained in different methods.

2. It is Thought inflamed. To meditate, is not only to think seriously of divine things, but to think of them with concern and suitable affection. *While we are thus musing, the fire must burn,* Ps. 39. 3. When the *Heart meditates terror,* (Isa. 33. 18.) the terrors of the Lord,

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Lord, it must be with a holy fear; when we contemplate the beauty of the Lord, his bounty, and his benignity, which is better than life, we must do it with holy complacency, solacing ourselves in the Lord our God: the design of meditation is to improve our knowledge, and to affect ourselves with those things with which we have acquainted ourselves, that the impressions of them upon our souls may be deep and durable, and that by *beholding the glory of the Lord, we may be changed into the same image.*

Serious meditation before a sacrament, will be of great use to us, to make those things familiar to us, which in that ordinance we are to be conversant with: that good thoughts may not be to seek when we are there, it is our wisdom to prepare them, and lay them ready beforehand. Frequent acts confirm a habit; and pious dispositions are greatly helped by pious meditations. Christian graces will be the better exercised in the ordinance, when they are thus trained, disciplined, and drawn out in the preparation for it.

For our assistance herein, I shall mention some few of those things which may most properly be pitched upon for the subject of our meditations before a sacrament: I say, before a sacrament, because, though this be calculated here for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, yet it may equally serve us in our preparations for the other sacrament, both that we may profit by the public administration of it, and, especially, that we may, in an acceptable manner, present our children to it; for which service we have as much need carefully to prepare ourselves as for this. As we must in faith join ourselves to the Lord, so we must in faith dedicate those pieces of ourselves to him.

That our hearts then may be raised, and quickened, and prepared for communion with Christ at his table.

I. Let us set ourselves to think of the sinfulness and misery of man's fallen state. That we may be taught to value our recovery and restoration by the grace of the second Adam, let us take a full and distinct view of our ruin by the sin of the first Adam; come and see what desolations it has made on the earth, and how it has turned the world into a wilderness. *How is this gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed?* What wretched work did sin make? What a black and horrid train of fatal consequences attended its entrance into the world.

Come, my soul, and see how the nature of man is corrupted and violated, and lamentably degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude: God's image defaced and lost, and Satan's image stamped instead of it. The understanding blind, and unapt to admit the rays of divine light; the will stubborn, and unapt to comply with the dictates of the divine law; the affections carnal, and unapt to receive the impressions of the divine love. Come, my soul, and lament the change; thou thyself feelest from it, and sharest in the sad effects of it; for a nature thus tainted, thus depraved, I brought into the world with me, and carry about with me to this day, sad remainders of its corruption. It was a nature by creation little lower than that of angels, but become by sin much baser than that of brutes. It was like the Nazarites, *purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruby than the rubies, and its polishing was of saphires;* but now, *its visage is blacker than a coal,* Lam. 4. 7. 8. Never was beauty so deformed, never was strength so weakened, never was a healthful constitution so spoiled, never was honour so laid in the dust. *How is the faithful city become a harlot?* Man's nature was *planted a choice Vine, wholly a right seed*: but alas, *it is become the degenerate plant of a strange vine,* Jer. 2. 21. I find in myself by sad experience, I am naturally prone to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good. Foolishness is daily breaking out in my life, and by that I perceive it is bound up in my heart: for these things I blush, and am ashamed: for these things I tremble, and am afraid: *For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runs down with tears,* Lam. 1. 16.

Come, my soul, and see how miserable fallen man is, see him excluded God's favour, expelled the garden of the Lord, and forbidden to meddle with the tree of life: see how odious he is become to God's holiness, and obnoxious to his justice, and by nature a child of wrath. See how calamitous the state of human life is; what troops of diseases, disasters, and deaths, in the most horrid and frightful shapes man is compassed about with; Lord, *How are they increased that trouble him?* See him attacked on every side by the malignant powers of darkness that seek to destroy; see him sentenced for sin to utter darkness, to the devouring fire, to the everlasting burning; *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning?* O what a gulph of misery is man sunk into by sin; separated from all good to all evil; and his condition in himself helpless and hopeless. A deplorable case! And it is my case by nature. I am of this guilty, exposed, condemned race; undone, undone for ever, as miserable as the curse of heaven, and the flames of hell can make me, if infinite mercy do not interpose. And shall not this affect me? Shall not this afflict me? Shall not these thoughts beget in me a hatred of sin, that evil, that only evil? Shall I ever be reconciled to that which has done so much mischief? Shall I not be quickened hereby to fly to Christ, in whom alone help and salvation is to be had? Is his thy condition, O my soul, thine by nature, and is there a door of hope opened to thee by grace? *Up,* then, *get thee out of this* Sodom; *escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the plain, escape to the mountain,* the mountain of holiness, *lest thou be consumed.*

II. Let us set ourselves to think of the glory of the Divine Attributes shining forth in the work of our redemption and salvation. Here is a bright and noble subject, the contemplation and wonder of angels and blessed spirits above, and which eternity itself will be short enough to be spent in the admiring view of.

Come then, O my soul, come and think of the kindness and love of God our Saviour, his good will to man which designed our redemption; the Spring and first wheel of that work of wonder. Herein is love! Though God was happy from eternity before man had a being, and would have been happy to eternity, if man

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man had never been, or had been miserable: though, man's nature was mean and despicable; though, his crimes were heinous and detestable; though, by his disobedience he had forfeited the protection of a prince; though, by his ingratitude he had forfeited the kindness of a friend; and, though, by his perfidiousness he had forfeited the benefits of a covenant; yet the tender mercies of our God moved for his relief. Come and see a world of apostate angels passed by and left to perish; no redeemer, no saviour provided for them; but fallen men pitied and helped; though angels had been more honourable, and would have been more serviceable.

Come and think of God's patience and forbearance exercised toward man; *The long suffering of our Lord is salvation.* Think how much he bears, and how long, with the world, with me, though most provoking. This patience left room for the salvation, and gives hopes of it. If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would have done it before now.

Come and think, especially, of the wisdom of God, which is so gloriously displayed in the contrivance of the work of our redemption: Here is *the Wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory,* 1 Cor. 2. 7. Think of the measures God has taken, the means he has devised, that the banished might not be for ever expelled from him, 2 Sam. 14. 14. Think with wonder how all the divine attributes are by the method pitched upon, secured from damage and reproach, so that one is not glorified by the diminution of the lustre of another. When sin has brought things to that strait, that one would think either God's justice, truth, and holiness must be eclipsed and clouded, or man's happiness must be for ever lost, Infinite Wisdom finds out an expedient for the securing both of God's honour and of man's happiness: it is now no disparagement at all to God's justice to pardon sin, nor to his holiness to be reconciled to sinners; for by the death of Christ justice is satisfied, and by the Spirit of Christ sinners are sanctified. *Mercy and truth* here *meet together;* behold, *righteousness and peace kiss each other.* Be astonished, O Heavens, at this, and wonder, O Earth. And thou, my soul, thou that owest all thy joys, and all thy hopes to this contrivance, despairing to find the bottom of this unfathomable fountain of life, sit down at the brink, and adore the depth; *O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* Rom. 11. 33.

III. Let us set ourselves to think of the person of our Redeemer, and his glorious understanding of the work of our Salvation. Come, my soul, and think of Christ, who thought of thee; think of him as the eternal Son of God, *the brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express image of his person;* who lay in his bosom from eternity, and had an infinite joy and glory with him before the world were, and in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead; the eternal Wisdom, the eternal Word that has life in himself, and is one with the Father, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God. *He is thy Lord,* (O my soul) and *worship thou him.*

Think of him as the former of all things, without whom was not any thing made that was made. *Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist,* Col. 1. 16, 17. Let this engage my veneration for him, let this encourage my faith and hope in him: if I have my being from him, I must consecrate my being to him, and may expect my bliss in him.

Think of him as Emmanuel, the word incarnate, *God manifest in the Flesh,* clothed with our nature, taking part of flesh and blood, that for us in our nature he might satisfy the justice of God whom we had offended, and break the power of Satan, by whom we were enslaved. Come, my soul and with an eye of faith behold the beauties, the transcendant, unparalleled beauties of the Redeemer. See him *white and ruddy, fairer than the children of men,* perfectly pure and spotless, wise and holy, kind and good; who has the infinite mercies of a God, and withal the experimental compassions of a man, who has been *touched with the feeling of our infirmities.* See him by faith, as John saw him in vision, (Rev. 1. 13, &c.) see him and admire him, as one who in all things has the pre-eminence; none like him, nor any to be compared with him.

Think of him as undertaking our redemption, the redemption of the soul, which was so precious, that otherwise it must have ceased for ever. When the sealed book of God's councils concerning man's redemption was produced, *none in Heaven or Earth was found worthy to open that book, or to look thereon,* Rev. 5. 3, 4. When sacrifice and offering for sin would not do, and the blood of bulls and goats had been tried in vain, and found ineffectual, then said he, *Lo, I come; this ruin shall be under my hands,* alluding to Isa. 3. 6. Come my soul, and see help laid upon one that is mighty; one chosen out of the people, and every way qualified for the undertaking; able to do the Redeemer's work, and fit to wear the Redeemer's crown. See how willingly he obliged himself to the service, how cheerfully he obliged himself to go through with it, and engaged his heart to approach unto God as our advocate. It is *the voice of thy beloved,* O my soul, *behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills,* making nothing of the difficulties that lay in his way. Behold thy King comes, thy Bridegroom comes, go forth my soul, go forth to meet him with thy joyful Hosannah's, and bid him welcome; *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

IV. Let us set ourselves to think of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the dishonours done to him, and the honours done to us by it. Here's a wide field for our meditations to expatiate in, nor can we determine to know any thing before a sacrament, more proper and profitable than *Jesus Christ, and him crucified; lifted up from the earth, and drawing all men unto him,* as the attractive load-stone of their hearts, and the common centre of their unity. Come then, and behold the Man; represent to thyself (O my soul) not to thy fancy, but to thy faith, *the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world,* by the sacrifice of himself.

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Come and look over the particulars of Christ's sufferings, all the humiliations and mortifications of his life; but especially the pains, agonies, and ignominies of his death. Review the story, thou wilt still find something in it surprising and very affecting: take notice of all the circumstances of his passion, and say, *Never was sorrow like unto his sorrow.* Take notice especially of the disgrace and reproach done him in his sufferings, the shame he was industriously loaded with: this contributed greatly to the satisfaction made by his sufferings: God has been injured in his glory by sin; and no other way could he be injured: he, therefore, who undertook to make reparation for that injury, not only denied himself in, and divested himself of the honours due to an incarnate Deity, but though most innocent and most excellent, voluntarily submitted to the utmost disgraces that could be done to the worst of criminals. Thus he restored that which he took not away: see him, my soul, see him *enduring the cross, and despising the shame.*

Come and see the purchases of the cross; the blood, there shed, is the ransom with which we are redeemed from hell; the price with which Heaven is bought for us. See it a price of inestimable value: *The Topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, nor shall it be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Sapphire.* No, my soul, thou wast not redeemed with such corruptible things. The pardon of sin, the favour of God, the graces of the Spirit, the blessings of the covenant, and eternal life, could not be purchased with silver and gold, but are dearly bought and paid for with the precious blood of the Son of God. All the praise be to the glorious purchaser!

Come and see the victories of the cross; see the Lord Jesus even a conqueror, when he seemed a captive; spoiling principalities and powers, when he seemed totally defeated and routed by them. See Christ upon the cross breaking the serpent's head, disarming Satan, triumphing over death and the grave, *leading captivity captive,* and going forth in that chariot of war, *conquering and to conquer.*

Think, my soul, think what thou owest to the dying of the Lord Jesus: the privileges of thy way, and the glories of thy home; all thou hast, all thou hopest for that is valuable, they are all precious fruits, gathered from this tree of life. Christ's wounds are thy healing, his agonies thy repose, his conflicts thy conquests, his groans thy songs, his pains thine ease, his shame thy glory, his death thy life, his suffering thy salvation.

V. Let us set ourselves to think of the present glories of the exalted Redeemer. When we meditate on the cross he bore, we must not forget the crown he wears. within the vail. Think, my soul, think where he is, at the right-hand of the Father, far above all principalities, and powers, and every name that is named; he is set down upon the throne of the Majesty in the highest Heavens. Having obtained eternal redemption for us, he is entered with his own blood into the Holy Place. Think how he is attended there with an innumerable company of angels, who continually surround the throne of God, and of the Lamb; think of the songs there sung to his praise, the crowns there cast at his feet, and the name he there has above every name. Think especially what he is doing there. He always appears in the presence of God, as the great High Priest of our profession, to intercede for all those that come to God by him, and he attends constantly to this very thing: there he is preparing a place for all his followers, and thence he will shortly come to receive them to himself, to behold his glory, and to share in it.

Dwell on these thoughts, O my soul, and say as they did who saw the glory of his transfiguration, *It is good to be here;* here let us *make tabernacles:* let these thoughts kindle in thee an earnest desire (shall I call it a holy curiosity) to see him as he is, face to face. His advancement is thine advantage: as the forerunner, he is for me entered: let the contemplation of the joy he is entered into, and the power he is there girded with, have such an influence upon me, that by faith I may be *raised up* likewise, and *made to sit together with him in heavenly places,* Eph. 2. 6.

VI. Let us set ourselves to think of the unsearchable riches of the new covenant made with us in Jesus Christ, and sealed to us in the sacrament. Peruse this covenant in the several dispensations of it, from the dawning of its day in the first promise, to that noon-day light, which life and immortality are brought to by the gospel. Read over the several articles of it, and observe how well ordered it is in all things; so well, that it could not be better. Review its promises, which are precious and many, very many, very precious, and sure to all the seed. Search into all the hidden wealth that is treasured up in them; dig into these mines; content not thyself with a transient view of these fountains of living water, but bring thy bucket, and draw with joy out of these wells of salvation. *Go walk about this Zion,* this City of God; *tell the towers, mark well the bulwarks, consider the palaces,* and say, *This God,* who is our God in covenant, *is ours for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death,* Ps. 48. 12, 13, 14.

Stir up thyself therefore, O my soul, to meditate on the privileges of a justified state; the liberties and immunities, the dignities and advantages that are conveyed by the charter of pardon. O the blessedness of the man whose iniquities are forgiven! See him secured from the arrests of the law, the curse of God, the evil of affliction, the sting of death, and the damnation of hell. Read with pleasure the triumphs of blessed Paul, Rom. 8. 33, &c. Happy thou art, my soul, and all is well with thee, or shall be shortly, if thy sins be pardoned.

Meditate on the honours and comforts of a state of Grace. If now I am a child of God, adopted and regenerated, and have received the Spirit of Adoption, I have liberty of access to the throne of grace, I have a sanctified use of my creature comforts, my fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ; *all is mine, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are mine,* (1 Cor. 3. 21, 22.) I have meat to eat that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger intermeddles not with. Let the thoughts of these privileges work in thee, O my soul, a holy disdain of the pleasures of sense and the profits

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profits of the world, whenever they come in competition with the gains of godliness, and the delights of the spiritual life: offer those to them that know no better.

VII. Let us set ourselves to think of the communion of saints. This contributes something to our comfort in communion with Christ, that through him *we have fellowship one with another*, (1 John 1. 7.) so that *we being many, are one bread and one body;* for Christ died *to gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad*, John 11. 52. That all might be one in him, in whom we all meet, as many members in one head, so making one body; many branches in one root, so making one vine; and many stones in one foundation, so making one building.

Enlarge thy thoughts then, O my soul, and let it be a pleasure to thee to think of the relation thou standest in to the whole family, both in Heaven and Earth, which is named of Jesus Christ; to think that thou art come in faith, hope, and love, even to the *innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 22, 23. Even these are thy brethren and fellow-servants. Rejoice in thine alliance to them, in their affection to thee, and in the prospect thou hast of being with them shortly, of being with them eternally. Here we sit down with a little handful of weak and imperfect saints, and those mixed with pretenders; but we hope shortly to have a place and a name in the general assembly of the first-born, and to *sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of our Father;* with all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect, and so to be together for ever with the Lord.

Please thyself also, O my soul, with thinking of the spiritual communion thou hast in the acts of christian piety, and in the exercise of christian charity, with *all that in every place* on this earth, *call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. Some good christians there are who fall within the reach of our personal communion, to whom we give the right-hand of fellowship. Others within the line of our acquaintance and correspondence, and many more, whom we know not, nor have heard of, never saw, nor are ever likely to see in this world; but all these our companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: they and we are guided by the same rule, animated by the same spirit, conformed to the same image, interested in the same promises, and joined to the same great body: they and we meet daily at the same throne of grace, under the conduct of the same Spirit of Adoption, which teaches us all to cry, *Abba, Father:* and they and we hope to meet shortly at the same throne of glory under the conduct of the same Jesus, who will gather his elect from the four winds, and present them all together unto the Father. Christ hath prayed, that *all that believe on him may be one*, and therefore we are sure they are so, for the Father heard him always, John 17. 20, 21. Let this subject yield us some delightful thoughts here in a scattered world, and a divided church.

VIII. Let us set ourselves to think of the happiness of heaven. A pleasant theme this is, very improveable, and pertinent enough to an ordinance which has so much of heaven in it. If indeed we have heaven in our eye as our home and rest, and our conversation there, we cannot but have it much upon our hearts. Have we good hope through grace of being shortly with Christ in the heavenly paradise, where there is *fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore*, where we shall see God's glory, and enjoy his love immediately to our compleat and everlasting satisfaction? Do we expect that yet a little while and the veil shall be rent, the shadow of the evening shall be done away, and we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known? Are we in prospect of a crown of glory that fades not away, an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance?

Raise thy thoughts then, O my soul, to the joyful contemplation of the glory to be revealed. Arise then, and survey this land of promise, as Abraham, Gen. 13. 14. Go with Moses to the top of Pisgath, and take a view of it by faith. Get a scripture map of that Canaan, and study it well. Think, my soul, what they see in that world, who always behold the face of the Father, and in it see all truth and brightness, and the perfection of beauty. Think what they have there who eat of the tree of life, and the hidden manna, whose faculties are enlarged to take in the full communications of divine love and grace, and who have *God himself with them as their God*, Rev. 21. 3. Think what they are doing there, who dwell in God's house, and are still praising him, and rest not day nor night from doing it. Think of the good company that is there, thousands of thousands of blessed angels, and holy souls, with whom we shall have an intimate and undisturbed converse in perfect light and love.

Compare the present state thou art in, my soul, with that thou hopest for; and let it be a pleasure to thee to think that whatever is here, thy grief and burthen shall be there removed, and done away for ever. Satan's temptations shall there no more assault thee, thine own corruptions shall there no more ensnare thee, the guilt of sin, and doubts about thy spiritual state, shall there no more terrify and perplex thee; no pain, nor sickness, nor sorrow, shall be an allay to the enjoyments of that world, as they are to those of this world. All tears shall there be wiped away, even those for sin.

On the other side, whatever is here thy delight and pleasure, shall there be perfected. The knowledge of God, joy in him, and communion with him, are here as it were thy running banquets, there they shall be thy continual feast. The work of Grace begun in thee, is that which reconciles thee to thyself, and gives thee some pleasure now in thy reflections upon thyself. This Work shall there be completed, and the finishing strokes given to it by the same skilful and happy hand that begun it.

Come now, my soul, and *neglect not the gift that is in thee*, but *meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them*, (1 Tim. 4. 14, 15.) ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι, *Be thou in them*, as in thy business, as in thine element. Think of the things that are not seen, that are eternal; the things of the invisible and unchangeable world, till thou findest

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findest thyself so affected with them, as even to forget the things that are here below, that are here behind; and look upon them with a holy negligence, that thou mayest with greater diligence *reach toward the things that are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling*, Phil. 3. 13, 14.

We must not only meditate, but we must pray, and cry earnestly to God for assistance and acceptance in what we do. When the Apostle had reckoned up all the parts of the christian's armour, he concludes with this, *Praying always*, Eph. 6. 18. Prayer must gird on the whole armour of God; for without prayer all our endeavours are vain and ineffectual. Therefore in our preparations for the Lord's Supper, time must be spent, and pains taken in prayer, for two reasons.

1. Because this is a proper means of quickening ourselves, and stirring up our graces. One duty of religion is of use to dispose and fit us for another; and the most solemn services ought to be approached gradually, and through the outer courts. In prayer the soul ascends to God, and converses with him, and thereby the mind is prepared to receive the visits of his grace, and habituated to holy exercises. Even the blessed Jesus prepared himself for the offering up of the great sacrifice by prayer, a long prayer in the house, (John 17.) and strong cryings with tears in the garden. Three times Christ was spoken to while he was here upon earth, by voices from heaven, and they all three found him praying. That at his baptism, (Luke 3. 21.) *Jesus being baptized and praying, the Heaven was opened.* That at his transfiguration, (Luke 9. 29.) *As he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered.* And that a little before his passion, (John 12. 27, 28.) when he prayed, *Father, glorify thy Name;* the voice came from Heaven, *I have glorified it*, &c. Saul of Tarsus prays, and then sees a vision, (Acts 9. 11, 12.) and afterwards, (Acts 22. 17, 18.) Cornelius had his vision when he was at prayer, (Acts 10. 30.) And Peter his, v. 9, 10. All which instances and many the like, suggest to us, that communion with God in prayer prepares and disposes the mind for communion with him in other duties.

2. Because this is the appointed way of fetching in that mercy and grace which God has promised, and which we stand in need of. In God is our help, and from him is our fruit found; and he has promised to help us, to give us a *new heart*, to *put his Spirit within us*, and to *cause us to walk in his statutes*, (Ezek. 36. 26, 27.) but it follows there, v. 37. *I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.* How can we expect the presence of God with us, if we do not invite him by prayer? Or the power of God upon us, if we do not by prayer derive it from him? The greatest blessings are promised to the prayer of faith; but God will not give, if we will not ask: Why should he?

But what must we pray for, when we draw near to God in this solemn ordinance? Solomon tells us, that both the *preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord*, Pro. 16. 1. To him therefore we must apply ourselves for both. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in these prayers, and in it the blessed Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for as much as we know not what to pray for, in this, or in any other case, as we ought.

(1.) We must pray that we may be prepared for the solemnity before it comes. Whatever is necessary to qualify us for communion with God in it, is spoken of in Scripture as God's gift; and whatever is the matter of God's promise, must be the matter of our prayers; for promises are given not only to be the ground of our hope, but also to be the guide of our desire in prayer. Is knowledge necessary? *Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding*, (Pro. 2. 6.) and at Wisdom's gates we must wait for Wisdom's gifts, rejoicing herein, *That the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding*, 1 Joh. 5. 20. Is faith necessary? That is *not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*, Eph. 2. 8. Him therefore we must attend, who is both *the author and the finisher of our faith* To him we must pray, *Lord, increase our faith: Lord, perfect what is lacking* in it: Lord, *fulfil the work of faith with power.* Is love necessary? It is the Holy Ghost that sheds abroad that love in our hearts, and circumcises our hearts to love the Lord our God. To that heavenly fire we must therefore go for this holy spark, and pray for the breath of the Almighty to blow it into a flame. Is repentance necessary? It is God who gives repentance, who takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh, and we beg of him to work that blessed change in us. *Behold the fire and the wood*, the ordinance instituted, and all needful provision made for our sacrifice: but *where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?* Where is the heart to be offered up to God? If God did not *provide himself a lamb*, the solemnity would fail, (Gen. 22. 7, 8.) to him therefore we must go to buy such things as we have need of against the feast; that is, to beg them; for we *buy without money and without price;* and such buyers shall not be driven out of God's temple, nor slighted there, however they are looked on in men's markets.

(2.) Pray, That our hearts may be enlarged in the duty. It is the gracious promise of God, that he will *open rivers in the wilderness and streams in the desart;* and the joint experience of all the saints, that *they looked unto him and were lightened.* Such out-goings of soul, therefore, toward God, as may receive the incomes of divine strength and comfort, we should earnestly desire and pray for. Pray that God would grace his own institutions with such manifest tokens of his presence, as, those two disciples had, who reasoned thus for their own conviction that they had been with Jesus, *Did not our hearts burn within us?* Luke 24. 32. Pray that by the grace of God, the business of the ordinance may be faithfully done; the work of the day, the sacrament day, in its day, *according as the duty of the day requires*, Ezra. 3. 4. Pray, that the ends of the ordinance may be sincerely aimed at, and happily attained, and the great intentions of the institution of it answered, that you may not receive the Grace of God therein in vain. O that my heart may be engaged to approach unto God! so engaged, as that

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that nothing may prevail to disengage it! Come, blessed Spirit, and breathe upon these dry bones! Move upon the waters of the ordinances, and produce a new creation: *Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth*; and then *let my beloved come into his garden*, (his it is, and then it will be fit to be called his) *and eat his pleasant fruits*, Cant. 4. 16.

(3.) Pray, that we may be favourably accepted of God, both in the preparation and the performance. In vain do we worship, if God do not accept us: the applause of men is but a poor reward (such as the hypocrites were content with, and put off with) if we come short of the favour of God: herein therefore we should labour, this we should be ambitious of as our highest honour, the top of our preferment, *that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 9. About this therefore we should be very solicitous in our inquiries, *Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord*, so as to please him? For this we should be very importunate in our prayers, *O that I knew where I might find him!* Job. 23. 3. O that I might be met at the table of the Lord with a blessing, and not with a breach! O that God would smile upon me there, and bid me welcome! O that the beloved of my soul would shew me some token for good there, and say unto me, *I am thy salvation!* Son, Daughter, *be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine.* O that it might be a communion indeed between Christ and my soul! That which is in vogue with the most of men is, *Who will shew us any good?* But when I am admitted to touch the top of the golden scepter, this is my petition, this is my request, *Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, and that shall put* true *gladness into my heart*, greater than *the joy of harvest.*

(4.) Pray, that what is amiss, may be pardoned in the blood of Christ. This prayer good Hezekiah has put into our mouths (God put it into our hearts! 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19.) *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart* in sincerity, *to seek the Lord God of his fathers*, and aims honestly, *though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.* We cannot but be conscious to ourselves, that in many things we come short of our duty, and wander from it: the rule is strict; it is fit it should be so, and yet no particular rule more strict, than that general and fundamental law of God's kingdom, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and might:* But, our own hearts know, and, God who is greater than our hearts, and knows all things, knows that we do not come up to the rule, nor *continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*: By our deficiencies we become obnoxious to the curse, and should perish by it, if we were under the law: but we are encouraged by a penitent believing prayer, to sue out our pardon, having an advocate with the Father.

Would we take with us words in these prayers: David's Psalms, and St. Paul's Epistles, will furnish us with great variety of acceptable words; words which the Holy Ghost teaches, and other helps of devotion, which, thanks be to God, we have plenty of, may be used to much advantage: and if in these prayers we stir up ourselves to take hold on God, our experience shall be added to that of thousands; that Jacob's God never said to Jacob's seed, *Seek ye me in vain.*

CHAP. VII.

Directions in what Frame of Spirit we should come to, and attend upon this Ordinance.

TO make up the wedding garment, which is proper for this wedding feast, it is requisite, not only, that we have an habitual temper of mind agreeable to the gospel, but that we have such an actual disposition of Spirit, as is consonant to the nature and intentions of the ordinance. It is an excellent rule in the Scripture Directory, for religious worship, (Ecc. 5. 1.) *Keep thy Foot when thou goest to the House of God;* that is, *keep thy heart with all diligence*, (Pro. 4. 23.) Look well to the motions of thy soul, and observe the steps it takes. When we are to see the goings of our God, our King in the Sanctuary, (Ps. 68. 24.) it concerns us to see to our own goings. *Keep thy Foot*, that is, do nothing rashly, but *when thou goest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee*, Pro. 23. 1. It was not enough for the priests under the Law, that they were washed and dressed in their priestly garments, when they were first consecrated, but they must be carefully washed and dressed every time they went in to minister, else they went in at their peril; we are spiritual priests to our God, and must do the office of our priesthood with a due decorum, remembering that this is that which the Lord has said, (God by his grace speak it home to our hearts!) *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me;* that is, I will be attended as a Holy God, in a Holy Manner, *and* so *before all the people I will be glorified*, Lev. 10. 3. We then sanctify God in holy duties, when we sanctify ourselves in our approaches to them; that is, when we separate ourselves from every thing that is common or unclean; from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, and consecrate ourselves to God's glory, as our end, and to his service as our business. If we would have the ordinance sanctified to us for our comfort and benefit, we must thus sanctify ourselves for it. Joshua's command to the people, when they were to follow the ark of the covenant through Jordan, should be still sounding in our ears, the night before a sacrament, (Josh. 3. 5.) *Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.* When the God of glory admits such worms, such a generation of vipers as we are, into covenant and communion with himself; when he gives gifts, such gifts even to the rebellious; when by the power of his grace he sanctifies the sinful, and comforts the sorrowful, and gives such holiness and joy as is life from the dead; surely then he does wonders among us: that we may see these wonders done, and share in the benefit of them, that we may experience

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rience them done in our souls, Jordan driven back at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, to open a passage for us into the heavenly Canaan, let us sanctify ourselves, and earnestly pray to God to sanctify us.

For our help herein, the following directions perhaps may be of some use.

I. Let us address ourselves to this service with a fixedness of thought. There is scarce any instance of the corruption of nature, and the moral impotency which by sin we are brought under, more complained of by serious christians, than the vanity of the thoughts, and the difficulty of fixing them to that which is good. They are apt to wander after a thousand impertinencies: and it is no easy matter to gather them in, and keep them employed as they should be; we all find it so by sad experience. Vain thoughts lodge within us, and are most a hindrance and disturbance to us, when good thoughts are invited into the soul, and should be entertained there. When, therefore, we apply ourselves to a religious service, which will find work for all our thoughts, and which present objects well worthy of our closest contemplation, we are concerned to take pains with ourselves to get our hearts engaged, and to *bring every thought into obedience* to the law of this solemnity.

This is a time to set aside the thoughts of every thing that is foreign and unseasonable, and all those foolish speculations which use to be the unprofitable amusements of our idle hours, and the sports and pastimes of our carnal minds: away with them all; clear the court of these vagrants, when the doors are to be opened for the King of Glory to come in. Are they thoughts that pretend business, and are as buyers and sellers in the temple? Tell them you have other business to mind; bid them depart for this time, and at a more convenient season you will call for them. Do they pretend urgent business, as Nehemiah's enemies did, when they sought to give him a diversion? Give them the repulse that he gave, and like him, repeat it as oft as they repeated their solicitations, (Neh. 6. 2, 3, 4.) *I am doing a great work, why should the work cease, while I leave it, and come down to you?* Do they pretend friendship, and send in the name of thy mother, and thy brethren standing without, to speak with thee: yet dismiss them as Christ did, by giving the preference to better friends, let not thoughts of those we love best, divert us from thinking of Christ, whom we know we must love better.

This is a time to summon the attendance of all the thoughts, and keep them close to the business we are going about. Suffer none to wander, none to trifle, for here is employment, good employment for them all, and all little enough. Though a perfect fixation of thought, without any distraction during the solemnity, is, what I believe none can attain to in this state of imperfection, yet it is what we should desire and aim at, and come as near to as we can. Let us charge our thoughts not to straggle, keep a watchful eye upon them, and call them back when they begin to rove. Keep them in full employment about that which is proper and pertinent, which will prevent their starting aside to that which is otherwise. Come, *bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar*, that it may not be to seek when it should be sacrificed, (Ps. 118. 27.) Be able to say, through Grace, *O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed*, though unfixed at other times, yet fixed now. Look up to God for grace to establish the heart, and keep it steady: look with sorrow and shame upon its wanderings: shut the door against distractions: watch and pray against temptations; and when those birds of prey come down upon the sacrifices, do as Abraham did, (Gen. 15. 11.) *Drive them away.* And while you sincerely endeavour to keep your hearts fixed, be not discouraged; the vain thoughts that are disallowed, striven against, and repented of, though they are our hindrance, yet, they shall not be our ruin.

II. Let us address ourselves to this service with an evenness and calmness of affection, free from the disorders and ruffles of passion. A sedate and quiet spirit, not tossed with the tempests of care and fear, but devolving care on God, and silencing fear by faith, not sinking under the load of temporal burthens, but supporting itself with the hopes of eternal joys, easy itself, because submissive to its God; this is a spirit fit to receive and return divine visits. They were still waters, on the face of which the Spirit moved to produce the world. *The Lord was not in the wind, was not in the earthquake.* The Prince of the power of the air raises storms, for he loves to fish in troubled waters: but the Prince of peace stills storms, and quiets the winds and waves, for he casts his net into a calm sea: *The Waters of Shiloah run softly*, and without noise, (Isa. 8. 6.) And that *river*, the *streams whereof make glad the city of our God*, is none of those, the *waters* whereof *roar and are troubled*, Ps. 46. 3, 4.

Let us therefore always study to be quiet, and however we are crossed and disappointed, let not our hearts be troubled, let them not be cast down and disquieted within us. Let us not create or aggravate our own vexations, nor be put into a disorder by any thing that occurs, but let the peace of God always rule in our hearts, and then that peace will keep them. They, whose natural temper is either fretful or fearful, have the more need to double their guard; and when any disturbance begins in the soul, should give diligence to suppress the tumult with all speed, lest the Holy Spirit be thereby provoked to withdraw, and then they will have but uncomfortable sacraments.

But especially let us compose ourselves, when we approach to the Table of the Lord. Charge the peace then in the name of the King of Kings; command silence, when you expect to hear the voice of joy and gladness: stop the mouth of clamours and noisy passions, banish tumultuous thoughts, suffer not those evil spirits to speak, but expel them, and let your souls return to God, and repose in him as their rest. Bring not unquiet distempered spirits to a transaction, which requires the greatest calmness and serenity possible. Let all intemperate heats be cooled, and the thoughts of that which has made an uproar in the soul be banished, and let a strict charge be given to all about you, to all within

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you, *by the roes and hinds of the field,* those innocent pleasant creatures, that they *stir not up, nor awake your love,* nor give disturbance to your communion with him.

III. Let us address ourselves to it with a holy awe and reverence of the Divine Majesty. We ought to be in the fear of the Lord every day, and all the day long, for he is our strict observer wherever we are, and will be the judge of persons and actions, by whose unerring sentence our eternal state will be decided; but in a special manner he is *greatly to be feared in the assemblies of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him,* Ps. 89. 7. and the nearer we approach to him, the more reverent we should be. Angels who always behold God's face, see cause to cover their own. Even when we are admitted to sit down at God's table, we must remember that we are worshipping at his footstool, and, therefore, must lay ourselves very low before him, and *in his fear worship towards his Holy Temple,* Ps. 5. 7. Let us not rush into the presence of God in a careless manner, as if he were a man like ourselves, nay, so as we would not approach a prince, or a great man, but observe a decorum, giving to him the glory due unto his name, and taking to ourselves the shame due to ours. If he be a master, where is his fear? We do not worship God acceptably, if we do not worship him *with reverence and godly fear,* Heb. 12. 28.

1. We must worship him with reverence, as a glorious God, a God of infinite perfection, and almighty power, who *covers himself with light, as with a garment,* and yet as to us *makes darkness his pavilion.* Dare we profane the temples of the Holy Ghost by outward indecencies of carriage and behaviour, the manifest indications of a vain regardless mind? Dare we allow of flat and common thoughts of that God who is over all blessed for evermore? See him, (my soul) see him by faith, upon a throne, high and lifted up, not only upon a throne of grace, which encourages thee to come with boldness, but upon a throne of glory, and a throne of government, which obliges thee to come with caution. Remember that *God is in Heaven, and thou art upon Earth,* and *therefore let thy words be few,* (Ecc. 5. 2.) *Be still, and know that he is God,* that he is great, and keep thy distance. Let an awful regard to the glories of the eternal God, and the exalted Redeemer, make thee humble and serious, very serious, very humble in thine approach to this ordinance, and keep thee so during the solemnity.

2. We must also worship him with godly fear, as a Holy God, a God whose name is Jealous, and who is a consuming fire, (Heb. 12. 29.) we have reason to fear before him, for we have offended him, and have made ourselves obnoxious to his wrath and curse, and, we are but upon our good behaviour, as probationers for his favour. He is not a God that will be mocked, that will be trifled with: if we think to put a cheat upon him, we shall prove in the end to have put a most dangerous cheat upon our own souls: in this act of religion therefore, as well as in others, we must *work out our salvation with fear and trembling.*

IV. Let us come to this ordinance with a holy jealousy over ourselves, and a humble sense of our own unworthiness. We must sit before the Lord in such a frame as David composed himself into, when he said, *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my Father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* 2 Sam. 7. 18. Nothing prepares the soul more for spiritual comforts than humility.

1. It may be, that we have reason to suspect ourselves, lest we come unworthily. Though, we must not cherish such suspicions of our state, as will damp our joy in God, and discourage our hope in Christ, and fill us with amazement; nor such as will take off our chariot wheels, and keep us standing at a gaze, when we should be going forward; yet, we must maintain such a jealousy of ourselves, as will keep us humble, and take us off from all self-conceit, and self-confidence; such a jealousy of ourselves as will keep us watchful, and save us from sinking into carnal security. And now is a proper time to think how many there are who *eat bread* with Christ, and *yet lift up the heel against him;* the *hand of him that betrayeth him perhaps is with him upon the table;* which should put us upon asking, as the disciples did, just before the first sacrament, *Lord, is it I?* Mat. 26. 22. Many who eat and drink in Christ's presence, will be rejected and disowned by him in the Great Day; have not I some reason to fear, lest that be my doom at last? To *fear lest a promise being left me of entering into rest,* I should *seem to come short?* To fear lest when the King comes in to see the guests, he find me without a wedding-garment; be not too confident, O my soul, lest thou deceive thyself; *be not high-minded, but fear.*

2. However, it is certain, that we have reason to abase ourselves, for at the best, we are unworthy to come. If we are *less than the least of God's mercies,* how much less are we than the greatest, than this, which includes all? We are unworthy of the crumbs that fall from our Master's table, much more unworthy of the children's bread, and the dainties that are upon the table; being invited, we may hope to be welcome; but, what is there in us that we should be invited; men invite their friends and acquaintance to their tables, but, we were naturally strangers and enemies in our mind by wicked works, and yet are we invited: men invite such as they think will with their quality or merit grace their tables, but we are more likely to be a reproach to Christ's table, being *poor and maimed, halt and blind,* and yet are picked up out of *the high-ways and the hedges,* Luke 14. 21. Men invite such as they are under obligations to, or have expectations from, but Christ is no way indebted to us, nor can he be benefited by us; our goodness extends not to him, and yet he invites us. We have much more reason than Mephibosheth had, when he was made a constant guest at David's table, to bow ourselves and say, *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?* 2 Sam. 9. 8. They who thus humble themselves shall be exalted.

V. Yet, let us come to this ordinance with a gracious confidence, as children to a father, to a father's table; not with any confidence in ourselves, but in Christ only. That

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That slavish fear, which represents God as a hard master, rigorous in his demands, and extreme to mark what we do amiss; which straitens our spirits, and subjects us to bondage and torment, must be put off and striven against, and we must *come boldly to the throne of Grace*, to the table of grace, not as having any thing in ourselves to recommend us, but having a *High-Priest, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. 4. 15, 16. As a presumptuous rudeness is a provocation to the master of the feast, so a distrustful shyness is displeasing to him, which looks as if we questioned either the sincerity of the invitation, or the sufficiency of the provision.

This is the fault of many good christians; they come to this sacrament rather like prisoners to the bar, than like friends and children to the table; they come trembling and astonished, and full of confusion. Their apprehensions of the grandeur of the ordinance, and the danger of coming unworthily, run into an extreme, and become a hindrance to the exercise of faith, hope, and love: this extreme we should carefully watch against; because it tends so much to God's dishonour, our own prejudice, and the discouragement of others. Let us remember we have to do with one who is willing to make the best of sincere desires, and serious endeavours, though in many things we be defective, and who deals with us in tender mercy, and not in strict justice; and, who, though he be out of Christ a consuming fire, yet in Christ is a gracious Father: let us therefore *draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith*, Heb. 10. 22. It is related of Titus the Emperor, that when a poor petitioner presented his address to him with a trembling hand, he was much displeased, and asked him, "Dost thou present thy petition to thy prince, as if thou wert giving meat to a lion?" Chide thyself for these amazing fears; *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?* If the Spirit undertake to work all my works in me, as the Son has undertaken to work all my works for me, both the one and the other shall be done effectually. Therefore *hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him.*

VI. Let us come to this ordinance with earnest desires toward God, and communion with him. It is a feast, a spiritual feast, and we must come to it with an appetite, a spiritual appetite; for the full soul loaths even the honey-comb, and slights the offer of it; but to the hungry soul, that is sensible of its own need, every bitter thing is sweet, even the bitterness of repentance, when it is in order to peace and pardon. Our desires toward the world and the flesh must be checked and moderated, and kept under the government of religion and right reason; for we have been too long spending our money for that which is not bread, and which is at the best unsatisfying; but our desires toward Christ must be quickened and stirred up. *As the hart*, the hunted hart, *panteth after* the refreshment of *the water-brook*, so earnestly must our *souls pant for the living God*, Ps. 42. 1, 2. The invitation is given, and the promise made to them only who hunger and thirst; they are called to *come to the waters*, (Isa. 55. 1.) to *come and drink*, (John 7. 37.) and it is promised to them, that *they shall be filled*, (Mat. 5. 6.) it is very necessary therefore that we work upon our hearts the consideration of those things that are proper to kindle this holy fire, and to blow its sparks into a flame. We are best prepared to receive temporal mercies, when we are most indifferent to them, and content, if the will of God be so, to be without them? *Did I desire a Son of my Lord?* said the good Shunamite, 2 Kings 4. 28. Here the danger is of being too earnest in our desires, as Rachael, *Give me children, or else I die.* But we are best prepared to receive spiritual mercies, when we are most importunate for them: Here the desires cannot be too vehement. In the former case strong desires evidence the prevalency of sense, but in this they evidence the power of faith, both realizing and valuing the blessings desired. The devout and pious soul thirsts for God, for the living God, as a thirsty land, Ps. 143. 6.——63. 1. It longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord, and for communion with God in them, Ps. 84. 2. *It breaks for the longing it hath unto God's judgment at all times*, Ps. 119. 20. Can our souls witness to such desires as these? O that I might have a more intimate acquaintance with God, and Christ, and divine things! O that I might have the tokens of God's favour and fuller assurances of his distinguishing love in Jesus Christ! O that my covenant interest in him, and relation to him, might be cleared up to me, and that I might have more of the comfort of it! O that I might partake more of the divine grace, and by its effectual working on my soul, might be made more conformable to the divine will and likeness, more holy, humble, spiritual, heavenly, and more meet for the inheritance! O that I might have the earnest of the Spirit in my heart, sealing me to the day of redemption!

Thus the desire of our souls must be toward the Lord, and toward the remembrance of his name. In this imperfect state, where we are at home in the body, and absent from the Lord, our love to God acts more in holy desires than in holy delights. It is rather love in motion, like a bird upon the wing, than love at rest, like a bird upon the nest. All those who have the Lord for their God, agree to desire nothing more than God, for they know they have enough in him; but still yet they desire more and more of God, for till they come to heaven, they will never have enough of him. Come then, my soul, why art thou so cold in thy desires toward those things which are designed for thy peculiar satisfaction, distinct from the body? Why so eager for the meat that perishes, and so indifferent to that which endures to everlasting life? Hast thou no desire to that which is so necessary to thy support, and without which thou art undone? No desire to that which will contribute so much to thy comfort, and yield thee an inexpressible satisfaction? Provision is made in the Lord's Supper of bread to strengthen thee, will not the sense of thine own weakness and emptiness, make thee hunger after that? Canst thou be indifferent to that which is the staff of thy life? Provision is made of pleasant food, fat things full of marrow, and wines on the lees; art thou not desirous of dainties,

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dainties, such dainties? Was the tree of knowledge such a temptation, because it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, that our first parents would break through the hedge of a divine command, and venture all that was dear to them to come at it? And shall not the tree of life, which we are not only allowed, but commanded to eat of, and the fruit of which will nourish us to life eternal, shall not that appear more pleasing in our eyes, and more to be desired? God, even thine own God, who has wherewithal to supply all thy need, and has promised to be to thee a God All-sufficient, a God that is enough, he has said, (Ps. 81. 10.) *Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it.*——Thou art not straitened in him, be not straitened in thine own desires.

VII. Let us come to this ordinance with raised expectations. The same faith that enlarges the desire, and draws it out to a holy vehemence, should also elevate the hope, and ripen it to a holy confidence. When we come thirsting to these waters, we need not fear that they will prove like the brooks in summer, which disappoint the weary traveller, for *when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place,* Job. 6. 17. &c. Such are all the broken cisterns of the creature, they perform not what they promise, or rather, what we foolishly promise to ourselves from them. No, but these are inexhaustible fountains of living water, in which there is enough for all, though ever so many, enough for each, though ever so needy, enough for me, though most unworthy.

Come, my soul, what dost thou look for at the table of the Lord? The maker of the feast is God himself, who does nothing little, nothing mean, but is *able to do exceeding abundantly, above what we are able to ask or think.* When he gives, he gives like himself, gives like a King, gives like a God, all things richly to enjoy, considering not what it becomes such ungrateful wretches as we are to receive, but what it becomes such a bountiful benefactor as he is to give. A lively faith may expect that which is rich and great from him who is possessor of heaven and earth, and all the wealth of both; and that which is kind and gracious from him, who is the *Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation.* A lively faith may expect all that is purchased by the blood of Christ, from a God who is righteous in all his ways, and all that is promised in the new covenant from a God who cannot lie nor deceive.

The provision in this feast is Christ himself, and all his benefits, all we need to save us from being miserable, and, all we can desire to make us happy; and glorious things, no doubt, may be expected from him, in whom it pleases the Father, that *all fulness should dwell.* Let our expectations be built upon a right foundation, not any merit of our own, but God's mercy and Christ's mediation, and then build large, as large as the new covenant in its utmost extent; build high, as high as heaven in all its glory. Come, expecting to see that which is most illustrious, and to taste and receive that which is most precious; come, expecting that with which you will be abundantly satisfied.

Though what is prepared seems to a carnal eye poor and scanty, like the five loaves set before five thousand men, yet when Christ has the breaking of those loaves, they shall all eat and be filled. In this ordinance the oil is multiplied, the oil of gladness, it is multiplied in the pouring out, as the widow's oil, 2 Kings 4. 2, &c. Do as she did therefore, bring empty vessels, bring not a few, they shall be filled; the expectations of faith shall all be answered; the oil stays not (as there, v. 6.) while there is an empty vessel, waiting to be filled; give faith and hope their full compass, and thou wilt find (as that widow did, v. 7.) there is enough of this oil, this multiplied oil, this oil from the good olive, to pay the debt, and enough besides for thee and thine to live upon. As we often wrong ourselves by expecting too much from the world, which is vanity and vexation, so we often wrong ourselves, by expecting too little from God, whose mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him; and who in exerting his power, and conferring his gifts, still says, *According to your faith be it unto you.* The King of Israel lost his advantage against the Syrians, by smiting thrice, and then staying, when he should have smitten five or six times, 2 Kings 13. 18, 19. And we do often in like manner prejudice ourselves, by the weakness of our faith; we receive little, because we expect little; and are like them among whom Christ could not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief, Mark 6. 5.

VIII. Let us come to this ordinance with rejoicing and thanksgiving. These two must go together, for whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, must be the matter of our thanksgiving; holy joy is the heart of our thankful praise; and thankful praise is the language of holy joy; and both these are very seasonable, when we are coming to an ordinance, which is instituted both for the honour of the Redeemer, and for the comfort of the redeemed.

Besides the matter for joy and praise, which we are furnished with in our attendance on the ordinance, even our approach to it, is such an honour, such a favour, as obliges us to *come before his presence with singing,* and even *to enter into his gates with thanksgiving,* Ps. 100. 2, 4. With gladness and rejoicing shall the royal bride be brought, Ps. 45. 15. Those who in their preparations for the ordinance have been sowing in tears, may not only come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them, but go with rejoicing to fetch their sheaves, to meet the ark, lifting up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption, and the sealing of them to the day of redemption draws on. Let those who are of a sorrowful spirit hearken to this; cheer up, and be comforted. *This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not, nor weep,* Neh. 8. 9. It is *the day which the Lord hath made,* and we must *rejoice* and *be glad in it,* and *the joy of the Lord will be our strength,* and oil to our wheels. All things considered, thou hast a great deal more reason than Haman had, to go in merrily with the King to the banquet of wine, Esth. 5. 4.

Two things may justly be the matter of our re-

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joicing and thanksgiving in our approach to this ordinance,

1. That God has put such a Price as this into our hands to gain wisdom. That such an ordinance as this was instituted for our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace: that it is transmitted down to us, is administered among us, and we are invited to it. This is a token for good, which we have reason to rejoice in, and be very thankful for. That our lot is not cast either among those who are strangers to the gospel, and so have not this ordinance at all, or among those who are enemies to the gospel, and have it wretchedly corrupted, and turned into an idolatrous service; but that Wisdom's table is spread among us, and her voice heard in our streets, and we are called to her feasts; we have *a nail in God's holy place*, a settlement in his house, and stated opportunities of communion with him. If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us such things as these. O what a privilege is it thus to eat and drink in Christ's presence! To sit down under his shadow, at his table with his friends and favourites! That we who deserved to have been set with the dogs of his flock, should be set with the children of his family, and eat of the children's bread; nay, that we should be numbered among his priests, and eat of the dedicated things. *Bless the Lord, O my soul.*

2. That God has given us a heart to improve this price in our hands: we have reason to be thankful that he has not only invited us to this feast, which is a token of his good-will toward us; but, that he has inclined us to accept the invitation, which is the effect of a good work upon us. Many who are called make light of it, and go their way to their farms and merchandize, and, if we had been left to ourselves, we should have made the same foolish choice, and in the greatness of our folly should have gone astray, and wandered endlessly. It was free grace that made us willing in the day of power, and graciously compelled us to come in to the gospel-feast; it was distinguishing grace that revealed to us babes, the things which were hidden from the wise and prudent. Let that grace have the glory, and let us have the joy of this blessed work.

IX. Let us come to this ordinance in charity with all men, and with a sincere affection to all good christians. It is a love-feast, and if we do not come in love, we come without the wedding-garment, and forfeit the comforts of the feast. This is to be seriously thought of, when we bring our gift to the altar, as we hope for acceptance there.

When we come to this sacrament, we must bring with us, ill-will to none, good-will to all, but especially *to them who are of the household of faith.*

1. We must bear ill-will to none, no, not to those who have been most injurious and provoking to us: though they have affronted us ever so much in our honour, wronged us in our interest, and set themselves to vilify us, and do us mischief, yet we must not hate them, nor entertain any malice toward them; we must not be desirous or studious of revenge, nor seek their hurt in any respect, but must from our hearts forgive them, as we ourselves are, and hope to be forgiven of God. We must see to it, that there be not the least degree of enmity to any person in the world, lodged in our breast, but, carefully purge out that old leaven; not only lay aside the thoughts of it for the present, but wholly pluck up and cast out that root of bitterness, which bears gall and wormwood. Pure hands must in this ordinance, as well as in prayer, be *lifted up, without wrath and doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. How can we expect that God should be reconciled to us, if we bring not with us a disposition to be reconciled to our brethren? for our trespasses against God are unspeakably greater than the worst of our brethren's trespasses against us. O that each would apply this caution to themselves; you have a neighbour, that upon some disgust conceived, you cannot find in your hearts to speak to, nor to speak well of; some one that you have entertained a prejudice against, and would willingly do an ill turn to, if it lay in your power; some one, whom, it may be, you are ready to say, that you cannot endure the sight of: and dare you retain such a spirit when you come to this ordinance? Can you conceal it from God? Or do you think that you can justify it at his bar, and make it out that you do well to be angry? Let the fear of God's wrath, and the hope of Christ's love, reduce you to a better temper; and when you celebrate the memorial of the dying of the Lord Jesus, be sure you remember this, that he is our peace, and that he died to slay all enmities.

2. We must bear good-will to all, with a particular affection to all good christians. Christian charity not only forbids that which is any way injurious, but it requires that which is kind and friendly.

The desire of our hearts must be toward the welfare of all: if we be indeed solicitous about the salvation of our own souls, we cannot but have the tender concern for the souls of others, and be hearty well-wishers to their salvation likewise; *for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved*, 1 Tim. 2. 3, 4. True grace hates monopolies. We must thus love those whose wickedness we are bound to hate; and earnestly desire their happiness, even while we industriously decline their fellowship.

But the delight of our souls must be in the saints that are on earth, those excellent ones; as David's was, Ps. 16. 3. They are precious in God's sight, and honourable, and they should be so in our's; they have *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*, and therefore by a sincere and affectionate love to them, we also should have fellowship with them. Our hearts will be comforted when they are *knit together in love*, Col. 2. 2. This love must not be confined to those of our own communion, our own way and denomination; then we love them for our own sakes, because they credit us, not for Christ's sake, because they honour him: but since God is no respecter of persons, we must not be such. *In every Nation he that fears God and works righteousness, is accepted of him*, and should be so of us,

Acts

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Acts 10. 34, 35. Doubtless there may be a diversity of apprehensions in the less weighty matters of the law, such as the distinction of meats and days, and a diversity of practice accordingly, and, yet a sincerity of mutual love, according to the law of Christ. Those who think it is not possible, should be content to speak for themselves only, and must believe there are those who have much satisfaction in being able to say, that they love the image of Christ wherever they see it, and highly value a good man, though not in every thing of their mind. He who casts out devils in Christ's name, must be dear to us, though he follows not us, Mark 9. 38. The differences that are among christians, though fomented by the malice of Satan for the ruin of love, are permitted by the wisdom of God for the trial of love, that they who are perfect therein may be made manifest. Herein a Christian commends his love, when he loves those who differ from him, and joins in affection to those with whom he cannot concur in opinion. This is thankworthy: *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink;* they who have tasted of the bread of life, and the water of life, know it is not, but it is *righteousness and peace,* and *joy in the Holy Ghost:* He, therefore, who in these things serves Christ, is acceptable to God, and, therefore, though he esteem not our days, though he relish not our meats, he should be acceptable and dear to us.

Let us then in our approach to this sacrament, stir up ourselves to holy love, love without dissimulation; let us bear those on our hearts, whom the great High Priest of our profession bears on his; and as we are *taught of God to love one another, let us increase therein more and more,* 1 Thes. 4. 9, 10. Christ's having loved us, is a good reason why we should love him; Christ's having loved our brethren also, is a good reason why we should love them. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for christians to be kindly affectioned one toward another, of one heart, and of one soul; there the Lord commands the blessing, and gives earnest of the joys of that world, where love is perfected, and reigns eternally.

CHAP. VIII.

Some Account of the Affecting Sights that are to be seen by Faith in this Ordinance.

CARE being taken, by the grace of God to compose ourselves into a serious frame of spirit agreeable to the ordinance, we must next apply ourselves to that which is the proper business of it, that we may do the work of the day in its day, of the hour in its hour. And the first thing to be done, is to contemplate that which is represented to us, and set before us there. This David aimed at, when he coveted to *dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of his life,* that he might *behold the beauty of the Lord,* (Ps. 27. 4.) might *see his power and his glory,* Ps. 63. 2. To the natural man, who receives not the things of the Spirit of God, there appears in it nothing surprising, nothing affecting, no form nor comeliness; but to that faith which is the substance and evidence of things not seen, there appears a great sight, which like Moses, (Exod. 3. 3.) it will with a holy reverence, turn aside now to see. As therefore in our preparation for this ordinance, we should pray with David, *Open thou mine eye, that I may see the wonderous things of thy law* and gospel; so we should with Abraham, (Gen. 13. 14.) *Lift up our eyes now and look.*

When the Lamb that had been slain had taken the book, and was going to open the seals, St. John, who had the honour to be a witness in vision of the solemnity, was loudly called by one of the four living creatures to come and see, Rev. 6. 1, 3, 5, 7. The same is the call given to us, when in this sacrament there is a door opened in Heaven, and we are bidden to *come up hither,* Rev. 4. 1.

I. In general, we are here called to see the Lamb that had been slain opening the seals. This is the general idea we are to have of the ordinance. We would have thought ourselves highly favoured indeed, and beloved disciples, if we had seen it in vision as John did; behold we are all invited to see it in a sacramental representation.

1. In this ordinance is shewed us the Lamb as it had been slain. John the Baptist pointed to him as *The Lamb of God,* and called upon his followers to *behold him,* John 1. 29. A Lamb designed for sacrifice, in order to the taking away of the sins of the world, a harmless spotless Lamb; but John the divine goes further, and sees him a *Lamb slain,* now sacrificed for us, in the outer courts; and not only so, but appearing *in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and of the elders,* as if he were newly slain, bleeding afresh, and yet alive, and *lives for evermore,* (Rev. 5. 6.—1. 18.) constantly presenting this sacrifice within the vail. The blood of the Lamb always flowing, that it may still be sprinkled on our consciences, to purify and pacify them, and may still speak in heaven for us in that prevailing intercession which the Lord Jesus ever lives to make there in the virtue of his satisfaction.

In this ordinance the Lord's death is shewed forth, it is shewed forth to us, that it may be shewed forth by us. Jesus Christ is here *evidently set forth, crucified among us,* (Gal. 3. 1.) that we may all *with open face behold as in a glass, the glory of God* in the face of Christ. Thus as Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, and the application of his merits to the saints who lived then; so, he will be the Lamb slain to the end of the world, in the word and sacraments of the New Testament, and the application of his merits to the saints that are now, and shall be in every age. Still he is seen as a Lamb that had been slain, for this sacrifice does not, like the Old Testament sacrifices, decay and wax old.

This is the sight, the great sight, we are here to see, the bush burning, and yet not consumed, for the Lord is in it, his people's God and Saviour. The wounds

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wounds of this Lamb are here open before us: come see in Christ's hands the very print of the nails, see in his side the very marks of the spear. Behold him in his agony, sweating as if it had been great drops of blood falling to the ground; then accommodating himself to the work he had undertaken; couching between two burthens, and bowing his shoulder to bear them. Behold him in his bonds, when *the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits*, and he was bound that we might go out free. Behold him at the bar, prosecuted and condemned as a criminal, because he was made sin for us, and had undertaken to answer for our misdemeanors. Behold him upon the cross, enduring the pain, and despising the shame of the accursed tree. Here is his body broken, his blood shed, his soul poured out unto death; all his sufferings, with all their aggravations, are here in such a manner as the Divine Wisdom saw fit, by an instituted ordinance, represented to us, and set before us.

2. In this ordinance is shewed us the Lamb that was slain, opening the seals of the everlasting gospel; not only discovering to us the glories of the divine light, but dispensing to us the graces of the divine love: opening the seals of the fountain of life, which had been long as a spring shut up, and rolling away the stone, that thence we may *draw water with joy*: opening the seals of the book of life, that things hidden from ages and generations might be manifested unto us, and we might know the *things which are freely given us of God:* opening the seals of God's treasures, the unsearchable riches of Christ, which would have been sealed up for ever from us, if he had not found out a way to supply and enrich us out of them: opening the seals of heaven-gates, which had been shut and sealed against us, and consecrating for us a new and living way into the holiest, by his own blood. This is a glorious sight, and that which cannot but raise our expectations of something further. This is the principal sight given us in this ordinance; but when we view this accurately, we shall find there is that in it, *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard.*

II. In particular, we are here called to see many other things, which we may infer from this general representation of the sufferings of Christ. It is a very fruitful subject, and that which will lead us to the consideration of divers things very profitable. When we come to this sacrament, we should ask ourselves the question which Christ put to those who had been John's hearers; *What went ye out for to see?* What do we come to the Lord's table to see? We come to see that, which, if God gives us the eye of faith to discern, it will be very affecting. Let this voice therefore be still sounding in our ears, *Come and see.*

1. Come and see the evil of sin. This we are concerned to see, that we may be truly humbled for our sins past, and may be firmly engaged by resolution and holy watchfulness against sin for the future. It was *for our transgressions* that Christ was thus *wounded, for our iniquities* that *he was bruised: know therefore,* O my soul, *and see, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts,* Jer. 2. 19. That was a great provocation to God, which nothing would atone for, but such a sacrifice; a dangerous disease to us, which nothing would heal but such a medicine: *This is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart,* Jer. 4. 18.

(1.) Here sin appears sin, and, by the cross of Christ, as well as by the command of God, it becomes exceeding sinful, Rom. 7. 13. The malignity of its nature was very great, and more than we can conceive or express; for it had made such a breach between God and Man, as none less than he who was both God and Man could repair; none less than he durst undertake to be made sin for us, to become surety for that debt, and intercessor for such offenders. It was *impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin;* the stain was too deep, to be washed out so: sacrifice and offering God did not desire, would not accept, as sufficient to purge us from it: no; the Son of God himself must come to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,* or it will for ever separate between God and us.

(2.) Here sin appears death, and, in the cross of Christ, shews itself exceeding hurtful. Behold, my soul, and see what mischief sin makes, by observing how dear it cost the Redeemer when he undertook to satisfy for it; how he sweat and groaned, bled and died, when *the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all!* Look on sin through this glass, and it will appear in its true colour, black and bloody; nothing can be more so. The fatal consequences of sin are seen more in the sufferings of Christ, than in all the calamities that it has brought upon the world of mankind. O what a painful, what a shameful thing is sin, which put our Lord Jesus to so much pain, to so much shame, when *he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree!*

See this, my soul, with application. It was thy sin, thy own iniquity, that lay so heavy upon the Lord Jesus, when he cried out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* It was thy pride and passion, thy worldliness and uncleanness, the carnal mind in thee, which is enmity against God, that crowned him with thorns, and nailed him to the cross, and laid him for a time under the sense of God's withdrawings from him. Is this so? And shall I ever again make a mock at sin? Ever again make a light matter of that, which Christ made so great a matter of? God forbid! *Is it a small thing to weary men;* but have I, by my sins, *wearied my God also?* Isa. 7. 13. *Have I made him* thus *to serve,* thus to *suffer by my sins?* Isa. 43. 24. And shall I ever be reconciled to sin again? Or shall I ever think a favourable thought of it any more? No; by the Grace of God, I never will. The carnal pleasure and worldly profit that sin can promise me, will never balance the pain and shame that it put my Redeemer to.

Meditate revenge, my soul, a holy revenge, such a revenge, as will be no breach of the law of charity; such

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such a revenge, as is one of the fruits of godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 11. If sin was the death of Christ, why should not I be the death of sin? When David lamented Saul and Jonathan, who were slain by the archers of the Philistines, (1 Sam. 31. 3.) it is said, (2 Sam. 1. 18.) he taught the children of Judah the use of the bow, that they might revenge the death of their princes upon their enemies. Let us thence receive instruction. Did sin, did my sin, crucify Christ? And shall not I crucify it? If it be asked, *Why, what evil has it done?* Say, It cost the blood of the Son of God to expiate it; and therefore cry out so much the more, *Crucify it, Crucify it.* And thus all *who are Christ's, have* in some measure *crucified the flesh,* Gal. 5. 24. As Christ died for sin, so must we die to sin.

2. Come and see the justice of God. Many ways the great Judge of the world has made it to appear that he hates sin; and both by the judgments of his mouth in the written word, and the judgments of his hand in the course of his providence, he has *revealed his wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* It is true, that he is gracious and merciful; but it is as true, that *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth,* Nah. 1. 2. God, even our God, is a consuming fire, and will reckon for the violation of his laws, and the injuries done to his crown and dignity. The tenor of the Scripture, from the 2d of Genesis to the last of the Revelation, proves this: *The soul that sinneth shall die.* In many remarkable punishments of sin, even in this life, it is written as with a sunbeam, so that he that runs may read, that *the Lord is righteous,* 2 Chro. 12. 6.

But never did the justice of God appear so conspicuous, so illustrious, as in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, set before us in this ordinance. Here his *righteousness is like the great mountains,* though *his judgments are a great deep,* Ps. 36. 6. Come and see the Holy God shewing his displeasure against sin in the death of Christ, more than in the ruin of angels, the drowning of the old world, the burning of Sodom, the destruction of Jerusalem; nay, more than in the torments of hell, all things considered.

(1.) God manifested his justice, in demanding such a satisfaction for sin as Christ was to make by the blood of his cross. Hereby he made it to appear how great the provocation was which was done him by the sin of man, that not only such an excellent person must be chosen to intercede for us, but his sufferings and death must be insisted on to atone for us. Sin being committed against an infinite majesty, seems by this to have in it a kind of infinite malignity, that the remission of it could not be procured, but by a satisfaction of infinite value. If mere mercy had pardoned sin, without any provision made to answer the demands of injured justice, God had declared his goodness; but when Jesus Christ is set forth to be a propitiation for sin, and God has been pleased to put himself to so vast an expence, for the saving of the honour of his government, in the forgiveness of sins, this declares his righteousness, it declares, I say, at this time his righteousness. See what an emphasis the Apostle lays upon this, Rom. 3. 25, 26.

Sin had wronged God in his honour, for he cannot otherwise be wronged by any of his creatures; in breaking the law we dishonour God; we sin and come short of his glory. For this wrong satisfaction must be made; that which offers itself is the eternal ruin of the sinner; *currat Lex—let the sentence of the law be executed,* and thereby God may get him honour upon us, in lieu of that he should have had from us, Exod. 14. 17. But can no expedient be found out to satisfy God, and yet save the sinner? Is it not possible to offer an equivalent? *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall we give our first-born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul?* No, these are not tantamount: no submissions, sorrows, supplications, services, or sufferings of ours, can be looked upon as a valuable consideration for the righteous God to proceed upon, in forgiving such injuries, and restoring such criminals to his favour; the best we do is imperfect; the utmost we can do is already owing: here therefore the Lord Jesus interposes, undertakes to make a full reparation of the injury done to God's glory by sin; cloaths himself with our nature, and becomes surety for us, as Paul for Onesimus, if they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on mine account, I have written it with my own hand, with my own blood I will repay it. He was made *sin for us,* (2 Cor. 5. 21.) a *curse for us,* (Gal. 3. 13.) an *offering for our sin,* (Isa. 53, 10.) he *bore our sins in his own body on the tree,* (1 Pet. 2. 24.) and thus the justice of God was not only satisfied, but greatly glorified. Come and see how bright it shines here.

(2.) God manifested his justice in dealing as he did with him, who undertook to make satisfaction. Having laid upon him the iniquity of us all, he laid it home to him, for *it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief,* Isa. 53. 10. He was not only despised and rejected of men, who knew him not, but he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. The ancient way in which God testified his acceptance of sacrifices, was by consuming them with fire from heaven, (Lev. 9. 24. 2 Chro. 7. 1. 1 Kin. 18. 38.) The wrath of God which the offerers deserved should have fallen upon them, fell upon the offering; and so the destruction of the sacrifice was the escape of the sinner. Christ becoming a sacrifice for us, the fire of God's wrath descended upon him, which troubled his soul, put him into an agony, and made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Come then and *behold the goodness and severity of God,* Rom. 11. 22. Christ being made sin for us, God did not spare him, Rom. 8. 32. By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, he was delivered to them, who with wicked hands crucified and slew him: *Awake, O Sword,* the sword of divine justice, furnished and bathed in heaven; awake *against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow,* says the *Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd,* Zech. 13. 7.

Let us look on the sufferings of Christ, and say, as he

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he himself has taught us, (Luke 23. 31.) *If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* What was done to him, shews what should have been done to us if Christ had not interposed, and what will be done to us if we reject him. If this were done to one who had but sin imputed to him, who, as he had no corruptions of his own for Satan's temptations to fasten upon, so he had no guilt of his own for God's wrath to fasten upon, who was as a green tree, not apt to take fire: what shall be done to those who have sin inherent in them, which makes them as a dry tree, combustible, and proper fuel for the fire of God's wrath? If this were done to one who had done so much good, what shall be done to us who have done so little? If the Lord Jesus himself was put into an agony by the things which were done to him, was sorrowful, and very heavy, can our hearts endure, or can our hands be strong, when God shall deal with us? Ezek. 22. 14. *Who would set the briars and thorns against him in battle?* From the sufferings of Christ we may easily infer what a *fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. 10. 31.

3. Come and see the love of Christ. This is that which with a peculiar regard we are to observe and contemplate in this ordinance; where we see Christ and him crucified, we cannot but see the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. When Christ did but drop a tear over the grave of Lazarus, the Jews said, *See how he loved him*, (John 11. 36.) much more reason have we to say, when we commemorate the shedding of his blood for us, "See how he loved us." *Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friend.* Thus Christ has loved us; nay, he laid down his life for us when we were enemies, John 15, 13. Rom. 5. 8.) herein is love without precedent, love without parallel. Come and see the wonders of his love.

(1.) It was free love. Christ gave himself for us, and what is more free than a gift? It was free, for it was unasked; nothing cried for this mercy, but our own misery: when no eye pitied us, of his own good will he relieved us; said to us, when we were in our sins, live; yea, he said to us live. That was a time of love indeed. It was free, for it was unmerited; there was nothing in us desirable, nothing promising; the relation we stood in to God as creatures, did but aggravate our rebellion, and make us the more obnoxious. As he could not obtain any advantage by our happiness, so he could not sustain any damage by our misery: if there were no profit in our blood (which is pleaded, Ps. 30. 9.) yet for certain there would have been no loss by it. No, but the reasons of his love were fetched from within him, as God's love of Israel was, (Deut. 7. 7, 8.) he loved them, because he would love them.——It was free, for it was unforced; he willingly offered himself. Here am I, send me. This sacrifice was bound *to the horns of the altar*, only with the *cords of his love.*

(2.) It was distinguishing love. It was good-will to fallen man, and not to fallen angels. He did not lay hold on a world of sinking angels; as their tree fell, so it lays, and so it is like to lie for ever; but *on the seed of Abraham he taketh hold*, Heb. 2. 16. The nature of angels was more excellent than that of man, their place in the creation higher, their capacity for honouring God greater, and yet they were passed by. Man who sinned, was pitied and helped, while angels who sinned were not so much as spared. The deplorable state of devils serves as a foil to set off the blessed state of the ransomed of the Lord.

(3.) It was condescending love. Never did love humble itself and stoop so low as the love of Christ did. It was great condescension, that he should fix his love upon creatures so mean, *Man that is a worm, the son of man that is a worm*, so near a-kin to the brutal part of the creation, especially since the fall, that one would think he should rather be the scorn than the love of spiritual and purely intellectual world; yet this is the creature that is chosen to be the darling of heaven, and in whom Wisdom's delights are, Pro. 8. 31. But especially that in prosecution of this love, he should humble himself as he did. Humble himself to the earth in his incarnation; humble himself on the earth in the meanness of his life; humble himself into the earth, when he went to the grave, the place where mankind appears under the greatest mortification and disgrace.

(4.) It was expensive love. His washing the feet of his disciples is spoken of as an act of love to them, (John 13. 1.) and that was condescending love, but not costly like this. He loved us and bought us, and paid dear for us, that we might be unto him a purchased People, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Because he loved Israel, he gave men for them, and people for their life, even Egypt for their ransom, (Isa. 43. 3. 4.) but because he loved us, he gave himself for us, even his own blood for the ransom of our souls.

(5.) It was strong love, strong as Death, and which many waters could not quench, Cant. 8. 6, 7. This was the greatness of his strength, in which the Redeemer travelled, who was mighty to save; Isa. 61. 1. It was strong to break through great difficulties, and trample upon the discouragements that lay in his way: when he had this baptism to be baptized with, this baptism of blood, it was love that said, *How am I straitened till it be accomplished?* Luke 12. 50. It was love that said, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover*, which he knew was to be his last. It was the strength of his love that reconciled him to the bitter cup, which was put into his hand, and made him wave his petition, that it might pass from him, which, for ought we know, if he had insisted upon, it had been granted, and the work undone.

(6.) It was an everlasting love, Jer. 31. 3. It was from everlasting in the counsels of it, and will be to everlasting in the consequences of it; not like our love, which comes up in a night, and perishes in a night. He loved to the end, and went on with his undertaking till he said, *It is finished.* Never was there such a constant lover as the blessed Jesus, whose gifts and callings are without repentance.

4. Come and see the conquest of Satan: and this is a very

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a very pleasing sight to all those who through grace are turned from the power of Satan unto God, as it was to the Israelites, when they had newly shaken off the Egyptian yoke, to see their task-masters and pursuers dead upon the sea-shore, Exod. 14. 30. Come and see our Joshua discomfiting the Amalekites, our David with a sling and a stone vanquishing that proud Goliah, who not only himself basely deserted, but then boldly defied the armies of the living God. Come and see, not Michael and his angels, but Michael himself, Michael our prince, who trod the wine-press alone, entering the lists with the Dragon and his angels, and giving them an effectual overthrow: the seed of the woman, though bruised in the heel, yet breaking the serpent's head, according to that ancient promise made unto the fathers, Gen. 3. 15. Come and see the great Redeemer not only making peace with earth, but making war with hell; dispossessing the strong man armed, *spoiling principalities and powers, making a shew of them openly*, and *triumphing over them in his cross*, Col. 2. 15.

Come and see Christ triumphing over Satan at his death. Though the war was in heaven, (Rev. 12. 7.) yet some fruits of the victory even then appeared on earth. Though when Christ was in the extremity of his sufferings, there was a darkness over all the land, which gave the powers of darkness all the advantage they could wish for, yet he beat the enemy upon his own ground. Satan (some think) terrified Christ into his agony, but then he kept possession of his own soul, and steadily adhered to his father's will, and to his own undertaking: so he baffled Satan. Satan put it in the heart of Judas to betray him; but in the immediate ruin of Judas, who presently went and hanged himself, Christ triumphed over Satan, and made a shew of him openly. Satan tempted Peter to deny Christ, *desiring to have him, that he might sift him as wheat;* but by the speedy repentance of Peter, who, upon a look from Christ, went out and wept bitterly, Christ triumphed over Satan, and baffled him in his designs. Satan was ready to swallow up the thief upon the cross, but Christ rescued him from the gates of hell, and raised him to the glories of heaven, and thereby spoiled Satan, who was as a lion disappointed of his prey.

Come and see Christ triumphing over Satan by his death; the true Sampson, who did more toward the ruin of the Philistines dying than living: see Judg. 16. 23, 30. Having by his life and doctrine destroyed the works of the devil, at length by his death he destroyed the devil himself, who had the power of death, Heb. 2. 14. In him was fulfilled the blessing of God, (Gen. 49. 19.) *A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last;* and through him who loved us, *we are conquerors*, yea, *more than conquerors.*

(1.) Christ by dying made atonement for sin, and so conquered Satan. By the merit of his death, he satisfied God's justice for the sins of all that should believe in him; and if the judge remit the sentence, the executioner has nothing to do with the prisoner. We are ready to fall under the curse, to be made an Anathema, that is, to be delivered unto Satan: Christ said, *Upon me be the curse;* this *blotted out the handwriting that was against us, took it out of the way, nailed it to the cross;* and so Satan is spoiled. *Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died*, Rom. 8. 33, 34. When God forgives the iniquity of his people, he brings back their captivity, Ps. 85. 1, 2. If we shall not come into condemnation, we are saved from coming unto execution.

(2.) Christ by dying sealed the gospel of grace, and purchased the spirit of grace, and so conquered Satan. The Spirit acting by the gospel as the instrument, and the gospel animated by the Spirit as the principal, are become *mighty to the pulling down of Satan's strongholds.* Thus the foundation is laid for a believer's victory over the temptations and terrors of the wicked one. Christ's victory over Satan is our victory, and we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, Rev. 12. 11. Thus *Kings of armies did flee apace*, and even *they that tarried at home*, and did themselves contribute nothing to the victory, yet *divide the spoil*, Ps. 68. 12. Christ having thus trodden Satan under our feet, he calls to us as Joshua to the captains of Israel, (Josh. 10. 24.) *Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these Kings. Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you*, for he is a conquered enemy.

5. Come and see the worth of souls. We judge of the value of a thing by the price which a wise man who understands it gives for it. He who made souls, and had reason to know them, provided for their redemption, not *corruptible things, as silver and gold, but the precious blood of his own son;* see 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. It was not a purchase made hastily, for it was the contrivance of infinite wisdom from eternity; it was not made for necessity, for he neither needed us, nor could be benefited by us; but thus he was pleased to teach us what account we should make of our souls, and their salvation and happiness. The incarnation of Christ put a great honour upon the human nature; never was it so dignified as when it was taken into union with the divine nature in the person of Immanuel, but the death and sufferings of Christ add much more to its value, for he laid down his own life to be the ransom of ours, when nothing else was sufficient to answer the price. Lord, what is man, that he should be thus visited, thus regarded! That the Son of God should not only dwell among us, but die for us!

(1.) Now let us see this, and learn how to put a value upon our own souls, not so as to advance our conceits of ourselves, (nothing can be more humbling and abasing, than to see our own lives sold by our own folly, and redeemed by the merit of another,) but so as to increase our concern for ourselves, and our own spiritual interests. Shall the souls, the precious souls which Christ put such a value upon, and paid such a price for, debase and undervalue themselves so far as to become slaves to Satan, and drudges to the world and the flesh? We are bought with a price, and therefore we not only injure the purchaser's right to us, if we alienate ourselves to another, but we reproach his wis-

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dom in paying such a price, if we alienate ourselves for a thing of nought. It is the Apostle's argument against uncleanness, (1 Cor. 6. 20.) and against making ourselves the servants of men, 1 Cor. 7. 23. Christ having purchased our souls at such a rate, we disparage them if we stake them to the trifles of the world, or pawn them for the base and sordid pleasures of sin. Shall that birthright be sold for a mess of pottage, which Christ bought with his own blood? No, while we live let our souls be our darlings, (as they are called, Ps. 22. 20. and 35. 17.) for his sake, to whom they were so dear. If Christ did and suffered so much to save our souls, let us not hazard the losing of them, though it be to gain the whole world, Mat. 16. 26.

(2.) Let us see this, and learn how to put a value upon the souls of others. This forbids us to do any thing that may turn to the prejudice of the souls of others, by drawing them to sin, or discouraging them in that which is good. The Apostle lays a great stress upon this argument, against the abuse of our christian liberty, to the offence of others, (Rom. 14. 15.) *Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died;* and again he urges it on the same occasion, 1 Cor. 8. 11. Shall not we deny ourselves and our own satisfaction, rather than occasion guilt or grief to them for whom Christ humbled himself, even to the death of the cross? Shall we slight those whom Christ put such a value upon? Shall we set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ purchased with his own blood, among the lambs of his flock? God forbid!

This also commands us to do all we can for the spiritual welfare and salvation of the souls of others: did Christ think them worth his blood, and shall not we think them worth our care and pains? Shall not we willingly do our utmost to save a soul from death, and thereby hide a multitude of sins, when Christ did so much and suffered so much to make it feasible? Shall not we pour out our prayers for them, for whom Christ poured out his soul unto death? And bear them upon our hearts, whom Christ laid so near his? Blessed Paul, in consideration hereof, not only made himself the servant of all, to please them for their edification, but was willing to be offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith, (Phil. 2. 17.) and so to fill up what was behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, Col. 1. 24.

And if we be at any time called upon, even to lay down our lives for the brethren, we must remember that in that, as well as in washing their feet, Christ has left us an example, 1 John 3. 16.

6. Come and see the purchase of the blessings of the new covenant. The blood of Christ was not only the ransom of our forfeited lives, and the redemption of our souls from everlasting misery, but it was the valuable consideration, upon which the grant of eternal life and happiness is grounded. Christ's death is our life, that is, it is not only our salvation from death, but it is the fountain of all our joys, and the foundation of all our hopes. All the comforts we have in possession, and all we have in prospect, all the privileges of our way, and all those of our home, are the blessed fruits of that accursed tree on which our Redeemer died.

(1.) See the blood of Christ, the spring whence all the blessings of the covenant flow. That is the price of all our pardons, *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,* (Eph. 1. 7.) without the shedding of blood, that blood, that precious blood, there had been no remission. That is the purchase of the divine favour, which is our life; we are made accepted only in the beloved, Eph. 1. 6. *Peace is made,* a covenant of peace settled, peace secured to all the sons of peace, by the blood of his cross, and not otherwise, Col. 1. 20. That is the price paid for the purchased possession, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, Heb. 9. 15. Christ *was made a curse for us,* not only to *redeem us from the curse of the law,* but that we through him might inherit the blessing, Gal. 3. 13, 14. Thus *out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.* Behold, he shews us a mystery.

(2.) See the blood of Christ, the stream in which all the blessings of the covenant flow to us. The blood of Christ, as it is exhibited to us in this ordinance, is the vehicle, the channel of conveyance, by which all graces and comforts descend from Heaven to Earth. *This cup is the New Testament in the blood of Christ,* and so it becomes a cup of blessing, a cup of consolation, a cup of salvation: all the hidden Manna comes to us in this dew. It is the blood of Christ, speaking for us, that pacifies an offended God: it is the blood of Christ sprinkled on us, that purifies a defiled conscience. As it was the blood of Jesus that consecrated for us the new and living way, and opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers, so it is by that blood that we have *boldness to enter into the holiest,* Heb. 10. 19, 20.

Come and see how much we owe to the death of Christ, the rich purchases he made for us that he might cause us to inherit substance, and might fill our treasures. Let this increase our esteem of the love of Christ, which was, not only so very expensive to himself, but, so very advantageous to us: let this also enhance the value of covenant blessings in our eyes. The blessings of this life we owe to the bounty of God's providence; but spiritual blessings in heavenly things we owe to the blood of his Son: let these, therefore, be to us more precious than rubies: let these always have the preference: let us be willing to part with any thing, rather than hazard the favour of God, the comforts of the Spirit, and eternal life, remembering what these cost. Let us never make light of Wisdom's preparations, when we see at what rate they were bought in. To them who believe they are precious, for they know they were purchased with the precious blood of Christ, which we undervalue as a common thing, if we prefer farms and merchandize before Heaven, and the present earnests of it.

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CHAP. IX.

Some Account of the precious Benefits which are to be received by Faith in this Ordinance.

IN the Lord's Supper we are not only to shew the Lord's death, and see what is to be seen in it, as many who, when he was upon the cross, stood afar off beholding: no, we must there be more than spectators, we must *eat of the sacrifice*, and so *partake of the altar*, 1 Cor. 9. 13. The bread which came down from heaven was not designed merely for shew-bread, bread to be looked upon; but for houshold-bread, bread to be fed upon: bread to strengthen our hearts, and wine to make them glad; and Wisdom's invitation is, *Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled.* Christ's feeding great multitudes miraculously, more than once, when he was here upon earth, was (as his other miracles) significant of the spiritual provision he makes in the everlasting gospel, for the support and satisfaction of those that leave all to follow him: if we do not all eat, and be not all filled, abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house, it is our own fault. Let us not then straiten and starve ourselves, for the Master of the feast has not stinted us: he has not only invited us, and made provision for our entertainment, but he calls to us, as one who bids us heartily welcome, *Eat, O Friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

All people are for what they can get: here is something to be got in this ordinance, if it be rightly improved, which will turn to our account infinitely more than the merchandize of silver, or the gain of fine gold. Christ and his benefits are here not only set before us, but offered to us; not only offered to us, but settled upon us, under certain provisoes and limitations; so that a believer who sincerely consents to the covenant, receives some of the present benefit of it in and by this ordinance, both in the comfortable experience of communion with God, in grace, and the comfortable expectation of the vision and fruition of God, in glory.

Gospel ordinances in general (and this in particular, which is the seal of gospel promises) are *wells of salvation*, out of which we may draw water with joy; *breasts of consolation*, from which we may suck and be satisfied; *golden pipes*, through which the oil of grace is derived from the good olive, to keep our lamps burning. We receive the grace of God herein in vain, if we take not what is here tendered, gospel blessings upon gospel terms. We are here to receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and since with him God freely gives us all things, (Rom. 8. 32.) we must with him by faith take what he gives; all spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ Jesus.

I. Here we may receive the pardon and forgiveness of our sins. This is that great blessing of the new covenant which makes way for all other blessings (*removendo prohibens—removing the hinderance*) by taking down that wall of partition which separated between us and God, and hinders good things from us. It is the matter of that promise, which comes in as a reason for all the rest, I will do so and so for them, *For I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness*, Heb. 8. 12.—This is that great blessing which Christ died to purchase for us; his blood was shed for many for the remission of sins; and perhaps he intimated this to be, in a special manner, designed by him in his sufferings, when the first word we find recorded, that he spoke after he was nailed to the cross, was, *Father, forgive them*, (Luke 23. 34.) which seems to look not only to those that had an immediate hand in his death, but to those that are remotely accessary to it, as all sinners are, though they know not what they do.

The everlasting gospel is an act of indemnity; an act of oblivion we may call it, for it is promised that *our sins and iniquities he will remember no more.* It is proclaimed to the rebels, that if they will lay down their arms, acknowledge their offence, return to their allegiance, approve themselves good subjects for the future, and make the merits of him whom the Father has appointed to be the Mediator, their plea in suing out their pardon, the offended Prince will be reconciled to them, their attainder shall be reversed, and they shall not only be restored to all the privileges of subjects, but advanced to the honours and advantages of favourites. Now it concerns us all to be able to make it out, that we are entitled to the benefit of this act, that we are qualified according to the tenor of it, for the favour intended by it; and if we be so indeed, in the Lord's Supper we receive that pardon to us in particular, which in the gospel is proclaimed to all in general. We do here receive the atonement, as the expression is, Rom. 5. 11. God has received it for the securing of his honour, and we receive it for the securing of our happiness and comfort; we claim the benefit of it, and desire to be justified and accepted of God for the sake of it.

This sacrament should therefore be received with a heart thus lifting up itself to God: "Lord, I am a sinner, a great sinner; I have done very foolishly; I have forfeited thy favour, incurred thy displeasure, and deserve to be for ever abandoned from thee. But Christ has died, yea, rather is risen again, has finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; he gave his life a ransom for many, and if for many, why not for me? In him a free and full remission is promised to all penitent and obedient believers; by him all who believe are justified, and to them there is no condemnation. Thou, even thou art he that blottest out their transgressions for thine own sake, and art gracious and merciful, nay, thou art faithful and just to forgive them their sins. Lord, I repent, I believe, and take the benefit of those promises, those exceeding great and precious promises, which are to my soul as life from the dead. I fly to this city of refuge, I take hold of the horns of this altar: here I humbly receive the forgiveness of my sins, through Jesus Christ, the great propitiation, to whom I entirely owe it, and to whom I acknowledge myself infinitely indebted for it, and under the highest obligations imaginable to love him, and to live to him. He is the Lord our righteous-

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ness, so I accept him; let him be made a God to me in righteousness, and I have enough, I am happy for ever."

Every time we come to the Lord's Supper, we come to receive the remission of sins, that is,

1. A renewed pardon of daily trespasses. In many things we offend daily, and even he who is washed, who is in a justified state, needs to wash his feet, John 13. 10. And blessed be God there is a fountain opened for us to wash in, and encouragement given to pray for daily pardon as duly as we do for daily bread. We have to do with a God who multiplies to pardon. "Lord, the guilt of such a sin lies upon me like a heavy burthen; I have lamented it, confessed it, renewed my covenant against it, and now in this ordinance I receive the forgiveness of that sin, and hear it said to my soul, *The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.* Many a fault I have been overtaken in since I was last with the Lord at his table, and having repented of them, I desire to apply the blood of Christ to my soul in a particular manner, for the forgiveness of them."

2. A confirmed pardon of all trespasses. I come here to receive further assurance of the forgiveness of my sins, and further comfort arising from those assurances. I come to hear again that voice of joy and gladness, which has made many a broken bone to rejoice, *Son, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* I come for the father's kiss to a returning prodigal, which seals his pardon so, as to silence his doubts and fears. When God would by his prophets speak comfortably to Sion, this he says, *Thy warfare is accomplished, thine iniquity is pardoned,* Isa. 40. 2. And *the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,* that is, he shall see no cause to complain of any outward calamity, if his iniquity be forgiven, Isa. 33. 24. O that I might here have the white stone of absolution (Rev. 2. 17.) and my pardon written more legibly! O that Christ would say to me, as he did to that woman, to whom much was already forgiven, (Luke 7. 48.) *Thy sins are forgiven.* This is that I come to receive, O let me not go away without it!

II. Here we may receive the adoption of sons. The covenant of grace not only frees us from the doom of criminals, but advances us to the dignity of children: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, in order to this, that *we might receive the adoption of sons,* Gal. 4. 5. The children's bread given us in this ordinance, is as it were livery and seisin, to assure us of our adoption upon the terms of the gospel, that if we will take God in Christ to be to us a Father, to rule and dispose of us, and to be feared and honoured by us, he will take us to be his sons and daughters; *Behold what manner of love is this! Be astonished, O Heavens, and wonder, O Earth!* Never was there such compassionate, such condescending love! God here seals us the grant both of the privileges of adoption, and the Spirit of adoption.

1. Here is a grant of the privileges of adoption sealed to us. Here we are called the children of God, and he calls himself our Father, and encourages us to call him so. *Seemeth it to you a light thing* (said David, 1 Sam. 18. 23.) *to be a King's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?* And shall it not seem to us a great thing, an honour infinitely above all those which the world can pretend to confer, for us (who are worms of the earth, and a generation of vipers, children of disobedience and wrath by nature) to be the adopted children of the King of Kings? *This honour have all the saints.* Nor is it an empty title that is here granted us, but real advantages of unspeakable value.

The eternal God here says it, and seals it to every true believer, *Fear not,* I will be *a Father to thee,* an ever-loving, ever-living Father: leave it to me to provide for thee, on me let all thy burthens be cast, with me let all thy cares be left, and to me let all thy requests be made known. *The young lions shall lack and suffer hunger,* but thou shalt want nothing that is good for thee, nothing that is fit for thee. My wisdom shall be thy guide, my power thy support, and underneath thee the everlasting arms. As the tender father pities his children, so will I pity thee, and spare thee as a man spares his son that serves him. Thou shalt have my blessing and love, the smiles of my face, and the kisses of my mouth, and in the arms of my grace, will I carry thee to glory, as the nursing father does the sucking child. Does any thing grieve thee? Whither shouldst thou go with thy complaint but to thy father, saying to him as that child, (2 Kings 4. 19.) *My head, my head;* and thou shalt find, that as one whom his mother comforts, so will the Lord thy God comfort thee. Does any thing terrify thee? *Be not afraid, for I am thy God; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.* Art thou in debt? consult me, and *I will instruct thee in the way that thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye.* Acknowledge me, and I will direct thy steps. Dost thou offend? Is there foolishness bound up in thy heart? Thou mayest expect fatherly correction, *I will chastise thee with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men,* but my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from thee; thine afflictions shall not only consist with, but flow from covenant love; and but for a season, when need is, shalt thou be in heaviness.

I will be a Father to thee, and, son! thou shalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are thine, as far as is necessary to thy happiness, nor shall any thing be ever able to separate thee from my love. I will be a Father to thee, and then Christ shall be thy elder brother, the prophet, priest, and king of the family, as the first-born among many brethren. Angels shall be thy guard, with the greatest care and tenderness shall they bear thee in their arms, as ministering spirits charged to attend the heirs of salvation. Providence shall be thy protector, and the disposer of all thine affairs for the best; so that whatever happens, thou mayest be sure it will be made to work for thy good, though as yet thou canst not see how or which way. The assurances of thy Father's love to thee in his promises,

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mises, and communion with him in his ordinances, shall be thy daily bread, thy continual feast, the manna that shall be rained upon thee, the water out of the rock that shall follow thee in this wilderness, till thou come to Canaan.

Now art thou a Child of God; but it does not yet appear what thou shalt be; when thou wast predestinated to the adoption of a son, thou wast designed for the inheritance of a son; if a child, then an heir. Thy present maintenance shall be honourable and comfortable, and such as is fit for thee in thy minority, while thou art under tutors and governors; but what is now laid out upon thee, is nothing in comparison with what is laid up for thee: an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away.—If God be thy father, not less than a crown, a kingdom, shall be thy portion, and heaven thy home, where thou shalt be for ever with him: in thy father's house there are many mansions, and one for thee, if thou be his dutiful child. *It is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee a kingdom.*

2. Here is a grant of the spirit of adoption sealed to us. As the giving of Christ for us was the great promise of the Old Testament, which was fulfilled in the fulness of time, so the giving of the Spirit to us is the great promise of the New Testament, and a promise that is sure to all the seed: this promise of the Father, which we have heard of Christ, we in this ordinance wait for, Acts 1. 4. And it follows upon the former, for wherever God gives the privileges of children, he will give the nature and disposition of children; regeneration always attends adoption; *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,* Gal. 4. 6. Great encouragement we have to ask this gift, from the relation of a father, wherein God stands toward us: if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, such as are needful and proper for them, much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him, Luke 11. 13. He will give the Spirit to teach his children, and as their tutor, *to lead them into all truth;* to govern his children, and as the best of guardians, to dispose their affections, while providence disposes their affairs for the best: he will give his Spirit to renew and sanctify them, and to make them meet for their father's service in this world, and their father's kingdom in a better world; to be the guide of their way, and the witness of their adoption, and to seal them to the day of redemption.

An earnest of this grant of the Spirit to all believers in this ordinance, Christ gave when in the first visit he made to his disciples after his resurrection, having shewed them his hand and his side, his pierced hands, his pierced side, (which in effect he does to us in this sacrament,) he breathed on them, and said unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* John 20. 22. What he says to them, he says to all his disciples, making them an offer of this inestimable gift, and bestowing it effectually on all believers, who are all *sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,* Eph. 1. 13. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost* then, in the receiving of this bread and wine; the graces of the Spirit, as bread to strengthen the heart; his comforts, as wine to make it glad. Be willing and desirous to receive the Holy Ghost, let the soul and all its powers be put under his operations and influences: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors,* and then this *King of Glory shall come in,* to all that invite him, and will bid him welcome.

But will God in very deed thus dwell with men, with such men upon the earth? And shall they become temples of the Holy Ghost? Shall he come upon them? Shall the power of the Highest overshadow them? Shall Christ be formed in me a holy thing? Say then (my soul) say as the blessed virgin did, Here I am, *be it unto me according to thy word.* I acknowledge myself unworthy the being of a man, having so often acted more like a brute; much more unworthy the dignity of a son: I have been an undutiful rebellious prodigal, I deserve to be turned out of doors, abandoned and disinherited, and forbidden my father's house and table; but who shall set bounds to infinite mercy and to the compassions of the Everlasting Father? If notwithstanding this he will yet again take me into his family, and clothe me with the best robe, though it is too great a favour for me to receive, who am a child of disobedience, yet, it is not too great for him to give, who is the Father of Mercies. To thee, therefore, O God, I give up myself; and I will *from this time cry unto thee, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth,* Jer. 3. 4. Though I deserve not to be owned as a hired servant, I desire and hope to be owned as an adopted son. Be it unto thy servant according to the promise.

III. Here we may receive peace and satisfaction in our minds. This is one of those precious legacies Christ has left to all his followers, and it is here in this ordinance paid, or secured to be paid, to all those that are ready and willing to receive it; (John 14. 27.) *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,* such a peace as the world can neither give nor take away. This is the repose of the soul in God; our reconciliation to ourselves arising from the sense of our reconciliation to God: the conscience being purged from dead works, which not only defile, but disturb and disquiet us. When the Spirit is poured out from on high, then the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever, Isa. 32. 15. 17. The guilt of sin lays the foundation of trouble and uneasiness; where that is removed by pardoning mercy, there is ground for peace; but there must be a further act of the divine grace to put us in the actual possession of that peace: when he who alone can open the ear to comfort, as well as discipline, makes us to hear joy and gladness; then the storm ceases and there is a calm. The mind that was disturbed with the dread of God's wrath, is quieted with the tokens of his favour and love.

This we should have in our eye at the Lord's table; here I am waiting to hear what God the Lord will speak, and hoping that he who speaks peace to his people, and to his saints, will speak that peace to me, who

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who make it the top of my ambition to answer the character, and have the lot of his people and saints. This peace we may here expect to receive for two reasons.

1. Because this ordinance is a seal of the promise of peace; in it God assures us, that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace, (Jer. 29. 11.) and then ours toward ourselves may be so; we are here among his people, whom he has promised to *bless with peace*, (Ps. 29. 11.) and we may apply that promise to ourselves, plead it, and humbly claim the benefit of it. This is that rest of the soul which our master has promised to all those that come to him, and take his yoke upon them, (Mat. 11. 28, 29.) and this promise, among the rest, is here ratified, as *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ. The covenant of grace is a covenant of peace, in the blessed soil of which *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*, Ps. 97. 11. And this covenant of peace is that which eternal truth has said shall never be removed, but shall stand firm as a rock, when the *everlasting mountains shall melt* like wax, and the *perpetual hills shall bow*. Has God so far consulted my present repose, as well as my future bliss, that he has provided not only for the satisfaction of his own justice, but for the satisfaction of my conscience; and shall I indulge my own disturbance, and refuse to be comforted? No, welcome the promised peace, the calm so long wished for, the desired haven of a troubled spirit tossed with tempests; come, my soul, and take possession of this Canaan, by faith enter into this rest, and let not thine own unbelief exclude thee, Heb. 4. 3, 6. If the God of peace himself speak peace, though with a still small voice, let that silence the most noisy and clamorous objections of doubts and fears; and if he give quietness, let not them make trouble, Job 34. 29.

2. Because this ordinance is an instituted means of obtaining the peace promised. As the sacrifice was ordained to make atonement for the soul, so the feast upon the sacrifice was intended for the satisfaction of the soul concerning the atonement made, to remove that fear and terror which arose from the consciousness of guilt: this ordinance is a feast appointed for that purpose. God does here not only assure us of the truth of his promise to us, but gives us an opportuity of solemnizing our engagements to him, and sealing ourselves to be his; which is appointed—not to satisfy him (he that knows all things, knows if we love him) but to satisfy ourselves, that thus taking hold of the hope set before us, we may have strong consolation. The blood of Christ is in this ordinance sprinkled upon the conscience to pacify that, having been already sprinkled upon the mercy seat, to make atonement there, so making the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. 9. 13, 14.

When our Lord Jesus appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, the first word he said to them, was, *Peace be unto you*, Luke 24. 36. And he says the same to us in this ordinance; peace be to this house, peace to this heart. But the disciples of Christ (like those, there) are apt to be terrified and affrighted, supposing that they see a spirit, or apparition, (v. 37.) fearing that it is all but a delusion, it is too good news to be true; what have they to do with peace, (think they) while their corruptions, follies, and infirmities are so many? But Christ by this sacrament checks those fears, as there, v. 38. 39. *Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Beholds my hands and my feet.* There is that in the marks of the nails which is sufficient to stop the mouth of unbelief, and to heal the wounds of a broken and contrite spirit: there is merit enough in Christ, though in us there is nothing but meanness and unworthiness. Such considerations this ordinance offers, as have often been found effectual, by the grace of God, to *create the fruit of the lips, peace*, and to *restore comfort to the mourners*, Is. 57. 18, 19. In it Christ says again, *Peace be unto you*, as he did, John 20. 11. and sometimes a mighty power has gone along with that word to lay a storm, as did with that Mark 4. 39. *Peace, be still;* so that the soul so calmed, so quieted, has gone away, and said with wonder, *What manner of man is this? for even the winds and the seas obey him.*

IV. Here we may receive supplies of grace. Jesus Christ is, in this ordinance, made of God to all believers, not only righteousness, but sanctification; so we must receive him, and having received him so, we must walk in him. It is certain we have as much need of the influences of the spirit to furnish us for our duties, as we have of the merit of Christ to atone for our sins, and as much need of divine grace to carry on the good work as to begin it. We are in ourselves not only ungodly, but without strength, impotent in that which is good, and inclined to that which is evil, (Rom. 5. 6.) and in the Lord alone have we both righteousness and strength, Isa. 45. 24. If therefore we have it in him, hither we must come to have it from him, for gospel ordinances (and this particularly) are the means of grace, and the ordinary vehicle in which grace is conveyed to the souls of believers. Though God is not tied to them, we are,—and must attend them with an expectation to receive grace from God by them, and an entire submission of soul to the operation and conouct of that grace. This ordinance is as the pool of Bethesda, which our weak and impotent souls must lie down by, waiting for the moving of the Waters, as those who know there is a healing virtue in them, which we may experience benefit by as well as others. Here therefore we must set ourselves, expecting and desiring the effectual working of God's grace in us, attending at Wisdom's gates for Wisdom's gifts, and endeavouring to improve the ordinance to this end.

From the fulness that is in Jesus Christ, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; we are here waiting to receive grace for grace, (John 1. 16.) that is, *abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness*, Rom. 15, 17. Where there is true grace, there is need of more, for they are sanctified but in part; and there is a desire of more, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, pressing toward perfection; and there

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there is a promise of more, for *to him that hath shall be given;* and *he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.* Therefore, in a sense of our own necessities, and a dependance upon God's promises, we must by faith receive and apply to ourselves the grace offered us. What things soever we desire, according to the will of God, if we believe that we receive them, our Saviour has told us, we shall have them, Mark 11. 24. *According to thy faith be it unto thee.*

Reach forth a hand of faith therefore, and receive the promised grace, both for the confirming of gracious habits, and for the quickening of gracious acts.

1. Let us here receive grace for the confirming of gracious habits, that they may be the more deeply rooted. We are conscious to ourselves of great weakness in grace: it is like a grain of mustard seed, as a bruised reed, and smoking flax; we are weak in knowledge, and apt to mistake; weak in our affections, and apt to cool; weak in our resolutions, and apt to waver; *How weak is my heart!* But here is bread that strengthens man's heart, signifying that grace of God which confirms the principles, and invigorates the powers of the spiritual and divine life in the souls of the faithful. Come, my soul, come eat of this bread, and it shall strengthen thee, though perhaps thou mayest not be immediately sensible of this strength received; the improvement of habits is not suddenly discerned; yet through this grace thou shalt find hereafter, that thy path has been like the shining light, which shineth more and more.

We find there is much lacking in our faith, in our love and every grace; here, therefore, we must desire, and hope, and prepare to receive from Christ such gifts of the Holy Ghost as will be mighty through God to increase our faith; that its discoveries of divine things may be more clear and distinct, and its assurances of the truth of them more certain and confident; that its consent to the covenant may be more free and resolved, and its complacency in the covenant more sweet and delightful. And that which thus increases our faith will be effectual to inflame our love, and make that strong as death in its desires toward God, and resolutions for him. We must here wait to be strengthened with all might, by his Spirit in the inner man, unto all patience in suffering for him, and diligence in doing for him, and both with joyfulness, Col. 1. 11. We here put ourselves under the happy influence of that exceeding great and glorious power, which works mightily in them who believe, Eph. 1. 19.

2. Let us here receive grace for the quickening of gracious acts, that they may be more strongly exerted: we come to this throne of grace, this mercy-seat, this table of our God, that here we may not only obtain mercy and pardon, but may find *Grace to help in every time of need,* Heb. 4. 16. Grace to excite us to, direct us in, and thoroughly furnish us for every good word and work, according as the duty of every day requires. It was a very encouraging word which Christ said to Paul, when he prayed for the removal of that messenger of Satan which was sent to buffet him, (2 Cor. 12. 9.) *My Grace is sufficient for thee;* and all true believers may take the comfort of it; what was said to him is said to all, whatever the exigence of the case is; they who commit themselves to the grace of God with a sincere resolution in every thing to submit to the conduct and government of that grace, shall be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening them.

Let a lively faith here descend to particulars, and receive this grace with application to the various occurrences of the christian life. When I go about any duty of solemn worship, I find I am not sufficient of myself for it, not so much as to think one good thought of myself, much less such a chain of good thoughts as is necessary to an acceptable prayer, to the profitable reading and hearing of the word, and the right sanctification of the Lord's Day; but all our sufficiency for these services is of God, and of his grace. That grace I here receive according to the promise, and will always go forth, and go on in the strength of it.

When an opportunity offers itself of doing good to others; to their bodies, by relieving their necessities, or contributing any way to their comfort and support; or to their souls, by seasonable advice, instruction, reproof, or other good discourse; we must depend on this grace, for ability to do it prudently, faithfully, and successfully, and so as to be accepted of God in it. I find I want wisdom for these and such like services, and for the ordering of all my affairs, and whither shall I go for it but to Wisdom's feasts, whose preparations are not only good for food, and pleasant to the eye, but greatly to be desired to make one wise: here, therefore, I receive Christ Jesus the Lord, as made of God unto me wisdom, Wisdom dwelling with Prudence, wisdom to understand my way, that wisdom which in every doubtful case is profitable to direct. Having many a time prayed Solomon's prayer, for *a wise and understanding heart,* I here receive the sealed grant in answer to it, *Wisdom and Knowledge are given thee,* so much as shall be sufficient for thee in thy place and station, to guide thee in glorifying God, so that thou mayst not come short of enjoying him.

When we are assaulted with temptations to sin, we find how weak and ineffectual our resistance has often been; here, therefore, we receive grace to fortify us against all those assaults, that we may not be foiled and overcome by them. All that in this sacrament list themselves under the banner of the Captain of our salvation, and engage themselves (as his faithful soldiers) in a holy war against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, may here be furnished with the whole armour of God, and that power of his might, (as it is called, Eph. 6. 10.) wherewith they shall be able to stand and withstand in the evil day, Eph. 6. 10, &c. I now receive from God and his grace, strength against such a sin that has often prevailed over me, such a temptation that has often been too hard for me; "Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands:" through God I shall do valiantly.

When we are burthened with affliction, we find it hard

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hard to bear up, we faint in the day of adversity, which is a sign our strength is small; we grieve too much, and are full of fears in a day of trouble, our hearts many a time are ready to fail us; hither therefore we come to receive grace sufficient for our support under the calamities of this present time, (that whatever we lose, we may not lose our comfort, and whatever we suffer, we may not sink,) grace to enable us, whatever happens, to keep possession of our own souls, by keeping up our hope and joy in God, that when flesh and heart fail, we may find God the strength of our hearts, and if he be so, *as our day is, so shall our strength be*, Deut. 33. 25. Such assurances are here given to all believers (of God's presence with them in all their afflictions, and of the concurrence of all for their good) that being thus encouraged, they have all the reason in the world to say, "Welcome the will of God; nothing can come amiss."

We know not how we may be called on to bear our testimony to the truths and ways of God in suffering for righteousness' sake; we are bid to count upon them, and to prepare for them. We must in this ordinance faithfully promise that (however we may be tried) we will never forsake Christ, nor turn from following after him; though we should die with him, yet will we not deny him: but we have no reason to confide in any strength of our own, for the making good of this promise, nor can we pretend to such a degree of resolution, steadiness, and presence of mind, as will enable us to encounter the difficulties we may meet with. Peter, when he shamed himself, warned us to take heed lest we fall, when we think we stand: here, therefore, we must receive strength for such trials; that we may overcome them by the blood of the Lamb, and by not loving our lives unto the death; and that the prospect of none of these things may move us.

3. How near our great change may be we cannot tell, perhaps nearer than we imagine; we are not sure that we shall live to see another opportunity of this kind; but this we are sure of, that it is a serious thing to die, it is a work we never did, and when we come to do it, we shall need a strength we never had. In this sacrament therefore, from the death of Christ, we must fetch in grace to prepare us for death, and to carry us safely and comfortably through that dark and dismal valley. I depend not only upon the providence of God to order the circumstances of my removal hence, for the best, to me,—but upon the grace of God to take out the sting of death, and then to reconcile me to the stroke of death, and to enable me to meet death's harbinger, and bear its agonies not only with the constancy and patience that becomes a wise man, but with the hope and joy that becomes a good christian.

V. Here we may receive the earnests of eternal bliss and joy. Heaven is the crown and centre of all the promises, and the perfection of all the good contained in them, all the blessings of the new covenant have a tendency to this, and are in order to this. Are we predestinated? It is to the inheritance of sons: Called? It is to his kingdom and glory: Sanctified? It is that we may be made meet for the inheritance, and wrought to the self-same thing. This, therefore, we should have in our eye, in our covenant and communion with God, that eternal life which God who cannot lie promises. We must receive the Spirit in his graces and comforts, as the *earnest of our inheritance*, Eph. 1. 14. 2 Cor. 1. 22.——5. 5. They who deal with God must deal upon trust for a happiness in reversion, a recompence of reward to come; must forsake a world in sight and present, for a world out of sight and future. All believers consent to this, they lay up their treasure in Heaven, and hope for what they see not. This they depend upon, and in prospect of it they are willing to labour, and suffer, to deny themselves, and take up their cross, knowing that Heaven will make amends for all; though they may be losers for Christ, they shall not be losers by him in the end; this is the bargain: In the Lord's Supper Christ gives us earnest upon this bargain, and what we receive there we receive as earnest. An earnest not only confirms the bargain, and secures the performance of it, but is itself part of payment, though but a small part in comparison with the full sum.

We here receive the earnest of our inheritance, that is,

1. We receive the assurances of it; the royal grant of it is here sealed and delivered by the King of Kings, *teste me ipso—being myself witness.* God says to me as he did to Abraham, (Gen. 13. 14.) *Lift up thine eyes now, and look from the place where thou art.* Take a view of the heavenly Canaan, that land which eternally flows with better things than milk and honey, Immanuel's land; open the eye of faith, and behold the pleasures and glories of that world, as they are described in Scripture, such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard;* and know of a surety, that *all the land which thou seest,* and that which is infinitely more and better than thou canst conceive, *to thee will I give it,* to thee for ever: *Fear not, little flock,* fear not, ye little ones of the flock, *it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* Follow Christ and serve him, and you shall be for ever with him: continue with him now in his temptations, and you shall shortly share with him in his glories: only be faithful unto death, and the crown of life is as sure to you as if it were already upon your heads. Here is livery and seisin upon the deed: take this and eat it, take this and drink it; in token of this, *I will be to thee a God,* (that is, a perfect and everlasting happiness) such as shall answer the vast extent and compass of that great word, (Heb. 11. 16.)

Come now, my soul, and accept the security offered; the inheritance offered is unspeakably rich and invaluable; the losses and sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with it; the title is good, it is a purchased possession, he that grants it has power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, John 17. 2. The assurances are unquestionably valid (not only the word and oath, but the writing and seal of the eternal God) in the scriptures and sacraments. Here is that, my soul, which thou mayst venture thyself upon, and venture thine all for; do it then, do it with a holy boldness:

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boldness: lay hold on eternal life, lay fast hold on it, and keep thy hold: look up, my soul, look as high as heaven, the highest heavens; look forward, my soul, look as far forward as eternity, and let eternal life, eternal joy, eternal glory, be thine aim in thy religion, and resolve to take up with nothing short of these. God has been *willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel,* and, therefore, has thus confirmed it, so as to leave no room for doubting, that by all these *immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us,* Heb. 6. 17, 18. Take him at his word then, and build thy hope upon it: be not faithless, but believing; be not careless, but industrious. Here is a happiness worth striving for: run with patience the race that is set before thee, with this prize in thine eye.

2. We receive the foretastes of it. We have in this ordinance not only a ratification of the promise of the heavenly Canaan, but a pattern or specimen given us of the fruits of that land, like the bunch of grapes which was brought from the valley of Eshcol to the Israelites in the wilderness; a view given us of that land of promise, like that which Moses had of the land of Canaan from the top of Pisgah: as the Law was a type and figure of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, so the Gospel is of his kingdom in heaven; both are shadows of good things to come, (Heb. 10. 1.) like the map of a rich and large country in a sheet of paper. Our future happiness is in this sacrament not only sealed to us, but shewed to us, and we here taste something of the pleasures of that better country. In this ordinance we have a sight of Christ, he is evidently set before us; and what is heaven but to see him as he is, and to be for ever beholding his glory? We are here receiving the pledges and tokens of Christ's love to us, and returning the protestations and expressions of our love to him; and what is heaven but an eternal interchanging of love between a holy God and holy souls? We are here praising and blessing the Redeemer, celebrating his honour, and giving him the glory of his atchievements, and what is that but the work of heaven? It is what the inhabitants of that world are doing now, and what we hope to be doing with them to eternity. We are here in spiritual communion with all the saints, coming in faith, hope and love to the general assembly and *church of the first-born,* and what is heaven but that in perfection? In a word, heaven is a feast, and so is this; only this is a running banquet, that an everlasting feast.

Come (my soul) and see a door here opened in heaven, look in at that door now, by which thou hopest to enter shortly. Let this ordinance do something of the work of heaven upon thee, God having provided in it something of the pleasure of heaven for thee. Heaven will for ever part between thee and sin; let this ordinance, therefore, set thee at a greater distance from it. Heaven will fill thee with the love of God; in this ordinance, therefore, let that love be shed abroad in thine heart. In heaven thou shalt enter into the joy of thy Lord; let that joy now enter into thee, and be thy strength and thy song. Heaven will be perfect holiness; let this ordinance make thee more holy, and more conformable to the image of the Holy Jesus. Heaven will be everlasting rest; here, therefore, return to God as thy rest, O my soul, and repose thyself in him. Let every sacrament be to thee a heaven upon earth, and each of these days of the son of man, as one of the days of heaven.

CHAP. X.

Helps for the exciting those pious and devout Affections which should be working in us while we attend this Ordinance.

WONDERFUL sights are here to be seen, where the Lord's Death is shewed forth; precious benefits are here to be had, where the covenant of grace is sealed; the transaction is very solemn, very serious, nothing more so on this side death: but what impressions must be made hereby upon our souls? How must we stand affected while this is doing? Is this service only a shew at which we may be unconcerned spectators? Or is it a market-place, in which we may stand all the day idle? No, by no means: here's work to be done, heart-work, such as requires a very close application of mind, and a great liveliness and vigour of spirit, and in which all that is within us should be employed, and all little enough. Here is that to be done which calls for fixed thoughts and warm affections, which needs them, and well deserves them. What sensible movings of affection we should aim at, is not easy to direct; tempers vary. Some are soon moved, and much moved with every thing that affects them; from such it may be expected that their passions, which are strong at other times, should not be weak at this ordinance; and yet, no doubt, there are others whose natural temper is happily more calm and sedate, who are not conscious to themselves of such stirrings of affection as some experience at that ordinance, and, yet have as comfortable communion with God, as good evidence of the truth, and growth of grace, and as much real benefit by the ordinance as those who think themselves even transported by it. The deepest rivers are scarce perceived to move, and make the least noise. On the other hand, there may be much heat where there is little light, and strong passions where there are very weak resolutions; like the waters of the land-flood, which make a great shew, but are shallow and soon gone. We must not, therefore, build a good opinion of our spiritual state upon the vehemence of our affection. A romance may represent a tragical story so pathetically, as to make a great impression upon the minds of some, who yet know the whole matter to be both feigned and foreign: *bodily exercise,* if that be all, *profits little.* And on the other hand, there may be a true and strong faith in forming the judgment, bowing the will, commanding the affections, and purifying the heart and life, where yet there are not any

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any transports or pathetical expressions. There may be true joy, where yet the mouth is not filled with laughter, nor the tongue with singing; and true sorrow where yet the eye does not run down with tears. They whose hearts are firmly fixed for God, may take the comfort of it, though they do not find their heart sensibly flowing out towards him.

And yet in this sacrament, where it is designed that the eye should affect the heart, we must not rest in the bare contemplation of what is here set before us, but the consideration thereof must make an impression on our spirits, which should be turned as clay to this seal. If what is here done do not affect us for the present, it will not be likely to influence us afterwards; for we retain the remembrance of things better by our affections than by our notions: *I shall never forget thy precepts, when by them thou hast quickened me.* Here therefore let us stir up the gift that is in us, endeavouring to affect ourselves with the great things of God and our souls; and let us pray to God to affect us with them by his Spirit and grace, and to testify his acceptance of the sacrifice of a devoted heart, which we are here to offer, by kindling it with the holy fire from heaven: *Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden.* Come thou blessed Spirit, and move upon these waters, these dead waters, to set them a moving in rivers of living water; come and breathe on these dry bones, that they may live. O that I might now be in the mount with God! That I might be so taken up with the things of the Spirit and the other world, that, for the time, I may even forget that I am yet in the body, and in this world! O that I might now be soaring upward, upward toward God, pressing forward, forward toward heaven, as one not slothful in this business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, for here it is no time to trifle!

Let us then see in some particulars how we should be affected when we are attending on the Lord in this solemnity, and in what channels these waters of the sanctuary should run, that we may take our work before us, and apply our minds to the consideration of those things that are proper to excite those affections.

I. Here we must be sorrowing for sin after a godly sort, and blushing before God at the thought of it. Penitential grief and shame are not at all unsuitable to this ordinance, though it is intended for our joy and honour, but excellent preparatives for the benefit and comfort of it. Here we should be, like Ephraim, bemoaning ourselves; like Job, abhorring ourselves, renewing those sorrowful reflections we made upon our own follies, when we were preparing for this service, and keeping the fountains of repentance still open, still flowing. Our sorrow for sin needs not hinder our joy in God, and therefore our joy in God must not forbid our sorrow for sin.

1. Our near approach to God in this ordinance, should excite and increase our holy shame and sorrow. When we see what an honour we are advanced to, what a favour we are admitted to, it is seasonable to reflect upon our own unworthiness by reason of the guilt of sin, and our own unfitness by reason of the power of sin, to draw near to God. A man's deformity and defilement is never such a mortification to him, as when he comes into the presence of those who are comely, clean and fashionable: and when we are conscious to ourselves, that we have dealt basely and disingenuously with one we were under the highest obligation to love and honour; an interview with the person so offended cannot but renew our grief.

I am here drawing nigh to God, not only treading his courts with christians at large, by sitting down at his table with select disciples; but when I consider how pure and holy he is, and how vile and sinful I am, *I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face before him: To me belongs shame and confusion of face: I have* many a time *heard of God by the hearing of the ear,* but now I am taken to sit down with him at his table, *mine eye sees him,* sees the king in his beauty, wherefore *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* What a fool, what a wretch have I been, to offend a God, who appears so holy in the eyes of all that draw nigh unto him, and so great to all them that are about him. *Woe is me, for I am undone,* lost and undone for ever, if there were not a Mediator between me and God, *because I am a man of unclean lips,* and an unclean heart: now I perceive it, and my own degeneracy and danger by reason of it, *for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts,* Isa. 6. 5. I have reason to be ashamed to see one I am so unlike to, and afraid to see one I am so obnoxious to. The higher we are advanced by the free grace of God, the more reason we shall see to abase ourselves, and cry, *God be merciful to us sinners.*

2. A sight of Christ crucified should increase and excite our penitential shame and sorrow, and that evangelical repentance in which there is an eye to the cross of Christ. It is prophesied, nay, it is promised as a blessed effect of the pouring out of the Spirit in gospel times upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that they shall *look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn,* Zech. 12. 10. Here we see Christ pierced for our sins, nay, pierced by our sins; our sins were the cause of his death, and the grief of his heart. The Jews and Romans crucified Christ, but as David killed Uriah with his letter, and Ahab killed Naboth with his seal, so the hand-writing that was against us for our sins, nailed Christ to the cross, and so he nailed it to the cross. We had eaten the sour grapes, and his teeth were set an edge. Can we see him thus suffering for us, and not we suffer with him? Was he in such pain for our sins, and shall not we be in pain for them? Was his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and shall not our's be exceeding sorrowful, when that is the way to life? Come, my soul, see by faith the holy Jesus made sin for thee, the glory of heaven made a reproach of men for thee; his Father's joy made a man of sorrow for thy transgressions. See thy sins burthening him when he sweat, spitting upon him and buffeting him, and putting him to open shame, crowning him with thorns, piercing his hands and his side; and let this melt and break this hard and rocky heart of thine, and dissolve it into tears of godly sorrow. Look on Christ dying, and weep not for him, (though they who have any thing of ingenuousness and good

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good nature, will see reason enough to weep for an innocent sufferer) but weep for thyself, and thy own sins, for them be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for an only son.

Add to this, that our sins have not only pierced him, as they were the cause of his death, but as they have been the reproach of his holy name, and the grief of his holy Spirit. Thus we have crucified him afresh, by doing that which he has often declared to be a vexation and dishonour to him, as far as the joys and glories of his present state can admit. The consideration of this should greatly humble us: nothing goes nearer to the quick with a true penitent, nor touches him in a more tender part than this. (Ezek. 6. 9.) *They shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me.* A strange expression, that the great God should reckon himself broken by the sins of his people! No wonder it follows, *They should lothe themselves for the evils which they had committed.* Can we look upon an humbled broken Christ with an unhumbled, unbroken heart? Do our sins grieve him, and shall they not grieve us? Come, my soul, and sit down by the cross of Christ as a true mourner; let it make thee weep to see him weep, and bleed to see him bleed. That heart is frozen hard indeed, which these considerations will not thaw.

3. The gracious offer here made us of peace and pardon, should excite and increase our godly sorrow and shame. This is a gospel motive, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;* that is, the promise of pardon upon repentance is published and sealed, and whoever will, may come and take the benefit of it. The terrors of the law are of use to startle us, and put us into a horror for sin, as those that are afraid of God; but the grace of the gospel contributes more to an ingenuous repentance, and makes us more ashamed of ourselves. This rends the heart, to consider God so gracious and merciful, so slow to anger, and ready to forgive, Joel 2. 13. Let this loving-kindness melt thee, O my soul, and make thee to relent more tenderly than ever. Wretch that I have been, to spit in the face, and spurn at the bowels of such mercy and love by my wilful sin! to despise the riches of gospel grace! *I am ashamed, yea, even confounded,* because I do *bear the reproach of my youth.* Does God meet me thus with tenders of reconciliation? Does the party offended make the first motion of agreement? Shall such an undutiful, disobedient, prodigal son as I have been, be embraced, kissed, and clothed with the best robe? This kindness overcomes me; now it cuts me to the heart, and humbles me to the dust, to think of my former rebellions; they never appeared so heinous, so vile as they do now I see them pardoned. The more certain I am that I shall not be ruined by them, the more reason I see to be humbled for them. When God promised to establish his covenant with repenting Israel, he adds, *That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of the shame, when I am pacified towards thee,* Ezek. 16. 62, 63. To see God provoked, causes a holy trembling; but to see him pacified, causes a holy blushing. The day of atonement, when the sins of Israel were to be sent into a land of forgetfulness, must be a day to *afflict the soul,* Lev. 16. 29. The blood of Christ will be the more healing and comforting to the soul, for its bleeding afresh thus upon every remembrance of sin.

II. Here we must be confiding in Christ Jesus, and relying on him alone for life and salvation. When we mourn for sin, blessed be God, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope: true penitents are perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed: Faith in Christ turns even their sorrows into joys, gives them their vineyards from thence, and even the *Valley* of *Achor* (of *trouble* for sin) *for a door of hope,* Hos. 2. 15. We have not only an all-sufficient happiness to hope for, but an all-sufficient Saviour to hope in: here, therefore, let us exercise and encourage that hope, let us trust in the name of the Lord Jesus, and stay ourselves upon him; come up out of this wilderness, leaning upon our beloved, Cant. 8. 5. Come, my soul, weary as thou art, and rest in Christ; cast thy burthen upon him, and he shall sustain thee; commit thy way to him, and thy thoughts shall certainly be established; commit thyself to him, and it shall be well with thee, he will keep through his own name that which thou committest to him: commit thyself to him, as the scholar commits himself to his teacher to be instructed, with a resolution to take his word for the truth of what he teaches (*oportet discentem credere—It is commendable in a learner to give credit.*) As the patient commits himself to his physician to be cured, with a resolution to take whatever he prescribes, and punctually to observe his orders: as the client commits himself to his council to draw his plea, and to bring him off when he is judged, with a resolution to do all such things as he shall advise: as the traveller commits himself to his guide, to be directed in his way, with a resolution to follow his conduct: as the orphan commits himself to his guardian, to be governed and disposed of at his discretion, with a resolution to comply with him: thus must we commit ourselves to Christ.

1. We must confide in his power, trusting in him as one who can help and save us. (1.) He has an uncontestable authority, is a Saviour by office, sanctified and sealed, and sent into the world for this purpose: help is laid upon him; we may well offer to trust him with our part of this great concern, which is the securing of our happiness, for God trusted him with his part of it, the securing of his honour, and declared himself well pleased in him, Mat. 3. 17. (2.) He has likewise an unquestionable ability to save to the uttermost; he is mighty to save, and every way qualified for the undertaking; he is skilful, for treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; he is solvent, for there is in him an inexhaustible fulness of merit and grace, sufficient to bear all our burthens, and supply all our need. We must commit ourselves and the greatest affairs of our salvation unto him, with a full assurance that he is able to keep what we commit to him against that day, that great day, which

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will try the foundation of every man's work, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

2. We must confide in his promise, trusting in him as one who will certainly help and save us on the terms proposed; we may take his word for it, and this is the word which he has spoken, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out*, (John 6. 37.) οὐ μή, a double negative, *I will not, no, I will not.* He is engaged for us in the covenant of redemption, and engaged to us in the covenant of grace, and in both he is the Amen, the Faithful Witness. On this, therefore, we must rely, the word on which he has caused us to hope; God hath spoken in his holiness, that he will accept us in the beloved, and in that *I will rejoice, I will divide Sichem, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine,* (Ps. 60. 6, 7.) pardon is mine, and peace mine, and Christ mine, and Heaven mine, for *faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it.*

Come then, my soul, come thou and all thy concerns into this ark, and there thou shalt be safe when the deluge comes: flee to this city of refuge, and in it thou shalt be secured from the avenger of blood: quit all other shelters, for every thing but Christ is a refuge of lies, which the hail will sweep away: There is not salvation in any other but in him; trust him for it therefore, and depend upon him only: Reach hither thy finger, and in this ordinance behold his hands; reach hither thy hand, thrust it into his side, and say as Thomas did, *My Lord, and my God.* Here I cast anchor, here I rest my soul, *it is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again,* and is, and will be the *author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* To him I entirely give up myself, to be ruled and taught and saved by him, and in him I have a full satisfaction. I will draw near to God for mercy and grace, in a dependance upon him as my righteousness; I will go forth, and go on in the way of my duty, in a dependance upon him as my strength; I will shortly venture in the invisible unchangeable world, in a dependance upon him as the Captain of my salvation, who is able to bring many sons to glory, and as willing as he is able. *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

Having thus committed thyself (my soul) to the Lord Jesus, comfort thyself in him, please thyself with the thoughts of having disposed of thyself so well, and of having lodged the great concern of thy salvation in so good a hand; now *return to thy rest, O my Soul,* and be easy. Every good christian may by faith triumph as the prophet does, pointing at Christ, (Isa. 50. 7, 8.) *The Lord God will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint,* in a holy defiance of Satan, and all the powers of darkness, *and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?* Take the Bible, turn to the 8th of the Romans, and read from ver. 31. to the end of the chapter: if ever blessed Paul rode in a triumphal chariot on this side heaven, it was when he wrote these lines, *What shall we say then to these things?* &c. Apply those comforts to thyself, O my Soul, thou hast said of the Lord, he is my Lord; rejoice in him then, and be exceeding glad. Thy Redeemer is mighty, and he *rides upon the heavens for thy help, and in his excellency on the sky;* Deut. 33. 26. Do thou then *ride upon the high places of the earth, and suck honey out of this rock; and oil out of this flinty rock,* Deut. 32. 13. Isa. 58. 14. Having made sure of thy interest in Christ, live in a continual dependance upon him; and being satisfied of his love, be satisfied with it: thou hast enough, and needest no more.

III. Here we must be delighting in God, and solacing ourselves in his favour. If we had not a Christ to hope in, being guilty and corrupt, we could not have a God to rejoice in; but having an advocate with the Father, so good a plea as Christ dying, and so good a pleader as Christ interceding, we may not only come boldly to the throne of grace, but may sit down under the shadow of it with delight, and behold the beauty of the Lord. That God who is Love, and the God of Love, here shews us his marvellous loving kindness; causes his goodness to pass before us; proclaims his name gracious and merciful: here he gives us his love, and thereby invites us to give him our's. It is a love-feast, the love of Christ is here commemorated, the love of God is here offered; and the frame of our spirits is disagreeable, and a jar in the harmony, if our hearts be not here going out in love to God, the chief good, and our felicity. They who come hither with holy desires, must refresh themselves here with holy delights. If we must rejoice in the Lord always, much more now, for a feast was made for laughter, and so was this, for spiritual joy. If ever Wisdom's ways be ways of pleasantness, surely they must be so when we come to eat of her bread, and to drink of the wine which she hath mingled.

Put thyself then (my soul) into a pleasant frame; let the joy of the Lord be thy strength, and let this ordinance put a new song into thy mouth. Come and hear the voice of joy and gladness.

1. Let it be a pleasure to thee to think that there is a God, and that he is such a one as he has revealed himself to be. The being and attributes of God are a terror to those who are unjustified and unsanctified; nothing can be more so; they are willing to believe there is no God, or that he is altogether such a one as themselves, because they heartily wish there were none, or one that they could be at peace with, and yet continue their league with sin: but to those who through grace partake of a divine nature themselves, nothing is more agreeable, nothing more acceptable than the thoughts of God's nature and infinite perfections. Delight thyself therefore in thinking that there is an infinite and eternal Spirit, who is self-existent and self-sufficient, the best of beings, and the first of causes, the highest of powers, and the richest and kindest of friends and benefactors; the fountain of being, and fountain of bliss; the *Father of lights,* and *Father of mercies.* Love to think of him whom thou canst not see, and yet canst not but know; who is not far from thee, and yet between thee and him there is an infinite awful distance. Let these thoughts be thy nourishment and refreshment.

2. Let

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2. Let it be a pleasure to thee to think of the obligation thou liest under to this God as thy creator. He that is the former of my body, and the Father of my spirit, *in whom I live, and move, and have my being*, is upon that account my rightful owner, whose I am; and my sovereign ruler, who I am bound to serve. Because he made me, and not I myself, therefore I am not mine own, but his, Ps. 100. 3. Please thyself (my soul) with this thought, that thou art not thine own, but his that made thee; not left to thine own will, but bound up to his; not made for thyself, but designed to be to him for a name and a praise. Noble powers are then intended for a noble purpose. ——Delight thyself in him as the felicity and end of thy being, who is the fountain and cause of it. Were I to chuse, I would not be my own master, mine own carver, mine own centre: No, I would not, it is better as it is; I love to think of the eternal God, as the just director of all my actions, to whom I am accountable; and the wise disposer of all my affairs, to whom I must submit. I love to think of him as my chief good, who having made me, is alone able to make me happy; and as my highest end, *of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things*, Rom. 11. 36.

3. Let it be a pleasure to thee to think of the covenant relations in which this God stands to thee in Jesus Christ. This is, especially, to be our delight in this sealing ordinance; though the sacrament directs us immediately to Christ, yet through him it leads us to the Father: he died, *the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;* to God therefore we must go, as our end and rest, by Christ as our way; to God as a Father, by Christ as Mediator. Come then, my soul, and see with joy and the highest satisfaction, the God who made thee, entering into covenant with thee, and engaging to make thee happy. Hear him saying to thee, my soul, *I am thy salvation*; thy shield, and not only thy bountiful rewarder, but thine exceeding great reward; I am, and will be to thee a God all-sufficient; a God that is enough. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee*, wherever thou art; *be not dismayed, for I am thy God*, whatever thou wantest, whatever thou losest, call me God, even thine own God; when thou art weak, *I will strengthen thee, yea*, when thou art helpless, *I will help thee, yea*, when thou art ready to sink, *I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness*, Isa. 41. 10. The God that cannot lie has said it, and here seals it to thee, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* Let this be to thee, my soul, the voice of joy and gladness, making even broken bones to rejoice. Encourage thyself in the Lord thy God. He is thy Shepherd, thou shalt not want any thing that is good for thee, Ps. 23. 1, &c. *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name*, (Isa. 54. 5) and *as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee*, Isa. 62. 5. He shall *rest in his love to thee*, Zeph. 3. 17. Rest then in thy love to him, and rejoice in him always. The Lord is thy Law-giver, thy King who will save thee, Isa. 33. 22. Swear allegiance to him then with gladness and loud hosanna's; *Let* Israel *rejoice in him that made him*, that new made him; *Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King*, Ps. 149. 2. What wouldst thou more? *This God is thy God for ever and ever.*

Stir up thyself (my soul) to take the comfort which is here offered thee: let this strengthen the weak hands, let it confirm the feeble knees: if God be indeed the health of thy countenance, and thy God, *Why art thou cast down? Why art thou disquieted?* Die not for thirst when there is such a fountain of living waters near thee, but draw water with joy out of these wells of salvation. Shiver not for cold when there is such a reviving quickening heat in these promises, but say with pleasure, *A-ha, I am warm, I have seen the fire*, Isa. 44. 16. Faint not for hunger now thou art at a feast of fat things, but be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of God's house, Ps. 26. 8.—65. 4. The God whose wrath and frowns thou hast incurred, here favours thee, and smiles on thee, let this therefore give thee a joy greater than the joy of harvest, and far surpassing what they have who divide the spoil. Though thou canst not reach to holy raptures, yet compose thyself to a holy rest; delight thyself always in the Lord, especially at this ordinance, and by thus taking the comfort of what thou hast received, thou qualifiest thyself to receive more, for then *he shall give thee the desire of thy heart*, Ps. 37. 4. The way to have thine heart's desire, is to make God thine heart's desire. Triumph in his love, and thine interest in him. His benignity is better than life, let it be to thee sweeter than life itself. *Behold*, God is my Saviour, *God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid;* for *the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and* therefore *my song;* the *strength of my heart*, and *my portion for ever*, Isa. 12. 2. Ps. 73. 26. When thou comest to the altar of God, call him, *God thy exceeding joy*, (Ps. 43. 4.) *thy God, thy Glory*, Isa. 60. 19.

IV. Here we must be admiring the mysteries and miracles of redeeming love. They that worshipped the beast, are said to wonder after him, (Rev. 13. 3.) so must they that worship the Lamb, for he has done marvellous things. We have reason to say, that we were fearfully and wonderfully made, but, without doubt, we were more fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. We were made with a word, but we were bought with a price; stand still then and see the salvation of the Lord, see it with admiration. Affect thyself (my soul) with a pleasing wonder, while thou art seeing this great sight. The everlasting gospel is here magnified and made honourable, let it be so in thine eyes; call it *The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God.* Let us take a view of some of the *marvellous things* which are done in the work of our redemption.

1. The contrivance of the salvation is marvellous: it would have for ever puzzled the wisdom of angels and men to have found out such a method of salvation as might effectually satisfy God's justice, and yet secure man's happiness; save the life of the law-breaker, and yet maintain the honour of the law-maker. This

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is that mystery which the angels desire to look into, and which the most piercing eye of those inquisitive spirits that see by the light of the upper world, will not be able to eternity to discern the bottom of. O the depth of this hidden wisdom!

2. The purposes of God's love concerning it from eternity, are marvellous. Be astonished, O my soul, at this, that the God who was infinitely happy in the contemplation and enjoyment of himself and his own perfections, should yet think thoughts of love toward a remnant of mankind, and toward thee among the rest, and design such favours for them, such favours for thee, before the worlds were. How precious should these thoughts be unto us! For how great is the sum of them! Ps. 139. 17.

3. The choice of the person who should undertake it is marvellous; the Son of his love, that in parting with him for us, he might commend his love: the eternal Wisdom, the eternal Word, that he might effectually accomplish this great design, and might not fail, nor be discouraged. A person every way fit, both to do the Redeemer's work, and to wear the Redeemer's crown. It is spoken of as an admirable invention, (Job 33. 24.) *I have found a ransom:* and (Ps. 89. 19, 20.) *I have found David my servant.* On earth there is not his like, nor in heaven either.

4. The Redeemer's consent to the undertaking is marvellous. Considering his own dignity and self-sufficiency, our unworthiness and obnoxiousness, the difficulty of the service, and the ill requitals he foresaw from an ungrateful world, we have reason to admire that he should be so free, so forward to it, and should say, *Lo I come: here am I, send me.* Never was there such a miracle of love and pity; verily it passeth knowledge.

5. The carrying on of his undertaking in his humiliation is marvellous. His name was Wonderful, Isa. 9. 6. His appearance in the world from first to last was a continual series of wonders: without controversy, great was this mystery of godliness. The bringing of the first begotten into the world, was attended with the adorations of wondering angels, Heb. 1. 6. His doctrine and miracles while he was in the world, were admirable; they that heard the one, and saw the other, were beyond measure astonished.

But his going out of the world was the greatest wonder of all; it made the earth to shake, the rocks to rend, and the sun to cover his face. Never was there such a martyr, never such a sacrifice, never such a paradox of love as that was. *God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of Christ;* which is so much *the wisdom of God and the power of God.*

6. The honours of his exalted state are marvellous. He who was for a little while lower than the angels, a worm and no man, is now the Lord of angels. One in our nature is advanced to the highest honours, invested with the highest powers; having an uncontestable authority to execute judgment, even for this reason, because he is the Son of Man; not only though he is so, but because he is so. *This is the Lord's doing, and it is,* and should be *marvellous in our eyes.*

7. The covenant of grace made with us in him is marvellous. The terms of the covenant are wonderful, reasonable and easy; the treasures of the covenant are wonderful, rich and valuable. The covenant itself is well ordered in all things, and sure; admirably well, both for the glory of God, and the comfort of all believers. God in it *sheweth us his marvellous loving-kindness,* (Ps. 17. 7.) and we answer not the design of the discovery, if we do not admire it. Other things, the more they are known, the less they are wondered at; but the riches of redeeming love appear more admirable to those who are best acquainted with them.

V. Here we must be caring what we shall render to him who hath thus loved us. This wonderful love is love to us, and not only gives the greatest encouragements to us to come to God for mercy and peace, but lays the strongest engagements upon us to walk with God in duty and obedience. We are bound in conscience, bound in honour, bound in gratitude, to love him, and live to him, who loved us and died for us. This concern should much affect us, and lie very near our hearts, how we may answer the intentions of this love.

1. We should be affected with a jealous fear, lest we prove ungrateful, and, like Hezekiah, *render not again according to the benefit done unto us,* 2 Chro. 32. 25. We cannot but know something by sad experience of the treachery and deceitfulness of our own hearts, and how apt they are to start aside like a broken bow; and therefore we have no reason to presume upon our own strength and sufficiency. We are told of many who eat and drink in Christ's presence, and yet are found at last unfaithful to him: And what if I should prove one of those? This thought is not suggested here to amuse any that tremble at God's word, or to weaken the hands, and sadden the hearts, of those who are truly willing, though very weak; but to awaken those who slumber, and humble those who are wise in their own conceit. Distrust thyself, O my soul, that thou mayest trust in Christ only: fear thine own strength, that thou mayst hope in his. He who has done these great things for thee, must be applied to, and depended on to work those great things in thee, which are required of thee: Go forth, therefore, and go on in his strength. If the same that grants us these favours, give us not wherewithal to make suitable returns for them, we shall perish for ever in our ingratitude.

2. We should be filled with serious desires to know and do our duty, in return for that great love wherewith we are loved. The affections of a grateful mind are very proper to be working in us at this ordinance. Does not even nature teach us to be grateful to our friends and benefactors? Let us be so to Christ then, the best of friends, and kindest of benefactors. Come, my soul, here I see how much I am indebted, and how I owe my life, and joy, and hope, and all to the blessed Jesus; and is it not time to ask, with holy David, (Ps. 116. 12,) *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?* Shall I not take the cup of salvation,

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vation, as he does there, (v. 13.) with this thought? *What shall I render?* Let David's answer to that question, which we find in that Psalm, be mine.

(1.) I love the Lord, v. 1. Love is the loadstone of love; even the publicans love those that love them; "*Lord, thou hast loved me with an everlasting love,* from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it, and shall not my heart with this loving kindness be drawn to thee? Jer. 31. 3. Lord, I love thee; the world and the flesh shall never have my love more; I have loved them too much, I have loved them too long; the best affections of my soul shall now be consecrated to thee, O God, thee, O blessed Jesus! *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.* It is my sorrow and shame that I am so weak and defective in my love to thee; what a wretched heart have I, that I can think, and speak, and hear, and see so much of thy love to me, and be so little affected with it! So low in my thoughts of thee, so cool in my desires toward thee, so unsteady in my resolutions for thee! Lord, pity me; Lord, help me, for yet I love thee, I love to love thee: I earnestly desire to love thee better, and long to be there where love shall be made perfect."

2. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, v. 17. As love is the heart of praise, so praise is the language of love. What shall I render? I must render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: the tribute of praise to God, to whom it is due. We do not accommodate ourselves to this thanksgiving-feast, if we do not attend it with hearts enlarged in thanksgiving; this cup of salvation must be a cup of blessing; in it we must bless God, because in it God blesses us. Thankful acknowledgments of God's favours to us, are but poor returns for rich receivings, yet they are such as God will accept, if they come from an upright heart. *Bless the Lord,* therefore, *O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name.* Speak well of him who has done well for thee. Thank him for all his gifts both of nature and grace, especially for Jesus Christ, the spring of all. *As long as I live I will bless the Lord, yea, I will praise my God while I have my being;* for he is the God of my life, and the author of my well-being; and when I have no life, no being on earth, I hope to have a better life, a better being in a better world, and to be doing this work for ever in a better manner.

3. *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant,* v. 16. I acknowledge myself already bound to be so, and further oblige myself by solemn promise to approve myself so. *What shall I render?* Lord, I render myself to thee, my whole self, body, soul, and spirit; not in compliment, but in truth and sincerity; I own myself thy servant, to obey thy commands, to be at thy disposal, and to be serviceable to thy honour and interest, it will be my credit and ease, my safety and happiness, to be under thy government: make me as one of thy hired servants.

4. *I will call upon the name of the Lord,* ver. 13. This is the immediate answer to that question, *What shall I render?* And it is a surprising answer: It is uncommon among men, to make petitions for further favours our return for former favours; yet, such a return as this, the God who delights to hear prayers will be well pleased with. Is God my Father, I will apply myself to him as his child, and call him *Abba, Father.* Have I an advocate with the Father? Then I will come boldly to the throne of grace. Are there such exceeding great and precious promises made me, and sealed to me? Then I will never lose the benefit of them for want of putting them in suit. As I will love God the better, so I will love prayer the better as long as I live; and having given myself unto God, I will give myself unto prayer, (as David did, Ps. 109. 4.) till I come to the world of everlasting praise.

5. *Return unto thy rest, O my soul,* v. 7. The God who has pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, would have them easy to themselves, and that they can never be, but by reposing in him; this therefore we must render: it is work that is its own wages; honour God by resting in him, please him, by being well pleased in him. Having received so much from him, let us own that we have enough in him, and that we can go no whither but to him with any hopes of satisfaction. Lord, whither shall we go? He has the words of eternal life.

6. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,* v. 9. A holy life, though it cannot profit God, yet it glorifies him, and therefore it is insisted upon as a necessary return for the favours we have received from God. While I am here in this land of the living, I will walk by faith, having mine eyes ever toward the Lord, to see him as he reveals himself, hoping that shortly in that land which is truly the land of the living above, I shall walk by sight, having mine eye ever upon the Lord, to see him as he is. God has here sealed to me, to be to me a God all-sufficient; here therefore I seal to him, according to the tenor of the covenant, that his grace enabling me, I will walk before him, and will be upright, Gen. 17. 1.

7. *I will pay my vows unto the Lord,* v. 14, 18. Those who receive the blessings of the covenant, must be willing not only to come, but always to abide under the bonds of the covenant. Here we must make vows, and then go away and make them good. More of this in the next chapter.

CHAP. XI.

Directions concerning the solemn Vows we are to make to God in this Ordinance.

A RELIGIOUS vow is a bond upon the soul; so it is described, Num. 30. 2. where he that voweth a vow unto the Lord, is said thereby to *bind his soul with a bond.* It is a solemn promise, by which we voluntarily oblige ourselves to God and duty, as a willing people in the day of his power, Ps. 110. 3. The cords of a man, and bands of love, wherewith God draws us, and holds us to himself, call upon us by our own act and deed

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deed to bind ourselves, and these vows also are cords of a man, for they are highly reasonable, and bands of love, for, to the renewed soul they are an easy yoke, and a light burthen.

From all the other parts of our work at the Lord's Table, we may infer, that this is one part of it; we must there make solemn vows to God, that we will diligently and faithfully serve him.

1. We are here to renew our repentance for sin, and it becomes penitents to make vows. When we profess ourselves sorry for what we have done amiss, it is very natural and necessary to add, that we will not offend any more, as we have done: *If I have done iniquity, I will do no more*, Job 34. 31, 32. We mock God when we say, "We repent that we have done foolishly," if we do not at the same time resolve that we will never return again to folly, Ps. 85. 8. Times of affliction are proper times to make vows, and what is repentance but a self-affliction? Trouble for sin was not the least of that trouble which David was in when his lips uttered those vows, which he speaks so feelingly of, Ps. 66. 13, 14. Probably it was under this penitential affliction that he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob, that he would find a place for the ark, Ps. 132. 1, 2. Vows against sin resulting from sorrow for sin, shall not be rejected as extorted by the rack, but graciously accepted, as the genuine language of a broken heart, and fruits meet for repentance.

2. We are here to ask and receive mercy from God, and it becomes petitioners to make vows. When Jacob found himself in special need of God's gracious presence, he vowed a vow, and set up a stone for a memorial of it, (Gen. 28. 20.) and Hannah, when she prayed for a particular mercy, vowed a vow, that the comfort she prayed for should be consecrated to God. Great and precious things we are here waiting to receive from God, and therefore though we cannot offer any thing as a valuable consideration for his favours, yet, it behoves us to promise such suitable returns as we are capable of making. When God encourages us to seek to him for grace, we must engage ourselves not to receive his grace in vain, but to improve and employ for him what we have from him.

3. We are here to give God thanks for his favours to us. Now it becomes us in our thanksgivings to make vows, and to offer to God not only the calves of our lips, but the works of our hands. Jonah's mariners, when they offered sacrifice of praise to the Lord for a calm after a storm, as an appendix to that sacrifice, made vows, Jonah 1. 16. The most acceptable vows are those which take rise from gratitude, and which are drawn from us by the mercies of God. Here I see what great things God has done for my soul, and what greater things he designs for me; shall I not therefore freely bind myself to that which he has by such endearing ties bound me to?

4. We are here to join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant; and it is requisite that our general covenant be explained and confirmed by particular vows. When we present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, with these cords we must bind that sacrifice to the horns of the altar; and while we experience in ourselves such a bent to backslide, we shall find all the arts of obligation little enough to be used with our own souls. As it is not enough to confess sin in the gross, saying, *I have sinned;* but we must enter into the detail of our transgressions, saying with David, *I have done this evil;* so it is not enough in our covenanting with God, that we engage ourselves in the general to be his, but we must descend to particulars in our covenants, as God does in his commands, that thereby we may the more effectually both bind ourselves to duty, and remind ourselves of duty. If the people must distinctly say *Amen* to every curse pronounced on mount Ebal, (Deut. 27. 15.) much more to every precept delivered on mount Horeb.

Come then, my soul, thou hast now thy hand upon the book to be sworn: thou art lifting up thy hand to the most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth; think what thou art doing, and adjust the particulars, that this may not become a rash oath, inconsiderately taken. God is here confirming his promise to us by an oath, to shew the immutability of his counsels of love to us, Heb. 6. 17, 18. Here, therefore, we must confirm our promise to him by an oath, to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, Neh. 10. 29. Some of the oriental writers tell us, that the most solemn oath which the patriarchs before the flood used, was "By the blood of Abel;" and we are sure that the blood of Jesus is infinitely more sacred, and speaks much greater, and much better things than that of Abel. Let us therefore testify our value for that blood, and secure to ourselves the blessings purchased by it, by our sincere and faithful dealing with God in that covenant, which this is the blood of.

The command of the Eternal God is, that we *cease to do evil*, and *learn to do well*; that *we put off the old man*, and *put on the new:* and our vows to God must accordingly be against all sin, and to all duty. And under each of these heads we must be particular, according as the case is.

I. We must here, by a solemn vow, bind ourselves out from all sin; so as not only to break our league with it, but to enter into league against it. The putting away of the strange wives in Ezra's time, was not the work of one day or two, (Ezra 10. 13.) but a work of time; and therefore Ezra, when he had the people under convictions, and saw them weeping sore for their sin in marrying them, very prudently bound them by a solemn covenant, that they would put them away, v. 3. If ever we conceive an aversion to sin, surely it is at the table of the Lord; and, therefore, we should improve that opportunity to invigorate our resolutions against it, that the remembrance of those resolutions may quicken our resistance of it, when the sensible impressions we are under from it are become less lively. Thus, we must, by a solemn vow, cast away

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away from us all our transgressions, saying with Ephraim, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Hos. 14. 8.

1. We must solemnly vow, that we will not indulge, or allow ourselves in any sin: though sin may remain, it shall not reign; though those Canaanites be in the land, yet we will not be tributaries to them. However it may usurp, and oppress as a tyrant, it shall never be owned as a rightful prince, nor have a peaceable and undisturbed dominion. I may be, in some particular instances, through the surprise of temptations, led into captivity by it; but I am fully resolved, in the strength of Christ, that I will never join in affinity with it, will never espouse its cause, never plead for it, nor strike in with its interests.

Bind thyself with this bond, O my soul, that though, through the remainders of corruption, thou canst not say, *Thou hast no sin*, yet, through the beginnings of grace, thou wilt be able to say, *Thou lovest none*. That thou wilt give no countenance or connivance to any sin, no, not to secret sins, which, though they shame thee not before men, yet shame thee before GOD and thine own conscience; no, not to heart-sins, those first-born of corrupt nature, the beginning of its strength. Vain thoughts may intrude, and force a lodging in me; but I will never invite them, never bid them welcome, nor court their stay. Corrupt affections may disturb me; but they shall never have the quiet and peaceable possession of me. No; whatever wars against my soul, by the grace of God, I will war against it, hoping in due time to get the dominion, and have its yoke broken from off my neck, when judgment shall be brought forth unto victory, and grace perfected in glory.

2. We must solemnly vow, that we will never yield to any gross sin, such as lying, injustice, uncleanness, drunkenness, profanation of God's name, and such like, which are not the spots of God's children. Though all the high places be not taken away, yet there shall be no remains of Baal, or of Baal's priests and altars in my soul. However my own heart may be spotted by sins of infirmity, and may need to be daily washed, yet, by the grace of God, I will never spot my profession, nor stain the credit of that by open and scandalous sin. I have no reason to be ashamed of the gospel, and therefore it shall be my constant endeavour, not to be in any thing a shame to the gospel. It is an honour to me; I will never be a dishonour to it: I will never do any thing, by the grace of God I will not, which may give just occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme that worthy name by which I am called. So shall it appear that I am upright, if I be innocent from these great transgressions, and truly penitent for all my transgressions, Ps. 19. 13.

3. We must solemnly vow, that with a particular care we will keep ourselves from our own iniquity. That sin, which, in our penitent reflections, our own consciences did most charge us with, and reproach us for; that sin, we must, in a special manner, renew our resolutions against. Was it pride? Was it passion? Was it distrust of God, or love of the world? Was it an unclean fancy, or an idle tongue? Whatever it was, let the spiritual forces be mustered, and drawn out against it. The instructions which Samuel gave to Israel, when they were lamenting after the Lord, are observable to this purpose; (1 Sam. 7. 3.) *If ye do return to the Lord with all your hearts*, and would be accepted of him therein, *then put away the strange Gods, and Ashtaroth*. Was not Ashtaroth one of the strange Gods or Goddesses? Yes; but that is particularly mentioned, because, it had been a beloved idol, dearer than the rest, that especially must be put away. Thus in our covenanting with God, we must engage against all sin, but in particular against that which, by reason of the temper of our minds, the constitution of our bodies, or the circumstances of our outward affairs, does most easily beset us, and we are most prone to.

Know thou thine own self, O my soul? If thou dost, thou knowest thine own sickness, and thine own sore; that is, thine own iniquity. Bring that hither, and slay it: let not thine eye spare, neither do thou pity it: hide it not, excuse it not; ask not for leave to reserve it, as Naaman did for his house of Rimmon: though it have been to thee as a right eye, as a right hand, as thy guide, and thine acquaintance; it has been a false guide, an ill acquaintance; pluck it out, cut it off, and cast it from thee. Now come, and fortify thy resolutions in the strength of Christ against that; double thy guard against that; fetch in help from heaven against that; be vigorous in thy resistance of that; and how many soever its advantages are against thee, yet despair not of victory at last.

4. We must solemnly vow, that we will abstain from all appearance of evil: not, only, from that which is manifestly sin, and which carries the evidences of its own malignity written in its forehead, but, from that which looks like sin, and borders upon it. Wisdom is here profitable to direct, so as that we may not, on the one hand, indulge a scrupulous conscience, and, yet, on the other hand, may preserve a tender conscience. Far be it from us to make that to be sin, which God has not made so: and, yet, in doubtful cases, it must be our care and covenant to keep the safer side, and to be cautious of that which looks suspicious: *He that walks uprightly, walks surely*. That which we have found to be either a snare to us, and an occasion of sin, or a blemish to us, and an occasion of scandal, or a terror to us in the reflection, and an occasion of grief and fear, it may do well expressly to resolve against, though we be not very sure that it is in itself sinful, nor dare censure it as evil in others; provided this vow be made with such limitations, that it may not afterwards prove an entanglement to us, when either by the improvement of our knowledge, or the change of our circumstances, it ceases to have in it an appearance of evil.

And art thou willing, my soul, to come under this bond? Wilt thou put far from thee the accursed thing? Wilt thou, in this ordinance, make a covenant with thine eyes, and oblige them not to look on the wine when

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when it is red, not to look on a woman to lust after her? Wilt thou shun sin as the plague, and engage thyself, not only never to embrace that adulteress, but, never to come nigh the door of her house? Pro. 5. 8. Thy vow being like that of the Nazarite, not to drink of this intoxicating wine; let it be then like his, not to eat any thing that comes of the vine, *from the kernel to the husk*, Num. 6. 3, 4. Abandon sin, and all its appurtenances; cast out Tobiah, and all his stuff: resolve to deny thyself in that which is most desirable, rather than give Satan any advantage; to abridge thyself even in that which is lawful, rather than come within the confines of sin, or bring thyself into danger of that which is unlawful. *Happy is the man that feareth always.*

5. We must solemnly vow, that we will have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, neither be partakers of other men's sins, Eph. 5. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 22. We live in a corrupt and degenerate age, wherein iniquity greatly abounds: our business, indeed, is not to judge others; to their own master they stand or fall; but our care must be to preserve ourselves, and the purity and peace of our own minds. Our covenant therefore must be, that we will never *walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners*, Ps. 1. 1. When David engaged himself to keep the commandments of his God, pursuant to that engagement, he said to evil-doers, *Depart from me*, (Ps. 119. 115.) and St. Peter reminded his new converts of the necessity of this care, (Acts 2. 40.) *Save yourselves from this untoward generation.*

Let the Psalmist's vow be mine then, (Ps. 26. 5.) having hated the congregation of evil doers, (such as drunkards, swearers, filthy-talkers, and scoffers at godliness,) *I will not sit with the wicked.* Though I cannot avoid being sometimes in the sight and hearing of such, yet, I will never take those for my chosen companions and bosom friends in this world, with whom I should dread to have my portion in the other world. Religion in rags shall be always valued by me, and profaneness in robes despised. Having chosen God for my God, his people shall always be my people; *Lord, gather not my soul with sinners.* If thou art in good earnest for heaven, resolve to swim against the stream, and thou wilt find, that sober singularity is an excellent guard to serious piety. On all that glory let there be this defence.

II. We must here by a solemn vow bind ourselves up to all duty. It is not enough that we depart from evil, but we must do good: it is not enough that we separate ourselves from the service of sin, and shake off Satan's iron yoke, but we must devote ourselves to the service of Christ, and put our necks under the sweet and easy yoke of God's commandments, with a solemn promise faithfully to draw in that yoke all our days. We need not bind ourselves to more than we are already bound to by the divine law, either expressly or by consequence, either as primary duties, or secondary, in order to them. We are not called to lay upon ourselves any other burthen than necessary things; and they are not heavy burthens, nor grievous to be borne; but we must bind ourselves faster, and by additional ties to that which we are already bound to.

1. We must, by a solemn vow, oblige ourselves to all the duties of religion in general. Jacob's vow must be ours, (Gen. 28. 21.) *Then the Lord shall be my God:* having avouched him for mine, I will fear him, and love him, delight in him, and depend upon him, worship him, and glorify him as my Lord and my God. Having owned him as mine, I will ever eye him as mine, and walk in his name, Micah 4. 5. David's vow must be ours, that we will *keep God's righteous judgments*, Ps. 119. 106. that we will keep in them, as our way; keep to them, as our rule; that we will keep them as the apple of our eye, keep them always unto the end.

In the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, we must here solemnly promise and vow,

(1.) That we will make religion our business. It is our great business in this world, to serve the honour of him that made us, and secure the happiness we were made for: this we must mind as our business, and not (as most do) make a by-business of it. Religion must be our calling, the calling we resolve to live in, and hope to live by: in the services of it, we must be constant and diligent, and as in our element. Other things must give way to it, and be made (as much as may be) serviceable to it.—And this must be our covenant with God here, that however we have trifled hitherto, henceforward we will mind religion, as *The one thing needful*, and not be slothful in the business of it, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. And art thou willing, my soul, thus to devote thyself entirely to the service of thy God? Shall that engage thy cares, fill thy thoughts, command thy time, and give law to the whole man? Let this matter be settled then in this day's vows, and resolve to live and die by it.

(2.) That we will make conscience of inside godliness. Having in our covenant given God our hearts, which is what he demands, we must resolve to employ them for him; for, without doubt, he is a jew, he is a christian, that is one inwardly; *and that is circumcision*, that is baptism, that is true and pure religion, which is of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, Rom. 2. 29. That we are really, what we are inwardly; and they only are the true worshippers, who worship God in the spirit: this is the power of godliness, without which the *form* is but a carcase, but a shadow. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within.* This therefore we must resolve, in the strength of the grace of God, that we will keep our hearts with all diligence; keep them fixed, fixed upon God; that the desire of our souls shall be ever toward God; that our hearts shall be lifted up to God in every prayer, and their doors and gates thrown open to admit his word; and that our constant care shall be about the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; so approving ourselves to God in our integrity, in every thing we do in religion.

(3.) That we will live a life in communion with God. Without

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Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness: if there be a heaven upon earth, certainly this is it, by faith to set the Lord always before us, having an eye to him with suitable affections, as the first cause and last end of all things that concern us: and, so, having communion with him in providences as well as ordinances, when we receive the common comforts of every day from his hand with love and thankfulness, and bear the common crosses and disappointments of every day, as ordered by his will, with patience and submission; when we commit every day's care to him, and manage every day's business and converse for him; having a constant habitual regard to God in the settled principles of the divine life, and frequent actual outgoings of soul toward him in pious ejaculations, the genuine expressions of devout affections; then we live a life of communion with God. Did we know by experience what it is to live such a life as this, we would not exchange the pleasures of it for the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces.

Engage thyself then, my soul, elevate thyself to this spiritual and divine life, that every day may thus be with thee a communion-day, and thy constant fellowship may be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ by the Spirit. Let me resolve henceforward to live (more than hitherto I have done) a life of complacency in God, in his beauty, bounty, and benignity; a life of dependance upon God, upon his power, providence, and promise; a life of devotedness to God, to the command of his word, the conduct of his Spirit, and the disposal of his Providence; and thus to walk with God in all holy conversation.

(4.) That we will keep heaven in our eye, and take up with nothing short of it. We are made for another world, and we must resolve to set our hearts upon that world, and have it always in our eye; seeking the things that are above, and slighting things below, in comparison with them; as those who are born from heaven, and bound to heaven. Bind thyself, my soul, with this bond, that *forgetting the things which are behind,* as one that hath *not yet attained, neither is already perfect,* thou wilt *reach forth to those things that are before; pressing forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling,* Phil. 3. 13, 14. "My treasure is in heaven; my head, and hope, and home are there; I shall never be well, till I am there: there, therefore, shall my heart be; and to that recompence of reward I will ever have respect; with an eye to that joy and glory set before me in the other world, I will, by the Grace of God, patiently run the race of godliness set before me in this world, Heb. 12. 1, 2.

2. We must, by a solemn vow, bind ourselves to some duties of religion in particular. As it is good to engage ourselves by covenant against particular sins, that by the help of resolution our resistance of them may be invigorated; so it is good to engage ourselves to particular duties, that thereby we may be quickened closely and diligently to apply ourselves to them, and may see our work before us.

(1.) We should particularly bind ourselves to those duties, which our own consciences have charged us with the neglect of. We have known that good which our own hearts tell us we have not done; we find upon reflection, it may be, that we have not been constant in our secret devotion, that we have not done that good in our families which we should have done; we have been barren in good discourse, careless of our duty to the souls of others, backward to the works of charity, unfurnished for, and indisposed to religious exercises: in these or other things wherein we are conscious to ourselves that we have been defective, we must covenant for the future to be more circumspect and industrious, that our works may be found filled up before God. When the Jews in Nehemiah's time made a sure covenant, wrote it, and sealed to it, they inserted particular articles relating to those branches of God's service which had been neglected, and made ordinances for themselves, according to the ordinances that God had given them, (Neh. 10. 32.) so should we do, as an evidence of the sincerity of our repentance for our former omissions, both of duty, and in duty: that work of our Lord wherein we have been most wanting, in that we must covenant to abound most, that thereby we may redeem the time.

(2.) We should particularly bind ourselves to those duties which we have found by experience to contribute most to the support and advancement of the life and power of godliness in our hearts. They who have carefully observed themselves, perhaps, can tell what those religious exercises are, which they have found to be most serviceable to the prosperity of their souls, and by which they have reaped most spiritual benefit and advantage. Have our hearts been most enlarged in secret devotion? Has God sometimes met us in our closets with special comforts, and the unusal manifestations of himself to our souls? Let us thence take an indication and covenant to be more and longer alone in secret communion with God. Have public ordinances been to us as green pastures, and have we sat down by them with delight? Let us resolve to be so much the more diligent in our attendance on them, and wait more closely at those gates where we have so often been abundantly satisfied. Though one duty must never be allowed to intrench upon another, yet those duties which we have found to be the most effectual means of increasing our acquaintance with God, confirming our faith in Christ, and furthering us in our way to heaven, we should, with a peculiar care, engage ourselves to.

Though God has strictly commanded us the great and necessary acts of religious worship, yet, for the trial of our holy ingenuity and zeal, he has left it to us to determine many of the circumstances, that, even, instituted sacrifices may be in some respects free-will offerings. He has commanded us to pray, and read the Scriptures, but has not told us just how often and how long we must pray and read; here, therefore, it is proper for us to bind ourselves to that which will best answer the intention of the command in general, best agree with the circumstances we are in, and best advance the interests of our souls: in which we must take heed, on the one hand, that we indulge not spiritual sloth, by contenting ourselves with the least proportions

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of time that may be, much less by confining ourselves to them; and, on the other hand, that we make not religious exercises a task and burthen to ourselves, by binding ourselves to that at all times, which in an extraordinary fervour of devotion is easy and little enough. In making resolutions of this kind, we ought to be cautious, and not hasty to utter any thing before God, that we may not afterward say before the angel, *It was an error*, Ecc. 5. 2, 6. Though such is the decay of christian zeal in the age we live in, that few need this caution, yet, it must be inserted, because, it is a snare to a man to devour that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.

(3.) We should particularly bind ourselves to those duties, by which we have opportunity of glorifying God, adorning our profession, and doing good in our places. We are not born for ourselves, nor bought for ourselves; we were born for God, and bought for Christ; and both as men, and as christians, we are members one of another, and ought to sit down and consider, how we may trade with the talent we are entrusted with, though it be but one, to the glory of our Creator, the honour of our Redeemer, and the good of our brethren. The liberal, and pious, devise liberal things, and pious things, and bind themselves to them, Think then, my soul, not only what must I do, but what may I do for God, who has done such great things for me? How may I be serviceable to the interests of God's kingdom among men? What can I do to promote the strength and beauty of the church, and the welfare of precious souls? And, if we have thought of any thing of this kind that falls within the sphere of our activity, (though but a low and narrow sphere) it may do well, when we find ourselves in a good frame at the Table of the Lord, by a solemn vow, with due caution, to bind ourselves to it, that we may not leave room for a treacherous heart to start back. Thus Jacob, for the perpetuating of the memory of God's favour to him, made it a part of his vow, (Gen. 28. 22.) *This stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house.* Thus Hannah vowed, that if God would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord, 1 Sam. 1. 11. It is one of the rules prescribed, concerning cost or pains bestowed for pious and charitable uses, (2 Cor. 9. 7.) *Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give;* so let him do. Now, lest that purpose should fail and come to nothing, it is good, when the matter of it is well digested, to bring it to a head in a solemn promise, that the tempter seeing us stedfastly resolved, may cease soliciting us to alter our purpose.

(4.) We should particularly bind ourselves to the duties of our respective callings and relations. Much christian obedience lies in these instances; and in them we are specially called to serve God and our generation, and should therefore bind ourselves to do so.

They who are in places of public trust and power, should here bind themselves by a solemn vow to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and to use their power for the public good. They who rule over men, must here covenant that they will be just, ruling in the fear of God. Their oaths must here be ratified, and David's promise must be their's, (Ps. 75. 2.) *When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly.* This ought to be seriously considered by all those, who receive this holy sacrament at their admission into the magistracy. When publicans and soldiers submitted to the baptism of John, and thereby bound themselves to live a holy life; they asked and received of John instructions, how to discharge the duty of their respective employments, Luke 3. 12, 13, 14. For, when we vow to keep God's commandments, though we must have a universal respect to them all, yet, we must have a special regard to those precepts which relate to the calling wherein we are called, whatever it is.

The stewards of the mysteries of God, when they administer this ordinance to others, receive it themselves, as an obligation upon them to stir up the gift that is in them, that they may make full proof of their ministry. Their ordination-vows are repeated, and confirmed in every sacrament; and they are again sworn to be true to Christ and souls. He who ministers about holy things, must here bind himself to *wait on his ministering; he that teacheth, on teaching; and he that exhorteth, on exhortation,* Rom. 12. 7, 8.

Governors of families must here oblige themselves as David did, to walk before their houses in a perfect way, with a perfect heart; and must affix this seal to Joshua's resolution, that whatever others do, *They and their house will serve the Lord,* Ps. 101. 2. Josh. 24. 15. Here they must consecrate to God a church in their house, and bind themselves to set up, and always to keep up, both an altar and a throne for God in their habitation, that they may approve themselves the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham, who was famous for family-religion. It is with this intent, I suppose, that the Rubric of the public establishment declares it convenient, "That new-married persons should receive the holy communion at the time of their marriage, or at the first opportunity after their marriage;" that being engaged to each other in a new relation, they may solemnly engage themselves to discharge the duties of that relation in the fear of God.

And inferiors must here oblige themselves to do the duty they owe their superiors; children to be dutiful to their parents, servants to be obedient to their masters; yea, all of us to be subject one to another. They who are under the yoke, (as the Apostle speaks, 1 Tim. 6. 1.) may here make the yoke they are under easy to them, by constraining themselves to draw in it, from a principle of duty to God, and gratitude to Christ, which will both sanctify and sweeten the hardest services and submissions.

Whatever our employments are, and our dealings with men, we must here promise and vow, that we will be strictly just and honest in them; that whatever temptations we may be under to the contrary at any time, we will make conscience of rendering to all their due, and of speaking the truth from their heart; that we will walk uprightly, and work righteousness, despise the gain of oppression, and shake our hands from holding of bribes, knowing that they who do so shall *dwell on high, their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks, bread*

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bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure, Isa. 33. 15, 16. We find it upon record, to the honour of Christ's holy religion, when it was first planted in the world, that Pliny, a heathen magistrate, and a persecutor of christianity, giving an account to the Emperor Trajan of what he had discovered concerning the christians (in an epistle yet extant) acknowledges, That in their religious assemblies they bound themselves by a sacrament (it is the very word he uses) *Non in scelus aliquod, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent; ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent.* That is, they bound themselves *not to do any ill thing, that they would not rob or steal, or commit adultery; that they would never be false to any trust reposed in them, never deny any thing that was put into their hands to keep,* and the like. The same is still the true intent and meaning of this service; it is the bond of a covenant added to the bond of command, that *We do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.*

Come then, my soul, come under these bonds; come willingly and cheerfully under them; he that bears an honest mind, does not startle at assurances; be not afraid to promise that which thou art already bound to do; for these vows will rather facilitate thy duty, than add to the difficulty of it; the faster thou findest thyself fixed to that which is good, the less there will be of uneasy hesitation and wavering concerning it, and the less danger of being tempted from it.

Only remember, that all these vows must be made with an entire dependance on the strength and grace of Jesus Christ, to enable us to make them good. We have a great deal of reason to distrust ourselves, so weak and treacherous are our hearts: Peter betrayed himself by confiding in himself when he said, *Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee:* but we have encouragement enough to trust in Christ; in his name, therefore, let us make our vows, in his grace let us be strong; surely in the Lord alone have we righteousness and strength: he is the surety of the covenant for both parties; into his custody, therefore, and under the protection of his grace, let us put our souls, and we shall find he is able to keep what we commit to him.

CHAP. XII.

Directions concerning the Frame of our Spirits, when we come away from this Ordinance.

THEY who have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ at the Table of the Lord, whose hearts are enlarged to send forth the workings of pious and devout affections toward God, and to take in the communications of divine light, life, and love from him, cannot but say as Peter did upon the holy mount, *Lord, it is good for us to be here;* here *let us make tabernacles*; they sit down under the refreshing shadow of this ordinance with delight, and its fruit is sweet unto their taste: here they could dwell all the days of their life, beholding the beauty of the Lord, and inquiring in his temple: but it is not a continual feast; we must come down from this mountain; these sweet and precious minutes are soon numbered and finished; supper is ended, thanks is returned, the guests are dismissed with a blessing, the hymn is sung, and we go out to the Mount of Olives; even in this Jerusalem, the city of our solemnities, we have not a continuing city; Jacob has an opportunity of wrestling with the angel a while, but he must let him go, for the day breaks, and he has a family to look after, a journey to prosecute, and the affairs thereof call for his attendance, Gen. 32. 26. We must not be always at the Lord's Table; the high priest himself must not be always within the veil, he must go out again to the people when his service is performed: now it ought to be as much our care to return in a right manner from the ordinance, as to approach in a right manner to the ordinance. That caution is here needful, (2 John 8.) *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought,——which we have gained,*——so some read it. Have we in this ordinance wrought any thing, or gained any thing that is good? We are concerned to see to it, that we do not undo what we have wrought, and let slip what we have gained. When the solemnity is done, our work is not done, still we must be pressing forward in our duty. This, perhaps, is the mystery of that law in Ezekiel's temple-service, (Ezek. 46. 9.) that they should not return from worshipping before the Lord in the solemn feasts through the same gate by which they entered in, but by that over against it. Forgetting those things which are behind, still we must reach forth to those things which are before.

Let us inquire, then, what is to be done at our coming away from the ordinance, for the preserving and improving the impressions of it.

I. We should come from this ordinance admiring the condescension of the divine grace to us. Great are the honours which have here been done us, and the favours which here we have been admitted to: the God who made us has taken us into covenant and communion with himself; the King of Kings has entertained us at his table, and there we have been feasted with the dainties of heaven, abundantly satisfied with the goodness of his house: exceeding great and precious promises have here been sealed to us, and earnests given us of the eternal inheritance: now, if we know ourselves, this cannot but be the matter of our wonder, our joyful and yet awful wonder.

1. Considering our meanness by nature, we have reason to wonder that the Great God should thus advance us; higher than heaven is above the earth, is God above us. Between heaven and earth there is, though a vast, yet, only a finite distance, but between GOD and Man there is an infinite disproportion. *What is Man?* (*man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm*) that he should be thus visited and regarded, thus dignified and preferred? That favour done to Israel sounds great, (Ps. 78. 25.) *Man did eat angels' food;* but here man is feasted with that which was never angels' food, the flesh and blood of the Son of

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of Man, which gives life to the world. Solomon himself stood amazed at God's condescending to take possession of that magnificent temple he had built, (2 Chro. 6. 18.) *But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?* And, which is more, shall men on the earth dwell in God, and make the *Most High their habitation?* If great men look with respect upon those who are much their inferiors, it is because they expect to receive honour and advantage by them; but *can a man be profitable unto God?* No, he cannot: our goodness extendeth not unto him; he was from eternity happy without us, and would have been so to eternity, if we had never been, or had been miserable; but we are undone, undone for ever, if his goodness extend not to us: he needs not our services, but we need his favours: men adopt others because they are childless, but God adopts us purely because we are fatherless. It was no excellency in us that recommended us to his love, but poverty and misery made us the proper objects of his pity.

Come then, my soul, and compose thyself as King David did, when, having received a gracious message from heaven, assuring him of God's kind intentions to him and his family, he went in, and with a great fixedness of mind sat before the Lord, and say as he said, *Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* That I should be so kindly invited to the table of the Lord, and so splendidly treated there? That one so mean and worthless as I am, the poorest dung-hill-worm that ever called God Father, should be placed among the children, and fed with the children's bread; and yet, as if this were a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, thou hast spoken also concerning thy servant for a great while to come, even as far as eternity itself reaches; and thus thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, though I am nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity: *And is this the manner of men, O Lord God?* Could men expect to be thus favoured? No, but thou givest to men not according to their poverty, but according to thy riches in glory. Do great men use to condescend thus? No, it is usual with them to shew their dignity, and to oblige their inferiors to keep their distance: but we have to do with one that is GOD, and not man, whose thoughts of love are as much above our's, as his thoughts of wisdom are; and therefore, as it follows there, *What can David say more unto thee?* What account can I give of this unaccountable favour? It is *for thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart,* for the performance of thy purposes and promises, that *thou hast done all these great things,* to *make thy servant know them,* 2 Sam. 7. 18, 21. 1 Chro. 17. 16, &c.

2. Considering our vileness by sin, we have yet more reason to wonder that the Holy God should thus favour us. We are not only worms of the earth, below his cognizance, but a generation of vipers, obnoxious to his curse; not only unworthy of his love and favour, but worthy of his wrath and displeasure: how is it then that we are brought so near unto him, who deserved to have been sentenced to an eternal separation from him? He has said, *The foolish shall not stand in his sight,* Ps. 5. 5. Foolish we know we are, and yet we are called to sit at his table, being through Christ reconciled to him, and brought into covenant with him. Justice might have set us as criminals at his bar, but, behold, mercy sets us as children at his board, and it is a miracle of mercy, mercy that is the wonder of angels, and will be the eternal transport of glorified saints. See how much we owe to the Redeemer, by whom we have access into this grace.

Let me, therefore, set myself, and stir up myself, to admire it: I have much more reason to say than Mephibosheth had, when David took him to eat bread at his table continually, (2 Sam. 9. 8.) *What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?* I am less than the least of God's mercies, and, yet, he has not withheld the greatest from me; I have forfeited the comforts of my own table, and, yet, I am feasted with the comforts of the Lord's Table; I deserve to have had the cup of the Lord's indignation put into my hand, and to have drank the dregs of it, but, behold, I have been treated with the cup of salvation. Were ever traitors made favourites? Such traitors made such favourites? Who can sufficiently admire the love of the Redeemer, who received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious also upon their return to their allegiance, that the Lord God might dwell among them? Ps. 68. 18. And have I shared in these gifts notwithstanding my rebellions? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous. Whence is this to me, that not the mother of my Lord, but my Lord himself should come to me? That he should thus regard me, thus distinguish me with his favours? *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to me, and not unto the world?*

II. We should come from this Ordinance lamenting our own manifold defects and infirmities in our attendance upon God in it. When we look back upon the solemnity, we find that as we cannot speak well enough of God and of his grace, so we cannot speak ill enough of ourselves, and of the folly and treachery of our own hearts. Now, conscience, thou art charged in God's name to do thine office, and to accomplish a diligent search: review the workings of thy soul in this ordinance distinctly and impartially.

1. If upon search thou findest cause to suspect that all has been done in hypocrisy, then set thy soul a trembling, for its condition is sad, and highly dangerous. If I have been here pretending to join myself in a covenant with God, while I continue in league with the world and the flesh; pretending to receive the pardon of my sins, when I never repented of them, nor designed to forsake them; I have but deceived myself, and have reason to fear that I shall perish at last with a lie in my right hand. While this conviction is fresh and sensible, let care be taken to mend the matter, and blessed be God it may be mended. Have I reason to fear that my heart is not right in the sight of God, and that, therefore, I have no part or lot in the matter, but am in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity? I must then

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then take the advice which St. Peter gave to Simon Magus, when he perceived that to be his condition, after he had received the sacrament of baptism, (Acts 8. 21, 22, 23.) *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* Let that be done with a double care after the ordinance, which should have been done before.

2. But, if upon search thou findest that here has been, through grace, truth in the inward part; yet, set thy soul a blushing, for it has not been cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. *When we would do good, evil is present with us:* our wine is mixed with water, and our gold with dross; and who is there that doeth good, and sinneth not, even in his doing good? We find, by sad experience, that the sons of God never come together, but Satan comes among them, and stands at their right hand to resist them; and that wherever we go, we carry about with us the remainders of corruption, a body of death, which inclines us to that which is evil, and indisposes us to that which is good. If *the spirit be willing*, yet alas *the flesh is weak*, and *we cannot do the things that we would.*

O what reason have I to be ashamed of myself, and blush to lift up my face before God, when I review the frame of my heart during my attendance on this ordinance! How short have I come of doing my duty, according as the work of the day required! My thoughts should have been fixed; and the subjects presented to them to fix upon, were curious enough to engage them, and copious enough to employ them; and, yet, they went with the fool's eyes into the ends of the earth, and wandered after a thousand impertinences. A little thing served to give them a diversion from the contemplation of the great things set before me. My affections should have been raised and elevated, but they were low and flat, and little moved: if sometimes they seemed to soar upward, yet they soon sunk down again, and the things which remained were ready to die. My desires were cold and indifferent, my faith weak and inactive; nor were there any workings of soul in me proportionable to the weightiness of the transaction. Through my own dulness, and deadness, and inadvertency, I lost a deal of time out of a little, and slipt much of that which might have been done and got there, If I had been close and diligent.

This thought forbids us to entertain a good conceit of ourselves and our own performances, or to build any confidence upon our own merit. While we are conscious to ourselves of so much infirmity cleaving to our best services, we must acknowledge that boasting is for ever excluded: we have nothing to glory of before God; nor can we challenge a reward as of debt, but must ascribe all to free grace. What good there is in us, is all of God, and he must have the honour of it: but there is also much amiss, which is all of ourselves, and we must take the shame of it, lamenting those sad effects of the remainder of sin in us, which we feel to our loss when we draw nigh to God in holy ordinances.

This thought obliges us, likewise, to rely on Christ alone for acceptance with God in all our religious duties: he is that great and gracious high priest, *who bears the Iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow in their holy gifts,* that notwithstanding that iniquity, when it is repented of, the gifts *may be accepted before the Lord,* Exod. 28. 38. Of his righteousness, therefore, we must make mention, even of his only; for, the most spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God only through him, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

III. We should come from this ordinance rejoicing in Jesus Christ, and in that great love wherewith he has loved us. From this feast we should go to our tents, as the people went from Solomon's feast of dedication, *Joyful and glad in heart for all the goodness that the Lord hath done by David his servant, for Israel his people,* 1 Kings 8. 66. They that went forth weeping, must *come back rejoicing,* as they have cause, if they bring their sheaves with them, Ps. 126. 5, 6. Has God here lifted up the light of his countenance upon us? That should put gladness into our hearts, Ps. 4. 6, 7. Have we here lifted up our souls to God, and joined ourselves to him in an everlasting covenant? We have reason, with the baptized eunuch, to go on our way rejoicing, Acts 8. 39. The day of our espousals should be the day of the gladness of our hearts, Cant. 3. 11. This cup of blessing was designed to be a cup of consolation, and its wine ordained to make glad man's heart, to make glad the heart of the new man: having, therefore, drank of this cup, let our souls make their boast in the Lord, and sing in his ways, and call him their exceeding joy.

Let this holy joy give check to carnal mirth; for having seen so much reason to rejoice in Christ Jesus, we deceive ourselves, if we rejoice in a thing of nought: we are not forbidden to rejoice, but our joy must be turned into the right channel, and our mirth sanctified, which will suppress and silence the laughter that is made. The frothiness of a vain mind must be cured by a religious cheerfulness, as well as by a religious seriousness.

Let it give check also to the sorrow of the world, and that inordinate grief for outward crosses, which sinks the spirits, dries the bones, and works death. Why art thou cast down, and why disquieted for a light affliction, which is but for a moment, when even that is so far from doing thee any real prejudice, that it works for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory? Learn, my soul, to sit down upon the ruins of all thy creature comforts, by a withered fig-tree, a fruitless vine, and a blasted crop, and even then to sing to the praise and glory of God, as the God of thy salvation. When thou art full, enjoy God in all; when thou art empty, enjoy all in God.

Let this holy joy express itself in praises to God, and encouragements to ourselves.

1. Let it express itself in the thankful acknowledgment of the favours we have received from God. As spiritual joy must be the heart and soul of divine praise, so divine praise must be the breath and speech of spiritual joy. Whatever makes us joyful must make us thankful. Do we come from this ordinance easy,

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easy, pleasant, and greatly refreshed with the goodness of God's house? Let the high praises of God then be in our mouths, and in our hearts. This is a proper time for us to be engaged with great fixedness, and enlarged with great fluency in his service. If we must give thanks for the mercies we receive at our own table, which relate only to a perishing body, and a dying life, much more ought we to give thanks for the mercies we receive at God's table, which relate to an immortal soul, and eternal life. *When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee,* Deut. 8. 10. Bless him for a Canaan on earth, a land of light, a valley of vision, in which God is known, and his name great; and for the comfortable lot thou hast in that land, a name among God's people, and a nail in his holy place, a portion in Immanuel's land: bless him for a Canaan in heaven, which he has given thee the promise and prospect of, that land flowing with milk and honey. Rejoice in hope of that, and sing in hope.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let *all that is within thee,* all thy thoughts, and all thy powers, be employed in blessing his holy name; and all little enough. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, good to all, good to Israel, good to me. *I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us,* &c. Isa. 63. 7. Give glory to the exalted Redeemer, and mention to his praise the great things he has done for us. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to take the book, and open the seals; worthy to wear the crown, and sway the scepter, for ever worthy to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; worthy to be adored by the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; worthy to be attended with the constant praises of the universal church; worthy of the innermost and uppermost place of my heart; of the best affections I can consecrate to his praise, and the best services I can do to his name: for he was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, and has made us to our GOD Kings and Priests. He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; a note of praise, which the angels themselves cannot sing, though they have many a song that we are strangers to. He loved me, and gave himself for me, to satisfy for my sin, and to obtain eternal redemption for me. Blessed, and for ever blessed be the great and holy name of the Lord Jesus, that name which is as ointment poured forth, that name which is above every name: which is worthy of, and yet exalted far above all blessing and praise.

And whenever we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, let it always be done to the glory of God the Father, Phil. 2. 11. His kindness and love to man, was the original spring and first wheel in the work of our redemption: it was he that gave his only begotten Son, delivered him up for us all, and who was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; Glory therefore, eternal glory be unto God in the highest, for in Christ there is on earth peace, and good-will toward men. God has in Christ glorified himself, we must therefore in Christ glorify him, and make all our joys and praises to centre in him. In the day of our rejoicing this must be the burthen of all our songs, *Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.* Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift, the foundation of all other gifts.

2. Let this holy joy speak encouragement to ourselves, cheerfully to proceed in our christian course. The comfort we have had in our covenant relation to God, and interest in Christ, should put a sweetness into all our enjoyments, and sanctify them to us; we must see the love of God in them, and taste that he is gracious, and this must make them comforts indeed to us. See the curse removed from them, see a blessing going along with them, and then, *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works,* Ecc. 9. 7. Have we good ground to hope, that through grace our works are accepted of God? If we sincerely aim at God's acceptance, make that our end, and labour for it with an eye to Christ as Mediator, we may hope that our persons and performances are accepted. If we accept God's works, accept the disposals of his providence, and the offers of his grace with a humble acquiescence in both, that will be a good evidence that he accepts our works. And if so, we have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: eat thy bread with joy, for it is thy Father's gift, the bread wherewith the Lord thy God feeds thee in this wilderness, through which he is leading thee to the land of promise: drink thy wine with a merry heart, remembering Christ's love more than wine: what thou hast, though mean and scanty, thou hast it with the blessing of God, which will make the little thou hast, *better than the riches of many wicked,* Ps. 37. 16.

Rejoice in the Lord now, O my soul, rejoice in him always; having kept this feast with gladness (as Hezekiah and his people did, 2 Chro. 30. 23.) carry with thee some of the comforts of God's table to thy own, and there eat thy meat with gladness, as those primitive christians did, Acts 2. 46. Live a life of holy cheerfulness, and the joy of the Lord will be thy strength.

IV. We should come from this ordinance much quickened to every good work. Seeing ourselves compassed about here with so great a cloud of witnesses, bound by so many engagements, invited by so many encouragements, and obliged to God and godliness by so many ties of duty, interest, and gratitude, let us *lay aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets us,* whatever it is, especially the evil heart of unbelief, which is our great hindrance, and *let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus,* Heb. 12. 1, 2. Let the covenants we have here renewed, and the comforts we have here received, make us more ready to every good duty, and more lively in it; more active and zealous for the glory of God, the service of our generation, and the welfare and prosperity of our own souls. From what we have seen and done here, we may fetch powerful considerations

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tions to shame us out of our slothfulness and backwardness to that which is good, and to stir us up to the utmost diligence in our Master's work.

When Jacob had received a gracious visit from God, and had made a solemn vow to him, (Gen. 28. 12, 20.) it follows, (ch. 29. 1.) *Then Jacob went on his way.* The original phrase is observable, *Then Jacob lift up his feet.* After that comfortable night he had at Bethel, knowing himself to be in the way of his duty, he proceeded with a great deal of cheerfulness; that strengthened the weak hands, and confirmed the feeble knees. Thus should our communion with God in the Lord's Supper, enlarge our hearts to run the way of God's commandments: after such an ordinance, we should lift up our feet in the way of God; that is, (as it is said of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chro. 17. 6.) we should *lift up our hearts* in those ways; abiding, and *abounding in the works of the Lord.*

Rouse up thyself now, my soul, from thy spiritual slumber; up, and be doing, for the Lord is with thee. Awake, awake, put on thy strength, put forth thy strength, that thou mayest push on thy holy war, thy holy work, with vigour; shake thyself from the dust, to which thou hast too much cleaved; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, with which thou hast been too much clogged, Isa. 52. 1, 2. Meditate more fixedly, pray more earnestly, resist sin more resolutely, keep sabbaths more cheerfully, do good more readily. Thou hast *heard the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,* plain indications of the presence of God with thee, therefore now *thou shalt bestir thyself,* 2 Sam. 5. 24. Let the comforts of this ordinance employ thy wings, that thou mayest soar upward, upward toward God; let them oil thy wheels, that thou mayest press forward, forward toward heaven: let God's gifts to thee stir up his gifts in thee.

V. We should come from this ordinance with a watchful fear of Satan's wiles, and a firm resolution to stand our ground against them. Whatever comfort and enlargement we have had in this ordinance, still we must remember that we are but girding on the harness, and, therefore, we have no reason to boast, or be secure, as though we had put it off. When we return to the world again, we must remember that we go among snares, and must provide accordingly: it is our wisdom so to do.

1. Let us therefore fear. He who travels with a rich treasure about him, is in most danger of being set upon, and is most afraid of being robbed. The ship that is richly laden is the pirate's prize. If we come away from the Lord's Table replenished with the goodness of God's house, and the riches of the covenant, we must expect the assaults of our spiritual enemies, and not be secure. A strong guard was constantly kept upon the temple, and there needs one upon the living temples. The mystical song represents the bed which is Solomon's, thus surrounded by valiant men, of the valiant of Israel, because of fear in the night, Cant. 3. 7, 8. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that believers in this world are in a military state, and the followers of Christ must be his soldiers. They that work the good work of faith, must fight the good fight of faith.

We must always stand upon our guard, for the good man of the house knows not at what hour the thief will come; but this we know, that immediately after our Saviour was baptized, and owned by a voice from heaven, he was led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil, (Mat. 4. 1.) and that immediately after he had administered the Lord's Supper to his disciples, he told them plainly, *Satan hath desired to have you,* (ἐξῃτήσατο ὑμᾶς—*he hath challenged you*) *that he may sift you as wheat,* (Luke 22. 31.) and what he said to them then, he says to all, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,* Mat. 26. 41. We must then double our guard against temptations to rash anger, and study to be more than ordinarily meek and quiet, lest by the tumults and transports of passion, the Holy Spirit be grieved and provoked to withdraw. If we have in this ordinance received Christ Jesus the Lord, let a strict charge be given, like that of the spouse, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that nothing be said, nothing done to stir up or awake our love until he please, Cant. 2. 7. Peace being spoken, peace made, let us be afraid of every thing that may give a disturbance to it. We should also watch against the inroads of worldly cares and fears, lest they make a descent upon us after a sacrament, and spoil us of the comforts we have there received.

But with a particular care we must watch against the workings of spiritual pride after a sacrament. When our Lord Jesus first instituted this ordinance, and made his disciples partakers of it, they were so elevated with the honour of it, that not content to be all thus great, a contest immediately arose among them, which of them should be greatest, Luke 22. 24. And when St. Paul had been in the third heavens, he was in danger of being *exalted above measure with the abundance of the revelations,* 2 Cor. 12. 7. We therefore have cause to fear, lest this dead fly spoil all our precious ointment, and to keep a very strict and jealous eye upon our own hearts, that they be not *lifted up with pride, lest we fall into the condemnation of the Devil,* 1 Tim. 3. 6. Let us dread the first risings of self-conceit, and suppress them; for *what have we that we have not received? And if we have received it, why then do we boast?* 1 Cor. 4. 7.

2. Let us therefore fix; and let our hearts be established with the grace here received. What we have done in this ordinance, we must go away firmly resolved to abide by all our days. I am now fixed, immovably fixed for Christ and holiness, against Sin and Satan. The matter is settled, never to be called in question again: *I will serve the Lord.* The bargain is struck; the knot is tied; the debate is come up to a final resolve; and here I fix, as one stedfastly resolved, with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord. No room is left to parley with a temptation: I am a christian, a confirmed christian, and, by the grace of God, a christian I will live and die; and, therefore, *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me.* My re-

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solutions, in which before I wavered and was unsteady, are now come to a head, and are as a nail in a sure place. I am now at a point; *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back,* (Judg. 11. 35.) and, therefore, by the grace of God, I am determined to go forward, and not so much as look back, or wish for a discharge from those engagements. *I have chosen the way of truth,* and, therefore, in thy strength, Lord, *I will stick to thy testimonies,* Ps. 119. 30, 31. Now my foot stands in an even place, well shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. I am now like a strong man refreshed with wine, resolved to resist the Devil, that he may flee from me, and never to yield to him.

VI. We should come from this ordinance praying, lifting up our hearts to God in ejaculatory prayers, and retiring as soon as may be for solemn prayer. Not only before, and in the duty, but after, if we have occasion to offer up our desires to God, and fetch in strength and grace from him.

Two things we should be humbly earnest with God in prayer for, after this solemnity; and we are furnished from the mouth of holy David with very emphatical and expressive petitions for them both: We may, therefore, take with us those words, in addressing God.

1. We must pray, that God will fulfil to us those promises, which he was graciously pleased to seal to us in this ordinance. David's prayer for this is, (1 Chron. 17. 23.) *Now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever; and do as thou hast said.* God's promises in the word are designed to be our pleas in prayer; and we receive the grace of God in them in vain, if we do not make that use of them, and sue out the benefits conveyed and secured by them. These are talents to be traded with, and improved as the guide of our desires, and the ground of our faith in prayer; and we must not hide them in a napkin. Having here taken hold of the covenant, thus we must take hold on God for covenant-mercies: *Lord, remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope,* Ps. 119. 49. Thou hast not only given me the word to hope in, but the heart to hope in it: It is a hope of thy own raising; and thou wilt not destroy, by a disappointment, the work of thine own hands.

Come, therefore, O my soul; Come, *Order thy cause before him, and fill thy mouth with arguments.* Lord, is not this the word which thou hast spoken? "Sin shall not have dominion over you: The God of peace shall tread satan under your feet: There shall no temptation take you, but such as is common to men; and the faithful God will never suffer you to be tempted above what you are able." Lord, be it unto thy servant according to these words! Is not this the word which thou hast spoken; "That all things shall work for good to them that love thee; that thou wilt be to them a God all-sufficient, their shield, and their exceeding great reward; that thou wilt give them grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that thou wilt never fail them, nor forsake them?" Now, Lord, let those words which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant (and many other the like) be established for ever, and do as thou hast said, for they are the words upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

2. We must pray, that he will enable us to fulfil those promises which we have made to him in this ordinance. David's prayer for this is, (1 Chro. 29. 18.) *O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel our Fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare* (or confirm) *their hearts unto thee.* Have there been some good affections, good desires, and good resolutions in the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts at this ordinance, some good impressions made upon us, and some good expressions drawn from us by it? We cannot but be sensible how apt we are to lose the good we have wrought; and therefore it is our wisdom, by prayer, to commit the keeping of it to God, and earnestly to beg of him effectual grace thoroughly to finish us for every good word and work, and thoroughly to fortify us against every evil word and work. We made our promises in the strength of the grace of God; that strength we must therefore pray for, that we may be able to make good our promises. Lord, maintain thine own interest in my soul; let thy name be ever hallowed there, *Thy kingdom come,* and *thy will be done in* my heart, *as it is* done *in heaven.*

When we come away from this ordinance, we return to a cooling, tempting, distracting world; as when Moses came down from the mount, where he had been with God, he found the camp of Israel dancing about the golden calf, to his great disturbance, Exod. 32. 19. In the midst of such sorrows, and such snares as we are compassed about with here, we shall find it no easy matter to preserve the peace and grace which we hope we have obtained at the Lord's table; we must, therefore, put ourselves under the divine protection. Methinks it was with an affecting air of tenderness, that Christ said concerning his disciples, when he was leaving them, (John 17. 11.) *Now I am no more in the world;* the days of my temptation are at an end; but these are in the world, they have their trial yet before them: What then shall I do for them? *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* That prayer of his was both the great example, and the great encouragement of our prayers. Now, at the close of a sacrament, it is seasonable thus to address ourselves to God: "I have not yet put off this body; I am not yet got clear of this world: yet, I am a traveller, exposed to thieves; yet, I am a soldier, exposed to enemies: Holy Father, keep through thine own name the graces and comforts thou hast given me; for they are thine. Mine own hands are not sufficient for me; O let thy grace be so, to preserve me to thy heavenly kingdom."

Immediately after the first administration of the Lord's Supper, our Saviour, when he had told Peter of Satan's design upon him, added this comfortable word, (Luke 22. 32.) *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;* and that is it that we must pray for, that this faith, which we think is so strong in the day of its advantage, may

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may not prove weak in the day of its trial: for, as they who would have the benefit of the spirit's operation must strive for themselves, so, they that would have the benefit of the Son's intercession must pray for themselves.

VII. We should come from this ordinance with a charitable disposition. Anciently the christians had their Ἀγάπαι, their *love-feasts*, or *feasts of charity*, annexed to the Eucharist; but what needed that, while the Eucharist is itself a love-feast, and a feast of charity? And surely that heart must be strangely hardened and soured, that can go from under the softening sweetening powers of this ordinance in an uncharitable frame.

The fervent charity, which now we should have among ourselves, must be a loving, giving, and forgiving charity. Thus it must have its perfect work.

1. We must come from this ordinance with a disposition to love our fellow-christians. Here we see how dear they were to Christ, for he purchased them with his own blood; and thence we may infer, how dear they ought to be to us, and how near they should lie to our hearts. Shall I look strangely upon them who have acquaintance with Christ; or be indifferent toward them whom he was so much concerned for? No; we that are many, being one bread and one body, and having been all made to drink into one spirit, my heart shall be more closely knit than ever to all the members of that one body, who are quickened and actuated by that one spirit. I have here beheld the beauty of the Lord, and, therefore, must love his image wherever I see it on his sanctified ones. I have here joined myself to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and thereby have joined myself in relation, and consequently in affection, to all those who are in the bond of the same covenant. I have here bound myself to keep Christ's commandments; and this is his commandment, that we *love one another*; and that *brotherly love continue*.

Those from whom we differ in the less weighty matters of the law, though we agree in the great things of God, we should now think of with particular thoughts of love and kindness, because from them our minds are most in temptation to be alienated: and those to whom we have given the right hand of fellowship, in this and in other ordinances, we should likewise be mindful of with particular endearments; because of the particular relation we stand in to them, as our more intimate companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Yea, after such an ordinance as this, our catholic charity must be more warm and affectionate, more active, strong, and stedfast, and more victorious over the difficulties and oppositions it meets with; and, as the apostle speaks, (1 Thess. 3. 12.) we should *increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men*; and in all the fruits and instances of that love.

2. We must come from this ordinance, with a disposition to give to the poor and necessitous, according as our ability and opportunity is. It is the laudable custom of the churches of Christ, to close the administration of this ordinance with a collection for the poor; to which we ought to contribute our share, not grudgingly, or of necessity, but with a single eye, and a willing mind, that our alms may be sanctified and accepted of God. And not only to this, but to all other acts of charity, we must be more forward and free after a sacrament. Though our Saviour lived upon alms himself, yet out of the little he had he gave alms to the poor, particularly at the feast of the passover, (John 13. 29.) to set us an example. Days of rejoicing and thanksgiving (and such our sacrament days are) used to be thus solemnized: for when we eat the fat, and drink the sweet ourselves, we must send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, (Neh. 8. 10.) that when our souls are blessing God, the loins of the poor may bless us. If our hearts have here been opened to Christ, we must evidence that they are so, by our being open-handed to poor christians: for, since our goodness cannot extend to him, it is his will that it should extend to them. Ps. 16. 2. 3. If we have here in sincerity given ourselves to God, we have with ourselves devoted all we have to his service and honour, to be employed and laid out for him; and thus we must testify that we have heartily consented to that branch of the surrender. *As we have opportunity*, we must *do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith*; remembering that we are but *stewards of the manifold grace of God*. If our prayers have here come up for a memorial before God, as Cornelius, our alms, like his, must accompany them, Acts 10. 4. We have here seen how much we owe to God's pity and bounty toward us; having therefore obtained mercy, we ought to shew mercy, knowing the *Grace of the Lord Jesus, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. 8, 9, Read Isa. 58. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

3. We must come from this ordinance with a disposition to forgive those who have been provoking and injurious to us. Our approach to the sacrament made it necessary for us to forgive; but our attendance on it should make it even natural to us to forgive, and our experience there of God's mercy and grace to us, should conquer all the difficulty and reluctance which we are conscious to ourselves of therein, and make it as easy to forgive our enemies, as it is to forgive ourselves, when at any time we happen to have had a quarrel with ourselves.

That which makes it hard to forgive, and puts an edge upon our resentments, is, the magnifying of the affronts we have received, and the losses we have sustained. Now, in this ordinance, we have had honours put upon us sufficient to balance all those affronts, and benefits bestowed on us sufficient to countervail all those losses; so that we may well afford to forgive and forget both. With ourselves, we have offered up to God our names, estates, and all our interests: in compliance therefore with the will of God, (that God who bid Shimei curse David, and who took away from Job that which the Sabeans and Chaldeans robbed him of) we must not only bear with patience the damage we sustain in those concerns, but must be charitably affected toward those who have been the instruments of

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that damage, knowing that men are God's hand, Ps. 17. 14. and to his Hand we must always submit.

But the great argument for the forgiving of injuries, when we come from the table of the Lord, is taken from the pardon God has in Christ there sealed to us. The jubilee trumpet which proclaimed releases, sounded at the close of the day of atonement. Is God reconciled to us? Let us then be more firmly than ever reconciled to our brethren. Let the death of Christ, which we have here commemorated, not only slay all enmities, but take down all partition-walls; not only forbid revenge, but remove strangeness; and let all our feuds and quarrels be buried in his grave. Has our master forgiven us that great debt, (and a very great debt it was;) and ought not we then to have compassion on our fellow-servants? Mat. 18. 32, 33. Let us, therefore, who have in this ordinance put on the Lord Jesus Christ, put on, as becomes the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies and kindness, inclining us to forgive; humbleness of mind, and meekness, enabling us to conquer that pride and passion which object against our forgiving; that if any man have a quarrel against any, it may be passed by, as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us; Col. 3. 12, 13.

VIII. We should come from this ordinance longing for heaven. Every good christian lives in the belief of the life everlasting, which God (that cannot lie) has promised; *looking for that blessed Hope.* And doubtless, much of the power of godliness consists in the joyful expectation of the glory to be revealed. But though we should look upon ourselves as heathens, if we did not believe it, and as desperate, if we had not some hopes of it; yet we have all reason to lament it, as not only our infelicity, but our iniquity, that our desires toward it are so weak and feeble. We are too apt to take up our rest here, and wish we might live always on this earth; and we need something, to make us hunger and thirst after that perfect righteousness, that crown of righteousness, with which only we shall be filled. For this good end, the Lord's Supper is very improveable, to hasten us toward the land of promise, and carry our souls in earnest breathings after the felicities of our future state.

1. The complaints we find cause to exhibit at this ordinance, should make us long for heaven: for, whatever is defective and uneasy here, we shall be for ever freed from when we come to heaven. When here we set ourselves to contemplate the beauty of God, and the love of Christ, we find ourselves in a cloud, we see but through a glass darkly: let us therefore long to be there, where the vail shall be rent, the glasses we now make use of laid aside, and we shall not only see face to face, but (which will yield us more satisfaction) we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. When here we would soar upward upon the wings of love, we find ourselves clogged and pinioned; this immortal spirit is caged in a house of clay, and does but flutter at the best: let us, therefore, long to be there, where we shall be perfectly delivered from all the incumbrances of a body of flesh, and all the entanglements of a world of sense and love, in its highest elevations, and utmost enlargements, shall survive both faith and hope. When here we would fix for God, and join ourselves closely to him, we find ourselves apt to wander, apt to waver; and should therefore long to be there, where our love to God will be no longer love in motion, constant motion, as it is here, but love at rest, in everlasting rest. Here we complain, that through the infirmity of the flesh we are soon weary of well-doing; and if the spirit be willing, yet the flesh is weak, and cannot keep pace with it; but there we shall run, and not be weary, we shall walk, and not faint; and shall not rest, because we shall not need to rest day or night, from praising God. O when shall I come to that world, where there is neither sin, nor sorrow, nor snare; and *to the spirits of just men made perfect* there, who *are as the angels of God in heaven.*

2. The comforts which, through grace, we experience in this ordinance, should make us long for heaven. The foretastes of those divine joys should whet our appetites after the full fruition of them. The bunch of grapes that meets us in the wilderness, should make us long to be in Canaan, that land of overflowing plenty, where we shall *wash our garments in this wine, and our cloaths in the blood of this grape,* Gen. 49. 11. Rev. 7. 14. If communion with God in grace here, affords us such a satisfaction as far surpasses all the delights of the sons of men; what will the fulness of joy be in God's presence, and those pleasures for evermore? If the shadows of good things to come be so refreshing, what will the substance be, and the good things themselves? If God's tabernacles be so amiable, what will his temple be? If a day in his courts, an hour at his table, be so pleasant; what then will an eternity within the veil be? If I find myself so enriched with the earnests of the purchased possessions, what then will the possession itself be? If the joy of my Lord, as I am here capable of receiving it, and as it is mixed with so much allay in this imperfect state, be so comfortable; what will it be when I shall enter into that joy, and bathe myself eternally in the spring head of those rivers of pleasure?

Pant then, my soul, pant after those fountains of living water, out of which all these sweet streams arise; that boundless bottomless ocean of delights, into which they all run! rest not content with any of the contentments here below; no, not with those in holy ordinances, (which are, of all others, the best we meet with in this wilderness; but long for the enjoyments above, in the vision of God. It is good to be here; but it is better to be there, far better to depart, and to be with Christ. While thou art groaning under the burthens of this present state, groan after the glorious liberties of the children of God, in the future state. Thirst for God, for the living God: *O when shall I come and appear before God!* That the day may break, and the shadows flee away, *Make haste, my beloved; and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIII.

An Exhortation to order the Conversation aright after this Ordinance.

WE will now suppose the new moon to be gone, the sabbath to be past, and the solemnities of the sacrament-day to be over: and is our work now done? No; now the most needful and difficult part of our work begins, which is, to maintain such a constant watch over ourselves, that we may, in the whole course of our conversation, exemplify the blessed fruits and effects of our communion with God in this ordinance. When we come down from this mount, we must (as Moses did) bring the tables of the testimony with us in our hands, that we may in all things have respect to God's commandments, and frame our lives according to them. Then we truly get good by this ordinance, when we are made better by it, and use it daily as a bridle of restraint, to keep us in from all manner of sin, and a spur of constraint, to put us on to all manner of duty.

I shall endeavour, I. to give some general rules for the right ordering of the conversation after we have been at the Lord's Supper: and then, II. I shall mention some particulars, wherein we must study to conform ourselves to the intention of that ordinance, and abide under the influence of it.

I. The Lord's Supper was instituted not only for the solemnizing of the memorial of Christ's death at certain times, but for the preserving the remembrance of it in our mind at all times, as a powerful argument against every thing that is evil, and a prevailing inducement to every thing that is good. In this sense, we must bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, so as that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies, 2 Cor. 4. 10. It was instituted not only for the sealing of the covenant, that it may be ratified; but for the imprinting of it upon our minds, that we may be ever mindful of the covenant, and live under the commanding power of it.

We must see to it, that there be an agreement between our performances at the Lord's Table, and at other times; that we be uniform in our religion, and not guilty of a self-contradiction. What will it profit us, if we pull down with one hand, what we build up with the other; and undo in our lives, what we have done in our devotions? That we may not do so, let us be guided by these rules.

1. Our conversation must be such, as that we may adorn the profession which in the Lord's Supper we have made. We have, in that ordinance, solemnly owned ourselves the disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus; we have done ourselves the honour to subscribe ourselves his humble servants, and he has done us the honour to admit us into his family; and now we are concerned to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, that our relation to Christ being so much an honour to us, we may never be a dishonour to it. We are said to be taken into covenant with God for this very end, that we may be unto him *for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory*, (Jer. 13. 11.) that we may be witnesses for him, and for the honour of his name among men.

We must, therefore, be very cautious that we never say or do any thing to the reproach of the gospel and Christ's holy religion, or which may give any occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. If those who profess to be devout toward God, be unjust and dishonest toward men, this casts reproach upon devotion, as if that would consist with, and countenance immorality. If those who call themselves christians walk as other Gentiles walk, and do Satan's drudgery in Christ's livery; christianity suffers by it, and religion is *wounded in the house of her friends:* injuries are done it, which cannot be repaired; and those will have a great deal to answer for another day, for whose sakes the name of God, and his doctrine, are thus evil spoken of. By our coming to the Lord's Supper, we distinguish ourselves from those, whose profession of christianity, by their being baptized in infancy, seems to be more their chance than their choice; and by a voluntary act of our own, we sirname ourselves by the name of Israel. Now, if after we have so distinguished ourselves, and so raised the expectations of our neighbours from us, we do that which is unbecoming the character we wear. If we be vain, carnal, and intemperate; if we be false and unfair, cruel and unmerciful, *what will the Egyptians say?* They will say, commend us to the children of this world, if these be the children of God; for what do they more than others? Men's prejudices against religion are hereby confirmed, advantage is given to Satan's devices, and the generation of the righteous is condemned for the sake of those who are spots in their feasts of charity. Let us therefore always be jealous for the reputation of our profession, and afraid of doing what may in the least be a blemish to it: and the greater profession we make, the more tender let us be of it; because we have the more eyes upon us, that watch for our halting. When we do good, we must remember the Apostle's caution, *Let not your good be evil spoken of*, Rom. 14. 16.

We must also be very studious to do that which will redound to the credit of our profession. It is not enough that we be not a scandal to religion; but we must strive to be an ornament to it, by excelling in virtue, and being forward to every good work. Our light must shine, as the face of Moses did when he came down from the mount; that is, our good works must be such, that they who see them may give religion their good word, and thereby glorify our Father who is in heaven, Mat. 5. 16. Our conversation must be as becomes the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that they who will not be won by the word, may be won by it to say, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise,* more amiable and lovely than other, let us *think on these things*, Phil. 4. 8. Are we children? Let us walk as obedient children, well taught, and well managed. Are we soldiers? Let us approve ourselves good soldiers, well trained, and well disciplined; so we shall do honour to him who has called us.

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us. If God's Israel carefully keep and do his statutes, it will be said of them to their honour among the nations, *Surely they are a wise and understanding people,* Deut. 4. 6. And this will redound to the honour of Christ; for thus Wisdom is justified of her children.

2. Our conversation must be such, that we may fulfil the engagements which at the Lord's Supper we have laid ourselves under. Having at God's altar sworn that we will keep his righteous judgments, we must conscientiously perform it in all the evidences of a holy, righteous, and sober conversation. The vows we have made, (express, or implicit) must be carefully made good, by a constant watchfulness against all sin, and a constant diligence in all duty; because, *Better it is not to vow, than to vow and not to pay,* Ecc. 5. 4, 5.

When we are at any time tempted to sin, or in danger of being surprised into any ill thing, let this be our reply to the tempter; and with this let us quench his fiery darts, *Thy vows are upon me, O God.* Did I not say, *I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue?* I did say so; and therefore *I will keep my mouth as with a bridle,* Ps. 39. 1. Did I not make a covenant with mine eyes? I did: that therefore shall be to me a covering of the eyes, that they may never be either the inlets or the outlets of sin. Did I not say, *I will not transgress?* Jer. 2. 20. I did say so; and, therefore, by the grace of God, I will *abstain from all appearance of evil,* and *have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.* An honest man is as good as his word.

When we begin to grow slothful and careless in our duty, backward and slighting in it; let this stir up the gift that is in us, and quicken us to every good word and work. *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord:* thou hast said it with the blood of Christ in thy hand. *He is thy Lord* then, *and worship thou* him, Ps. 16. 2. and 45. 11. When a lion in the way, a lion in the streets, deters us from any duty, and we cannot plough by reason of cold, nor sow or reap for fear of winds and clouds; let this help our difficulty, with a steady resolution: it is what I have promised, and I must perform it: I will not, I dare not be false to God, and my covenants with him: *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and* (without incurring the guilt of perjury) *I cannot go back.*

3. Our conversation must be such, as that we may make some grateful returns for the favours which we have here received. The law of gratitude is one of the laws of nature: for the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: and some have thought, that all our gospel-duties may very fitly be comprized in that of gratitude to our Redeemer. In the Lord's Supper we see what Christ has done for us, and we receive what he bestows, and in consideration of both, we must set ourselves not only to love and praise him, but to walk before him in the land of the living; that though we cannot return him any equivalent for his kindness, yet, by complying with his will, and consulting his honour, we may shew that we bear a grateful mind, and would render again according to the benefit done unto us.

By wilful sin after a sacrament, we load ourselves with the guilt not only of treachery, but of base ingratitude. It was a great aggravation of Solomon's apostacy, *that he turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,* 1 Kin. 11. 9. More than twice, yea, many a time God hath appeared not only for us in his providences, but to us in his ordinances, manifesting himself in a distinguishing way to us, and not unto the world: Now if we carry ourselves strangely to him who has been such a friend to us, if we affront him, who has so favoured us, and rebel against him, who has not only spared, but ransomed us, we deserve to be stigmatized with a mark of everlasting infamy, as the most ungrateful wretches that ever God's earth bore, or his sun shone upon. Foolish people and unwise we are, thus to requite the Lord: Let us, therefore, thus reason with ourselves, when at any time we are tempted to sin. After he has given us such a deliverance as this, shall we again break his commandments? Shall we spit in the face, and spurn at the bowels of such loving kindness? After we have eaten bread with Christ, shall we go and lift up the heel against him? No, God forbid, we will not continue in sin after grace has thus abounded, Rom. 6. 1, 2.

By an exact and exemplary conversation we shew ourselves sensible of the mighty obligations we lie under to love him, and live to him, who loved us, and died for us: we should, therefore, from a principle of gratitude, always abound in the work of the Lord, and lay out ourselves with zeal and cheerfulness in his service, thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer or too dear to part with for him who has done, and suffered, and parted with so much for us. Let the love of Christ constrain us.

4. Our conversation must be such, that we may preserve the comforts which in the Lord's Supper we have tasted. Have we been satisfied with the goodness of God's house? Let us not receive the grace of God therein in vain, by the forfeiture or neglect of those satisfactions. *Fear the Lord and his goodness,* (Hos. 3. 5.) that is, fear lest you sin against that goodness, and so sin it away. Have we received Christ Jesus the Lord? Let us hold fast what we have received, that no man take our crown, and the comfort of it. Has God here spoken peace to us? Let us then never return to folly, lest we break in upon the peace that God has spoken: it is a jewel too precious to be pawned, as it is by the covetous for the wealth of this world, and by the voluptuous for the pleasures of the flesh. Have we tasted that the Lord is gracious? Let us not put our mouths out of taste to those spiritual and divine pleasures, by any carnal delights or gratifications. Has God made us to hear joy and gladness? Let us not set ourselves out of the hearing of that joyful sound, by listening to the voice of Satan's charms, charm he never so wisely.

If we walk loosely and carelessly after a sacrament, we provoke God to hide his face from us, to take from us the cup of consolation, and to put into our hands, instead of it, the cup of trembling; we cloud our evidences' shake our hopes, wither our comforts, and undo what

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what we have been doing at this ordinance. That caution, therefore, which the Apostle gives to the elect lady and her children, should ever be sounding in our ears, (2 John 8.) *Look to yourselves, that we lose not the things which we have wrought*; or as the margin reads it, *the things which we have gained.* Let us not, by our own folly and neglect, let slip the benefit of what we have done and of what we have got at the table of the Lord.

Especially, we should take heed lest Satan get an advantage against us, and improve that to our prejudice, which we do not take due care to improve as we ought, to our benefit. *After the sop, Satan entered into Judas,* (John 13. 27.) If the comforts which we think we have received in this ordinance, do not make us more watchful, it is well if they do not make us more secure. If they be not a savour of life unto life, by deterring us from sin; there is danger, lest they prove a savour of death unto death, by hardening us in sin. It was one of the most impudent words which that adulterous woman spoke (and she spoke a great many) when she allured the young man into her snares, (Pro. 7. 14, 15.) *I have peace-offerings with me, this day have I paid my vows, therefore came I forth to meet thee.* I have been confessed, and been absolved, and therefore can the better afford to begin upon a new score: I know the worst of it, it is but being confessed and absolved again. But shall we continue in sin, because grace has abounded, and that grace may abound? God forbid: far be it, far be it from us ever to entertain such a thought. Shall we suck poison out of the balm of Gilead, and split our souls upon the rock of salvation? *Is Christ the minister of sin?* Shall the artifices of our spiritual enemies turn this table into a snare, and that on it which should be for our welfare, into a trap? Those are but pretended comforts in Christ, that are thus made real supports in sin. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* Hell will be hell indeed to those who thus trample under foot the blood of the covenant, as an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace. Their case is desperate indeed, who are emboldened in sin by their approaches to God.

5. Our conversation must be such, that we may evidence the communion we have had with God in Christ, at the Lord's Table. It is not enough to say, that we have fellowship with him: the vilest hypocrites pretend to that honour, but by walking in darkness they disprove their pretensions, and give themselves the lie, (1 John 1. 6.) We must therefore shew that we have fellowship with him, by walking in the light, v. 7. and as he also walked, 1 John 2. 6. By keeping up communion with God in providences, having our eyes ever toward him, and acknowledging him in all our ways, receiving all our comforts as the gifts of his bounty, and bearing all our afflictions as his fatherly chastisements, we evidence that we have had communion with him in ordinances. They who converse much with scholars, evidence it by the tongue of the learned; as one may likewise discover by the politeness and refinedness of a man's air and mien, that his conversation has lain much with persons of quality. Thus they who have communion with the Holy God, should make it to appear in all holy conversation, not suffering any corrupt communication to proceed out of their mouth, but abounding in that which is good, and to the use of edifying, that by our speech and behaviour, it may appear what country we belong to.

When Peter and John acquitted themselves before the council with such a degree of conduct and assurance, as one could not have expected from unlearned and ignorant men, not acquainted with courts or camps, or academies, it is said, that they who marvelled at it, *took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus,* Acts 4. 13. And from those who had been with Jesus, who had followed him, sat at his feet, and eaten bread with him, very great things might be expected. In this ordinance we have been seeing his beauty, and tasting his sweetness, and now we should live so, that all who converse with us may discern it, and by our holy heavenly converse *may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus.*

II. Let us mention some particulars wherein we ought in a special manner to approve ourselves well after this solemnity, that *as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord,* we may *so walk in him,* Col. 2. 6.

After we have been admitted into communion with God, and have renewed our covenants with him at his table, it behoves us to be careful in these six things.

1. We must see to it, that we be sincerely devout and pious. It is not enough that we live soberly and righteously, but we must live godly in this present world, and our sacramental engagements should stir us up to abound therein more and more. After an interview with our friends, by which mutual acquaintance is improved, and mutual affections confirmed, we are more constant and endearing in our correspondence with each other; so we should be with God, after this ordinance, more frequent in holy ejaculations and breathings of soul toward God, intermixed even with common business and conversation; more abundant in reading, meditation, and solemn prayer; more diligent in our attendance on public ordinances; more fixed and enlarged in closet devotions, and more lively and affectionate in our family-worship. Those religious exercises wherein we have formerly been remiss and careless, easily persuaded to put them by, or put them off, we should now be more constant to, and more careful in; more close in our application to them, and more serious in our performance of them.

If we have indeed found that it is good for us to draw near to God, we will endeavour to keep near him, so near him, as upon every occasion to speak to him, and to hear from him. If this sacrament has been our delight, the word will be our delight, and we shall daily converse with it; prayer will be our delight, and we shall give ourselves to it, and continue instant in it. They who have been feasted upon the sacrifice of atonement, ought to abound in sacrifices of acknowledgment, the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and a broken heart, which are acceptable to God through Christ Jesus: and having in our flock a male, we must offer that, and not a corrupt thing.

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It is the shame of many who are called christians, and have a name and a place in God's family, that they are as backward and indifferent to holy duties, as if they were afraid of doing too much good for God and their own souls, and as if their chief care were to know just how much will serve to bring them to heaven that they may do no more. They can be content to go a mile, but they are not willing to go twain. And does it become those on whom God has sown so plentifully, to make their returns so sparingly? Ought we not rather to inquire what free-will offerings we may bring to God's altar? And how we may do more in religion than we have used to do? They who have found what a good table God keeps, and how welcome they have been to it, should desire to dwell in his house all the days of their life, and blessed are they that do so, *they will be still praising him*, Ps. 27. 4.—— 84. 4.

2. We must see to it that we be conscientiously just and honest. We not only contradict our profession, and give ourselves the lie, but we reproach the religion we profess, and give it the lie, if after we have been at this sacrament, we deceive or defraud our brother in any matter; for this is that which the Lord our God requires of us, that we do justly, that is that we never do wrong to any, in their body, goods, or good name, and that we ever study to render to all their due, according to the relation we stand in, and the obligation we lie under to them. *That*, therefore, *which is altogether just* (*justice, justice*, as the word is) *thou shalt follow*, Deut. 16. 20. There are many who make no great pretensions to religion, and yet natural conscience, sense of honour, and a regard to the common good, keep them strictly just in all their dealings, and they would scorn to do a base and dishonest thing: and shall not the bonds of this ordinance added to those inducements, restrain us from every thing that has but the appearance of fraud and injustice? a christian! a communicant! and yet a cheat! yet a man not to be trusted, not to be dealt with, but standing on one's guard! How can those be reconciled? Will that man be true to his GOD, whom he has not seen, that is false to his brother, whom he has seen? Shall he be entrusted with *the true riches*, who is *not faithful in the unrighteous mammon?* Luke 16. 11.

Let the remembrance of our sacramental vows be always fresh in our minds, to give a check to those secret covetings which are the springs of all fraudulent practices. I have disclaimed the world for a portion, shall I then, for the compassing of a little of its forbidden gain, wrong my brother, whom I ought to do good to; wrong my profession, which I ought to adorn; and wrong my own conscience, which I ought to keep void of offence? God forbid. I have likewise renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, and promised not to walk in craftiness. By the grace of God I will therefore ever have *my conversation in the world in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom*, 2 Cor. 1. 12.——4. 2. They who are so well skilled in the arts of deceit, as to save themselves from the scandal of it, and to be able to say with Ephraim, though he had the balances of deceit in his hand, *In all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me, that were sin*, (Hos. 12. 7, 8.) yet, cannot thereby save themselves from the guilt of it, and the ruin that attends it; for doubtless *the Lord is the avenger of all such*, 1 Thes. 4. 6. Those who cheat their neighbours, cannot cheat their God, but will prove in the end to have cheated themselves into everlasting misery; *and what is a man profitted, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*

3. We must see to it, that we be religiously meek and peaceable. We must not only come from this ordinance in a calm and quiet frame, but we must always keep ourselves in such a frame. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ (which the Apostle mentions as a most powerful charm, 2 Cor. 10. 1.) let us be wrought upon to be always meek and gentle, as those who have learned of him. The storms of passion that are here appeased, must never be suffered to make head again, nor must the enmities that are here slain, ever be revived. Having eaten of this gospel-passover, we must all our life long keep the feast, without the leaven of malice and wickedness, 1 Cor. 5. 8. Having been feasted at Wisdom's table, we must always abide under the conduct and influence of that wisdom which is *first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated*, Jam. 3. 17.. God was greatly displeased with those who, after they had released their bond-servants, according to the law, recalled their release, and brought them into subjection again. Jer. 34. 11, 17. And so will he be with those who seem to set aside their quarrels when they come to the sacrament, but as soon as the fervour of their devotion is over, the heat of their passion returns, and they resume their quarrels, and revive all their angry resentments; thereby making it to appear that they did never truly forgive, and, therefore, never were forgiven of God. *Factum non dicitur quod non perseverat—The reality of the act is only proved by persevering in it.*

Let those who have had communion with God in this ordinance, be able to appeal to their relations and domestics, and all they converse with, concerning this; and to vouch them for witnesses, that they have mastered their passions, and are grown more mild and quiet in their families than sometimes they have been, and that even when they are most provoked, they know both how to hear reason, and how to speak it. Whatever others do, let us never give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to say, that the seriousness of religion makes men sour and morose, and that zeal in devotion disposes the mind to peevishness and passion: but let us evidence the contrary, that the grace of God does indeed make men good-natured, and that the pleasures of serious godliness make men truly cheerful and easy to all about them. Having been here sealed to the day of redemption, let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, that blessed dove; and that we may not, *let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from* us, *with all malice*, as it follows there, Eph. 4. 30, 31.

4. We must see to it that we be strictly sober and chaste.

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chaste. Gluttony and drunkenness, and fleshly lusts, are as great a reproach as can be to those who profess relation to Christ, and the expectation of eternal life. It becomes those who have been feasted at the table of the Lord, and have there tasted the pleasures of the spiritual and divine life, to be dead to all the delights of sense, and to make it appear that they are so, by a holy indifference to them. Let not the flesh be indulged to the prejudice of the spirit, nor provision made for the fulfilling the lusts thereof. Have we been entertained with the dainties of heaven? Let us not be desirous of the dainties of sense, nor solicitous to have the appetite gratified, and all our enjoyments to the highest degree pleasing. When our Lord had instituted his supper, and given this cup of blessing to his disciples, he added, (Mat. 26. 29.) *I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine:* now welcome the bitter cup, the vinegar and the gall; teaching us after a sacrament to sit more loose than before to bodily delights, and to be better reconciled to hardships and disappointments in them. It was the sin and shame of the Israelites in the wilderness, that while they were fed with manna, angels food, they lusted, saying, *Who will give us flesh to eat?* And they sin after the similitude of that transgression, who, when they have eaten of the bread of life, and drank of the water of life, yet, continue to be as curious and careful about their meat and drink, as if they knew no better things, and had their happiness bound up in them; as if the *Kingdom of God* were in this sense *meat and drink* and a Turkish Paradise were their heaven. Surely, they who are of this spirit serve not our Lord Christ, but their own bellies.

But if they thus shame themselves who indulge the flesh, though their reason remains with them, what shall we think of those, who, by their intemperance, put themselves quite out of the possession of their own souls, disfit themselves for the service of God, and level themselves with the beasts? A christian! a communicant! and yet a tipler, a drunkard, a companion with those who run to this excess of riot! This, this is the sin that has been the scandal and ruin of many, who, having begun in the spirit, have thus ended in the flesh: this is that which has quenched the spirit, hardened the heart, besotted the head, debauched the conscience, withered the profession, and so has slain its thousands, and its ten thousands. Against this sin, therefore, the Lord's Prophets must cry aloud, and not spare: of the danger of this the watchmen are concerned to give warning: and dare those who partake of the cup of the Lord, drink of the cup of Devils? 1 Cor. 10. 21. Can there be so much concord between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial? No, there cannot, these are contrary the one to the other. If men's communicating will not break them off from their drunkenness, their drunkenness must break them off from communicating; for these are spots in our feasts of charity, and if God be true, drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let me, therefore, with all earnestness, as one that desires to obtain mercy of the Lord, to be faithful, warn all who profess religion, and relation to Christ, to stand upon their guard against this snare, which has been fatal to multitudes. As you tender the favour of God, the comforts of the Spirit, the credit of your profession, and the welfare of your own souls here and hereafter, take heed of being entangled in any temptations to this sin. Shun the society of those evil-doers: abstain from all the appearances of this sin: watch and be sober: he who *loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,* has *made us unto our God kings and priests,* Rev. 1. 5, 6. Are we priests? This was the law of the priesthood, and it was a law made upon the occasion of the death of Nadab and Abihu, who probably had erred through wine, (Lev. 10. 9.) *Do not drink wine nor strong drink when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation.* Are we kings? *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine—lest they drink and forget the law,* Prov. 31. 4, 5. It is not for christians to drink to excess, and to allow themselves in those riotings and revellings, which even the sober heathen condemned and abhorred.

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, are likewise lusts of the flesh, and defiling to the soul, which therefore all those must carefully avoid, who profess to be led by the spirit; they are abominable things, which the Lord hates, and which we also must hate. Are not our bodies temples of the Holy Ghost? Dare we then defile them? Are they not members of Christ? And shall we make them the members of a harlot? Let those who eat of the holy things, be holy both in body and spirit, and *possess their vessel in sanctification and honour, and not in the lusts of uncleanness.* Let those eyes never be guilty of a wanton look, that have here seen Christ evidently set forth crucified among us: let no lewd corrupt communication proceed out of that mouth into which God's covenant has been taken: let no unclean lascivious thoughts be ever harboured in that heart which the holy Jesus vouchsafes to dwell in. Let those who have eaten of Wisdom's bread, and drank of the wine that she has mingled, never hearken to the invitations of the foolish woman, who courts the unweary to stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret, under pretence that they are sweet and pleasant; for the *Dead are there,* and *the guests are in the depths of Hell,* Prov. 9. 17, 18.

5. We must see to it that we are abundantly charitable and beneficent. It is not enough that we do no hurt, but if we would order our conversation aright, we must, as we have opportunity, do good to all men, as becomes those to whom God in Christ is good, and does good, and who profess themselves the disciples and followers of him, who went about doing good. Shall we be selfish, and seek our own things only, who have here seen how Christ humbled and emptied himself for us? Shall we be sparing of our pains for our brethren's good, who have here seen Christ among us as one that serveth, as one that suffereth, and as one that came *not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many?* Shall we be shy of speaking to, of speaking for our poor brethren, who have here seen our Lord Jesus not ashamed to own us and intercede

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for us, notwithstanding our poverty and meanness? Shall we be strait-handed in distributing to the necessities of the saints, who have here found Christ so liberal and open-handed in imparting to us, not only the gospel of God, but even his own soul. After we have been at this ordinance, we should shew how much we are affected with our receiving there, by being ready and forward to every good work: because *our goodness extendeth not to God,* it ought to extend *to the saints that are in the earth,* Psal. 16. 2, 3. Thus we must be *followers of God as dear children,* we must *walk in love, as* here we see Christ *hath loved us, and gave himself for us,* Eph. 5. 1, 2.

6. We must see to it, that we be more taken off from this world, and more taken up with another world. A christian then lives like himself, when he lives above the things that are seen, which are temporal, and looks upon them with a holy contempt; and keeps his eye fixed upon the things that are not seen, which are eternal, looking upon them with a holy concern. We are not called out of the world, but we are not of it; we belong to another world, and are designed for it, we must therefore seek the things that are above, and not set our affections on things beneath.

The thoughts of Christ crucified should wean us from this world, and make us out of love with it: the world knew him not, but hated him; the princes of this world crucified him, but he overcame the world; and we also, by faith in him, may obtain a victory over it, such a victory over it, that we may not be entangled by its snares, encumbered with its cares, or disquieted by its sorrows. By frequent meditation on the cross of Christ, the world will be crucified to us, and we to the world, (Gal. 6. 14.) that is, the world and we should grow very indifferent one to another, and no love shall be lost between us.

The thoughts of Christ glorified, should raise our hearts to that blessed place *where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,* Col. 3. 1.) and *from whence we look for the Saviour,* Phil. 3 20. When we commemorate Christ's entrance within the veil, as our fore-runner, and have good hopes of following him shortly; when we think of his being in Paradise, and of our being with him, how should our affections be carried out toward that joy of our Lord! How studious should we be to do the work of heaven, conform to the laws of heaven, and converse (as much as may be) with the glorious society there! Having received the adoption of sons, we should improve our acquaintance with, and raise our expectations of, the inheritance of sons.

CHAP. XIV.

Some Words of Comfort, which this Ordinance speaks to serious Christians.

THE Lord's Supper was intended for the Comfort of good people, not only while they are actually attending on God in it, but even after; not only that their joy may be full, but that this joy may remain in them, John 15. 11. It is a feast which was made for laughter, not that of a fool, which terminates in a sigh, and the end of it is heaviness, but that of the truly wise man, who has learned to rejoice evermore, yea, to rejoice in the Lord always: not that of the hypocrite, whose triumphing is short, and is joy but for a moment, (Job. 20. 5.) but that of a sincere christian, whom God *causes always to triumph in Christ,* 2 Cor. 2. 14. The water that Christ here gives, is designed to be a well of water, living water, sending forth streams that make glad the city of our God. The feast, if it be not our own fault, will be to us a continual feast, and a breast of consolation, from which we may daily suck and be satisfied.

1. It is the will of God that his people should be a comforted people. The most evangelical part of the prophecy of Isaiah begins with this, (ch. 40. 1.) *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God:* he takes pleasure in their prosperity, he delights to see them cheerful, and to hear them sing at their work, and sing in his ways. Religion was never designed to make people melancholy; wisdom's adversaries do her wrong, if they paint her in mourning, and wisdom's children do not do her right, if they give the occasion to do so; for though they are, like St. Paul, as sorrowful, yet they should be like him, always rejoicing, because though they seem (perhaps) to have nothing, yet really they possess all things, 2 Cor. 6. 10. So good a master do we serve, that he has been pleased to twist interests with us, and so to compound his glory and our comfort, that in seeking the one, we seek the other also. He has made that to be our duty, which is indeed our greatest privilege, and that is to delight ourselves alway in the Lord, and to live a life of complacency in him. And it is the New Testament character of a christian indeed, that *he rejoiceth in Christ Jesus,* Phil. 3. 3.

2. Good christians have (of all people) most reason to rejoice, and be comforted. As for those who are at a distance from God, and out of covenant with him, they have reason to be afflicted, and mourn and weep: *Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God,* Hos. 9. 1. To them who eat of the forbidden tree of knowledge, this tree of life also is forbidden; but those who devote themselves to God, have all the reason in the world to delight themselves in God. They who ask the way to Sion, with their faces thitherward, though they go weeping to seek the Lord their God, (Jer. 50. 4, 5.) yet they shall go on rejoicing, when they have found him; for they cannot but find the way pleasantness, and the paths of it peace. Have not they reason to smile, on whom God smiles? If God has put grace into the heart, has he not put gladness there, and a new song into the mouth? Is Christ proclaimed King in the soul? And ought it not to be done with acclamations of joy? Is the atonement received, and the true treasure found? And shall not we rejoice with joy unspeakable? Have we good hope (through grace) of entering shortly into the joy of our Lord? And have not we cause now to rejoice in hope of it?

3. Yet those who have so much reason to rejoice, are

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are often cast down, and in sorrow, and not altogether without cause. This state of probation and preparation is a mixed state, and it is proper enough it should be so, for the trial and exercise of various graces, and that God's power may have the praise of keeping the balance even. In those whose hearts are visited by the day-spring, from on high, the light is neither clear nor dark, it is neither day nor night, Zech. 14. 6, 7. They have their comforts, which they would not exchange for the peculiar treasure of kings and princes; but withal they have their crosses, under which they groan, being burthened. They have their hopes, which are as an anchor to the soul, both sure and stedfast, entering into that within the veil; but withal they have their fears, for their warfare is not yet accomplished, they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect. They have their joys, such as the world can neither give nor take away: Joys that a stranger does not intermeddle with; but withal they have their griefs, their way to Canaan lies through a wilderness, and their way to Jerusalem through the valley of Bacah: Their master was himself *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, and they are to be his followers. While we are here, we must not think it strange, if for a season, when need is, we are in heaviness; we cannot expect to reap in joy hereafter, unless we sow in tears. We must not, therefore, think that either the present happiness of the saints, which in this world they are to expect, or their present holiness, which in this world they are to endeavour after, consists in such delights and joys, as leave no room for any mourning, and sense of trouble; no, there is a sorrow that is a godly sorrow; a jealousy of ourselves, that is a godly jealousy: it is only a perfect love that casts out all fear and all grief, which we are not to expect in this imperfect state. All tears shall not be wiped away from our eyes, nor shall sorrows and sighing quite flee away, till we come to heaven: while we are here, we are in a vale of tears, and must conform to the temper of the climate; we are at sea, and must expect to be tossed with tempests; we are in the camp, and must expect to be alarmed; while without are fightings, no wonder that within are fears.

4. Our Lord Jesus has therefore provided such comfort for the relief of his people (in their present sorrowful state) as may serve to balance their griefs, and keep them from being pressed above measure; and he has instituted holy ordinances (and especially this of the Lord's Supper) for the application of those comforts to them, that they may never fear, may never be sorry, as those that have no hope, or no joy. The covenant of grace (as it is ministered in the everlasting gospel) has in it a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady; so that they who have an interest in that covenant, and know it, may triumph with blessed Paul, (2 Cor. 4. 8, 9.) Though *we are troubled on every side, yet* we are *not distressed; perplexed* sometimes, *but* (thanks be to God) *not in despair; persecuted* by men, *but not forsaken* of GOD; *cast down* and drooping, *but not destroyed and lost.* This is that which bears them up under all their burthens, comforts them in all their griefs, and enables them to rejoice in tribulation. God is their's, and they are his, and he has *made with them an everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things, and sure;* and this is *all* their *salvation* and *all* their *desire*, however it be, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

The word of God is written to them for this end, *That* their *joy may be full*, (1 John 1. 4.) and that *through patience and comfort of the Scriptures*, they *may have hope*, Rom. 15. 4. Precious promises are there treasured up, to be the foundations of their faith and hope, and consequently the fountains of their joy. Songs of thanksgiving are there drawn up for them, to refresh themselves with in their weary pilgrimage, and to have recourse to, for the silencing of their complaints. Ministers are appointed to be the helpers of their joy, (2 Cor. 1. 24.) and to speak comfort to such as mourn in Zion. The Sabbath is the day which the Lord has made for this very end, that they may rejoice and be glad in it. Prayer is appointed for the ease of troubled spirits, that in it they may pour out their complaints before God, and fetch in comfort from him; *Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.* This sacrament was ordained for the comfort of good christians, for the confirmation of their faith, in order to the preservation and increase of their joy; and they ought to improve it, both for the strengthening of the habit of holy cheerfulness, and their actual encouragement against the several particular grievances of this present time. And there is no complaint which a good christian has cause to make at any time, which he may not qualify, and keep from growing clamorous, by comforts drawn from what he has seen and tasted, what he has done and received at the Lord's table. Let us therefore be daily drawing water out of these wells of salvation, and when our souls are cast down and disquieted within us, let us fetch arguments from our communion with God in this ordinance, both in chiding them for their despondency, and encouraging them to hope and rejoice in God. What is it that grieves and oppresses us? Why is our countenance sad, and why go we mourning all the day long? Whatever the occasion of the heaviness is, let it be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and I dare say there is that comfort to be fetched from this ordinance, which is sufficient to be set in the scale against it, and outweigh it. Let us mention some of the most common causes of our trouble, and try what relief we may from hence be furnished with.

I. Are we disquieted and discouraged by the remembrance of our former sins and provocations? There is that here which will help to quiet and encourage us in reference to this. Conscience sometimes calls to mind the sins of the unconverted state, and charges them home upon the soul, especially if they were heinous and scandalous; it repeats the reproach of the youth; reminds us of old quarrels, and aggravates them; rakes in the old wounds, and makes them bleed afresh; and hence the disconsolate soul is ready to draw such hard conclusions as these: "Surely it is impossible that so great a sinner as I have been, should be pardoned and accepted; that such a prodigal should

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be welcomed home, and such a publican ever find mercy! Can I expect to share in that grace which I so long slighted and sinned against? Or to be taken into that covenant which I have so often cast away the cords of? Will the Holy God take one into the embraces of his love, who has been so vile and sinful, and fitter to be made a monument of his wrath? Can there be any hope for me? Or if there be some hope, yet, can there be any joy? If I may (through a miracle of mercy) escape Hell at last, which I have deserved a thousand times, yet, ought I not to weep mine eyes out, and to *go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul?* Isa. 38. 15. Ought I not to *go down to the grave mourning?* Gen. 37. 35. Should not my soul now refuse to be comforted, which so long refused to be convinced?"

These are black and sad thoughts, and enough to sink the spirit, if we had not met with that at the Lord's Table, which gives a sufficient answer to all these challenges. We have been great sinners, but there we have seen the great Redeemer, able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him; and have there called him by that name of his, which is an ointment poured forth, *The Lord our Righteousness.* Our sins have reached to the heavens, but there we have seen God's mercy in Christ reaching beyond the heavens. We have been wretchedly defiled in our own ways, but there we have seen not only a laver, but a fountain opened for the house of David to wash in, and have been assured that the *Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin,* even that which (for the heinousness of its nature, and the multitude of its aggravations) has been as scarlet and crimson, Isa. 1. 18. That article of the covenant, which is so expressive of a general pardon, has been sealed to me, upon gospel-terms, Heb. 8. 12. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;* and this I rely upon. Great sinners have obtained mercy; and why may not I?

And though an humble remembrance of sin will be of use to us all our days; yet, such a disquieting remembrance of it, as hinders our faith in Christ, and our joy in God, is by no means good: even sorrow for sin may exceed due bounds; and penitents may be swallowed up with over-much sorrow, 2 Cor. 2. 7. The covenant of grace speaks not only pardon, but peace to all believers; and not only sets the broken bones, but makes them to rejoice, Ps. 51. 8. When it says, *Thy sins be forgiven thee;* it says also, *Son, Daughter, Be of good cheer,* Mat. 9. 2. It is the duty of those who have received the atonement, to take the comfort of it, and to joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 11. Acts of self-denial and mortification are means and evidences of our sanctification, and such as we ought to abound in; but they are not the grounds of our justification. It is Christ's blood that makes the satisfaction, not our tears. Therefore we must not so remember former sins, as to put away present comforts. A life of repentance will very well consist with a life of holy cheerfulness.

II. Are we disquieted and discouraged by the sense of our sins of daily infirmity? There is that here which will be a relief against this grievance also. I have not only former guilt to reflect upon, contracted in the days of my ignorance and unbelief; but alas, I am still sinning, sinning daily! God knows, and my own heart knows, that in many things I do offend: I come short of the rule, and short of the glory of God every day. Vain thoughts lodge with me; idle words proceed from me. If I would count either the one or the other, they are more in number than the sand. When I think of the strictness and extent of the divine law, and compare my own heart and life with it, I find that innumerable evils compass me about. Neglects of duty are many, and negligences in duty are more. Who can tell how often he offends? If the righteous God should enter into judgment with me, and be extreme to mark what I do amiss, I were not able to answer him for one of a thousand. It might have been expected, that when the God of mercy had, upon my repentance, forgiven the rebellions of my sinful state, taken me into his family, and made me as one of his hired servants, nay, as one of his adopted children, that I should have been a dutiful child, and a diligent servant: but, alas, I have been slothful and trifling, and in many instances undutiful: I am very defective in my duty, both to my master, and to my fellow-servants, and in many things transgress daily. *For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runs down with tears.*

But there is that in this ordinance which may keep us from sinking under this burthen, though we have cause enough to complain of it. It is true, I am sinning daily; and it is my sorrow and shame that I am so; but the memorial of that great sacrifice which Jesus Christ offered once for all upon the cross, is therefore continually to be celebrated on earth, because the merit of it is continually pleaded in heaven, where Christ ever lives to make intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction. Having therefore celebrated the memorial of it at the table of the Lord, here, in the outer court; I ought to take the comfort of the continual efficacy of it within the veil, and its prevalency for the benefit of all believers. The water out of the rock, the rock smitten, follows God's Israel through this wilderness; in the precious streams of which, they that are washed are welcome to wash their feet from the pollutions they contract in their daily walk through this defiling world; and the best have need of this washing, John 13. 10. That needful word of caution, *That we sin not,* is immediately followed with this word of comfort; but *If any Man sin, we have an advocate with the Father;* one to speak for us, and to plead our cause: and he has a good plea to put in on our behalf; for *he is the propitiation for our sins,* 1 John 2. 1, 2.

Add to this, that the covenant of grace, which is sealed to us in this ordinance, is so well ordered in all things, and so sure, that every transgression in the covenant does not presently throw us out of the covenant. We do not stand upon the same terms that Adam in innocency did, to whom the least failure was fatal: no; to us God has *proclaimed his name Gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* If we

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we mourn for our sins of daily infirmity, are ashamed of them, and humble ourselves for them; if we strive, and watch, and pray against them, we may be sure they shall not be laid unto our charge, but in Christ Jesus they shall be forgiven to us; for we are under grace, and not under the law. The God we are in covenant with, is a God of pardon, (Neh. 9. 17.) with him there is forgiveness, Ps. 130. 4. We are instructed to pray for daily pardon, as duly as we pray for daily bread; and encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy: so that, though there be a remembrance of sins made every day, yet, thanks be to God, there may be a remembrance made of the sacrifice for sin, by which an everlasting righteousness was brought in.

III. Are we disquieted and discouraged by the sad remainders of indwelling corruption? We may hence derive support under this burthen. All that are enlightened from on high, lament the original sin that dwells in them, as much as the actual transgressions that are committed by them; not only that they are defective in doing their duty, but that they labour under a natural weakness and inability for it; not only that they are often overtaken in a fault, but that they have a natural proneness and inclination to that which is evil. It was the bitter complaint of blessed Paul himself; *O wretched Man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. 7. 24. and it is the complaint of all that are spiritually alive, while they are here in this imperfect state.

The most intelligent find themselves in the dark, and apt to mistake; the most contemplative find themselves unfixed, and apt to wander: the most active for God, find themselves dull, and apt to tire: when the spirit through grace is willing, yet the flesh is weak; and when we would do good, evil is present with us. Corrupt appetites and passions often get head, and betray us into many indecencies. This makes the heart sad, and the hands feeble; and by reason of these remaining corruptions, many a good christian loses the comfort of his graces. These Canaanites in the land are as thorns in the eyes, and goads in the side, of many an Israelite.

But, be not cast down, my soul; the covenant which was sealed to thee at the table of the Lord, was a covenant of grace, which accepts sincerity as gospel-perfection; not a covenant of innocency, which accepts of nothing less than a sinless spotless purity. Were not these complaints poured out before the Lord; and did he not say, *My grace is sufficient for thee?* And what canst thou desire more? 2 Cor. 12. 9. Were not orders given at the banquet of wine, for the crucifying of the adversary and enemy, this wicked Haman; so that though it be not yet dead, it is a body of death, and ere long it shall be put off for ever? Was it not there said to thee, was it not sealed, That *sin shall not have dominion over thee*; but *the God of peace shall bruise Satan under thy feet shortly?* so that, though he may for a while disturb thy peace, and his troops may foil thee; yet, like God in Jacob's blessing, thou shalt overcome at the last, Gen. 49. 18. The bruised reed shall not be broken, nor the smoaking flax quenched; but judgment shall in due time be brought forth unto victory: grace shall get the upper hand of corruption, and be a conqueror, yea more than a conqueror, through him that loved us! Come then, come set thy feet upon the necks of these kings, and rejoice in hope of a complete victory at last. These lusts which war against thee, make war with the Lamb too, and oppose his interests; but for certain the Lamb shall overcome them; *for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful,* Rev. 17. 14. Thou hast seen on how firm a rock the kingdom of God within thee is built, and mayest be sure that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Christ has given thee a banner to be displayed because of the truth, and through him thou shalt do valiantly, for he it is that shall tread down thine enemies; Ps. 60. 4, 12.

Go on, my soul, go on to fight the Lord's battles, by a vigorous resistance of sin and Satan; maintain a constant guard upon all the motions of thy spiritual enemies; hold up the shield of faith, and draw the sword of the Spirit against all their assaults. Suppress the first risings of corruption; make no provision for it; resolve not to yield to it: *Walk in the Spirit,* that thou mayest *not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.* Never make league with these Canaanites; but vex these Midianites, and smite them: mortify this body of death, and all its members; strengthen such principles, and dwell upon such considerations, as are proper for the weakening of the power of sinful lusts. And then be of good comfort, this house of Saul shall grow weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger. Thou hast seen, my soul, thou hast tasted the bread and wine which the Lord Jesus, that blessed Melchisedeck, has provided for the support and refreshment of all the followers of faithful Abraham, when they return weary (and wounded perhaps) from their spiritual conflicts. Make use of this provision then; feast upon it daily, and go on in the strength of it. Thank God (as St. Paul did in the midst of these complaints) for Jesus Christ, who has not only prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; but is now, like Moses, interceding on the top of the hill, while thou art, like Joshua, fighting with these Amalekites in the valley. Be faithful, therefore to the death, and thou shalt shortly have a place in that New Jerusalem, into which no unclean thing shall enter. Now thou groanest, being burthened; but in heaven there shall be none of these complaints, nor any cause for them.

IV. Does the trouble arise from prevailing doubts and fears about thy spiritual state? We may draw that from this ordinance, which will help us to silence those fears, and solve those doubts, and to clear it up to us, that God in Christ is our's, and we are his; and that all shall be well shortly. Many good christians, though they are so far willing to hope the best concerning themselves, as not to decline coming to the Lord's table, and there perhaps they meet with some satisfaction; yet, afterwards, the tide of their comforts ebbs, a sadness seizes their spirits; the peace they have had, they suspect to have been a delusion, and are ready to give up all

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all for gone. Unbelief makes hard conclusions, clouds the evidences, shakes the hopes, withers the joys; suggests that it is as good to give off all pious pursuits, as thus to keep them up in vain; as good to make a Captain, and return into Egypt, as to perish in this wilderness; for this is not the way to Canaan. And thus many are kept from entering into the present Sabbatism, or rest, which is intended for the people of God in this life, by unbelief, Heb. 4. 9, 11.

But, *O thou of little faith! wherefore dost thou doubt?* Come, call to remembrance the former days, the former sacrament-days, and the sweet communion thou hadst with God in them; days never to be forgotten. Thou doubtest whether God loves thee; and thou art ready to say as they did, (Mal. 1. 2.) *Wherein hath he loved me?* But dost thou not remember the love tokens he gave thee at his table, when he embraced thee in the arms of his grace, kissed thee with the kisses of his mouth, and his banner over thee was love. Thou doubtest whether thou be a child of God, and a chosen vessel or no, and art sometimes tempted to say, surely *the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people, and I am a dry tree,* Isa. 56. 3. How should he *set me among the children, and give me a pleasant land?* Jer. 3. 19. But, dost thou not remember the children's bread thou hast been fed with at thy Father's table, and the Spirit of adoption there sent forth into thine heart, teaching thee to cry, *Abba, Father?* Thou calledst thyself a prodigal, and no more worthy to be accounted a son, because thou didst bear the reproach of thy youth, which made thee ashamed, yea, even confounded! but, did not God at the same time call thee as he did penitent Ephraim, a *dear son, a pleasant child?* Were not his bowels troubled for thee? And did he not say, *I will surely have mercy on thee?* Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. Did not thy Father meet thee with tender compassions? Did he not call for the best robe, and put it on thee? Did he not invite thee to the fatted calf, and, which was best of all, give thee a kiss, which sealed thy pardon? And wilt thou now call that point in question, which was then so well settled? Is GOD *a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent?* No, he is GOD, and no Man. Thou doubtest whether Christ be thine or no; whether thou hast any interest in his mediation and intercession; whether he died for thee or no: but didst thou not at his table accept of him to be thine, and consent to him upon his own terms? Didst thou not say to him, with thy finger in the print of the nails, *My Lord, and my God!* And did he not answer thee with good words, and comfortable words, saying unto thee, *I am thy Salvation?* Hast thou revoked the bargain? Or, dost thou fear that he will revoke it? Was it not an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten? *Why art thou troubled?* And why do thoughts arise in thy heart? Was not Christ present with thee, and did he not shew himself well affected to thee, when at his table he said to thee, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself,* Luke 24. 38, 39.—Thou doubtest whether thou hast any grace or no, any love to God, any faith, any repentance; but hast thou forgotten God's workings on thy heart, and the workings of thy heart toward God at his table? *Did not thine heart burn within thee,* when thy dear Redeemer *talked with thee there?* Didst thou not sit down under his shadow with delight, and say, *It is good to be here?* Didst thou not desire a sign of the Lord, a token for good? Didst thou not say, *Do not deceive me?* And was there not a token for good shewed thee? Was not thy heart melted for sin? Was it not drawn out toward God? Did it not appear that God was with thee of a truth? Wherefore, then, dost thou doubt of that which thou hadst then such comfortable evidences of? *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?* Why dost thou entertain such hard thoughts of God and thy own state? *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, even the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?* Isa. 40. 27, 28.

And why art thou fearful and faint-hearted? Why dost thou look forward with terror and trembling, while thou hast so much reason to look forward with hope and rejoicing? Alas, (says the troubled spirit) God has cast me off out of his sight, and I fear will cast off for ever, and will be favourable no more; I shall *no more see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living!* My comforts are removed, and all my pleasant things are laid waste! My *bones are dried, my hope is lost, and I am cut off for my part,* Ezek. 37. 11. But hearken to this, thou who thus fearest continually every day: dost thou not remember the encouragements Christ gave thee at his table to hope in him, and to expect all good from him? Does he not say, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee?* And didst thou not promise that thou wouldest never leave nor forsake him? Nay, did he not promise to put his fear into thy heart, that thou mightest not depart from him? He did: and is not he faithful that hath called thee? Faithful that hath promised, who also will do it? Thou art afraid that some time or other Satan will be too hard for thee, and thou shalt one day perish by his hand; but hast thou not had that precious promise sealed to thee, that *the Faithful God will never suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able, but will with the temptation make a way for thee to escape?* 1 Cor. 10. 13. His providence shall proportion the trial to the strength; or (which comes all to one) his grace shall proportion the strength to the trial. Thou art afraid that after all, thou shalt come short; that by reason of the violence of the storm, the treachery of the sea, and, especially, thine own weakness and unskilfulness, thou shalt never be able to weather the point, and get safe into the harbour at last: but shall I ask thee, thou that followest Christ thus trembling, *Dost thou not know whom thou hast believed?* Is thy salvation entrusted with thyself, and lodged in thy own hands? No, it is not; if it were, thou wouldest have reason to fear the loss of it: but has not God committed it, and hast not thou committed it to the Lord Jesus? And *is not he able to keep that which is committed to him against that day,* that great day, when it shall be called for? Is not that a divine power which keeps thee, a divine promise which secures thee? Be not fearful then, *Be not faithless, but believing.*

V. Are

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V. Are we disquieted and discouraged by the troubles and calamities of this life? From our communion with God in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we may fetch comfort and support under all the afflictions of this present time, whatever they be. Our Master instituted this sacrament in the night wherein he was betrayed; and soon after he put off the body, and pleasantly said, *Now I am no more in the world:* but when we have received this sacrament, we find ourselves still in a world which is vexation of spirit; the soul still in a house of clay, liable to many shocks; and so close is the union between the soul and the body, that what touches the bone and the flesh, cannot but affect the spirit at second-hand. We are born and born again to troubles: besides that, we are exposed with others to the common calamities of human life, and the persecutions which all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must count upon. We are under the discipline of sons, and must look for chastisement. Afflictions are not only consistent with the love of God, but the flow from it: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* They are not only reconcilable with the covenant, but a branch of it;—*I will chasten their transgressions with the rod, and their sin with stripes,* is an article of the agreement with David and his seed, with this comfortable clause added; *Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him:—My covenant will I not break,* Ps. 89. 32, 33.

There is no disputing against sense: christianity was not designed to make men stocks and stones, and stoicks under their calamities. *No affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous:* hence the best men, as they have their share of trouble, so they cannot but have the sense of it; that's allowed them; they groan, being burthened. But this sense of trouble is apt to exceed due bounds: it is hard to grieve, and not to overgrieve; to lay to heart an affliction, and not to lay it too near the heart. When grief, or any outward trouble overwhelms our spirits, embitters our comforts, hinders our joy in God, stops the mouth of praise, takes off our chariot wheels, and makes us drive heavily in our way to heaven; then it is excessive and inordinate, and turns into sin to us. When sorrow fills the heart, and plays the tyrant there; when it makes us fretful and impatient, and breaks forth into quarrels with God and his providence, and robs us of the enjoyment of ourselves, our friends, and our GOD; it is an enemy that we are concerned to take up arms against.

And from our sacramental covenants and comforts, we may fetch plenty of arguments against the unreasonable insinuations of inordinate grief. Did I not see at the table of the Lord, a lively representation of the sufferings of Christ; the variety and extremity of his sufferings? Did I not see his tears, his sweats, his agonies, his stripes; the pain and shame he underwent? And is *the servant better than his master, and the disciple than his Lord?* Did Christ go by the cross to the crown, and shall a christian expect to go any other way? The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, and have not we much more need of them, for the perfecting of what is lacking in us? Is not this one part of our conformity to the image of Christ, that as he was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs,* so we should, that he might be *the first-born among many brethren?* A sight of Christ's afflictions should reconcile us to our own; especially if we consider, not only what he suffered, but how he suffered, and with what an invincible patience and cheerful submission to his Father's will, *leaving us an example,* 1 Pet. 2. 21. Have we so often celebrated the memorial of Christ's sufferings, and have we not yet learned of him to say, *The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* Though it be a bitter cup, *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.* Have we not yet learned of him, who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, to be dumb, and not to open our mouths against any thing that God does to forgive our enemies, and pray for our persecutors, and cheerfully to commit ourselves to him that judgeth righteously? Let the same mind be in us, which here we have seen to be in Christ Jesus.

Yet this is not all: in the Lord's Supper we give up ourselves, and all we have, unto the Lord, with a promise to acquiesce in all the disposals of his providence, concerning us and ours; let us not, therefore, by our discontent and uneasiness, revoke the surrender which we then made, or go counter to it. We there said it, and sealed it, that we could be the Lord's, and may he not do what he will with his own, especially, when it is so by his own consent? God there said it, and sealed it to us, that he would be to us *a Father;* and can we take any thing amiss from a Father, such a Father, who never chastens us but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness? Inviolable assurances were there given to us, that all things should work together for our present good, and for our future glory; that as afflictions abound, consolations shall so much the more abound; and some experience we there had of the sweetness and power of those consolations, which we ought to treasure up, that we may have them ready for our supports in the evil day. Can we forget how sweet GOD's smiles were which there we saw? How reviving his comforts were which there we tasted? And are not those sufficient to countervail the loss of the world's flattering smiles, and the comforts we have in the creature? It is generally supposed, that the comfortable sermon which Christ preached to his disciples on that text, *Let not your hearts be troubled,* (John 14.) immediately followed the administration of the Lord's supper; for it is the will of Christ, that those whom he has raised up to sit with him by faith in heavenly places, should not be cast down and disquieted for any cross or disappointment in earthly things.

Art thou sick, languishing, perhaps, under some wasting distemper, which consumes thy strength and beauty like a moth? Or chastened it may be with pain upon thy bed, and the multitude of thy bones with strong pain? Or labouring under the infirmities and decays of old age? Take comfort then from thy communion with the Lord at his table. Didst thou not

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see there how Christ himself bore our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows, when he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, and so took away the sting of them, extracted out of them the wormwood and the gall, which he himself drank in a bitter cup, and infused into them the comforts of his love, which he has given us to drink of? Didst not thou there receive a sealed pardon? Did not God, in love to thy soul, cast all thy sins behind thy back, and tell thee so? Thou hast then no reason to complain of bodily distempers: (Isa. 33. 24.) *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick;* How so? How can one that is sick, avoid saying, I am sick? Why, it follows, *The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.* And sickness is nothing, or next to nothing, to those who know their sins are pardoned. When thou didst present thy body to God in that ordinance a living sacrifice, and didst engage that it should be for the Lord, was it not graciously added—*And the Lord for thy body,* 1 Cor. 6. 13. And if the Lord be for thy body, he will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing; and though he may not presently help thee off of it, yet, he will set by thee, and (which speaks the wonderful condescention of divine goodness) *he will make all thy bed in thy sickness,* Ps. 41. 3. And that bed cannot but be made easy, which he has the making of.

Art thou poor, crossed in thine affairs, disappointed in lawful and hopeful designs, clogged with cares, and perhaps reduced to straights? Let the spiritual riches secured to thee in that sealing ordinance, be a balance to the affliction of outward poverty. The God of truth has said, and thou mayest rely upon it, that those who fear him, and seek him, *shall not want any good thing;* not any thing that infinite wisdom sees really good for them. *Trust in the Lord,* therefore, *and do good* with the little thou hast, *so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,* Ps. 37. 3. It is not promised that thou shalt be feasted with varieties and dainties; those who are feasted at God's table need not complain, though they be not feasted at their own: but thou shalt be fed, fed with food convenient for thee. Some good christians, who have been in a very poor condition, have said, that they have made many a meal upon the promises, when they wanted bread: *Verily thou shalt be fed; Pascere Fide,* so the learned Junius reads it, *he fed by faith;* and compares it with Hab. 2. 4. *The just shall live by his faith;* and good living, good feeding it is. *Though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine,* yet, while thou hast in the Lord's Supper seen the rose of Sharon blossoming, and tasted the fruit of the true vine, thou hast reason enough, however it be, to *rejoice in the Lord,* and *to joy in the God of thy salvation,* Hab. 3 17, 18.

Are thy relations a grief to thee? Do those afflict thee of whom thou saidst, *These same shall comfort me?* Suppose thy yoke-fellow unsuitable, children undutiful, parents unkind, friends ungrateful, neighbours injurous, yet the comfort of our relation to God may suffice to make up the loss of comfort in any relation on earth. If man be false, yet God is faithful: If man be harsh, yet God is gracious. Though the waters of our rivers may be mud died, or turned into blood, yet the fountain of life runs always clear, and its stream as pure as chrystal, Rev. 22. 1. It was upon the supposition of family disappointments, that David, in his last words, took comfort from the covenant of grace made with him, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

Are those who are dear to thee removed from thee by death? It is fit that which is so sown should be watered: but sacrament comforts will keep us from sorrowing, *as those that have no hope* for them *that sleep in Jesus.* We have lost the satisfaction we used to have in them, but is not God better to us than ten sons, far better than ten thousand such relations could have been? And yet they are not lost, they are only gone before, and death itself cannot wholly cut us off from communion with them, for *we are come to the spirits of just men made perfect,* and hope to be with them shortly, Heb. 12. 23.

Are the calamities of the church, and of the nation our affliction? It is fit they should be so, for we have eaten and drank into the great body, and as living members must feel from its grievances: but in the Lord's Supper we have seen what provision the grace of God has made for his houshold, and thence may infer the protection under which the providence of God will always keep it safe. The promises that are sealed to us, are sure to all the seed, and the covenant of grace is the rock on which the church is built so firm, that *the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. The Lord* (we see) *hath founded Sion, and the poor of his people shall trust to that.* Let us at this ordinance learn this new song, and sing it often, *Hallelujah, The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*

VI. Are the fears of death a trouble and terror to us? We may fetch from the Lord's Supper that which will enable us, through grace, to triumph over these fears. This is a fear which is often found to have torment, and by reason of it, many weak christians have been all their life-time subject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15. It is likewise a fear which often brings a snare, exposes us to many temptations, and gives Satan advantage against us. There are many, who (we hope) through grace are saved from the second death, and, yet, are afraid of the first death; being more solicitous than they need to be about a dying life, and more timorous than they need to be of a living death, a death that is their way to life.

But the arrests of death, and its harbingers, would not be at all dreadful, if we did but know how to make a due improvement of the comforts we were made partakers of at the Table of the Lord. We there saw Christ dying; dying so great a death, a death in pomp, armed and attended with all its terrors, dying in pain, in shame, in darkness, in agonies; and yet the Son of God, and the heir of all things, This takes off the reproach of death; so that now we need not be ashamed to die: if Christ humbled himself, and became obedient to death, why should not we? It likewise takes off the terror of death, so that now we need not be afraid to die. When we walk through that

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that dark and dismal valley, we have no reason to fear any evil; while the great shepherd of the sheep is not only gone before us, but goes along with us, his rod and his staff they comfort us, Ps. 23. 4. He is our leader; and, we do not approve ourselves his good soldiers, if we be not willing to follow him whithersoever he goes. He went through death to the joy set before him; and we cannot expect to follow him to that joy, but in that way. Through this Jordan, we must enter Canaan.

The death of Christ has broken the power of death, and taken from it all the armour wherein it trusted; so that now let it do its worst, it cannot do a good christian any real prejudice, for it cannot separate him from the love of God. Surely the bitterness of death is now past, by Christ's tasting it, Heb. 2. 9. The sharpness of death Christ has overcome, by submitting to it, and so has opened the kingdom of Heaven to believers. The *sucking child may* now *play upon* this *hole of the asp*, and *the weaned child may put his hand in* this *cockatrice den:* for death itself shall not hurt or destroy, in all God's Holy Mountain.

Nay, the death of Christ has quite altered the property of death. It not only ceases to be an enemy, but it is become a friend: the covenant of grace, sealed to us in the Lord's Supper, assures us of the unspeakable kindness that even death itself shall do us. *All things are yours;——and death*, among the rest, 1 Cor. 3. 22. As the death of Christ was the purchase of our happiness, so our own death is the passage to our happiness; it discharges us from our prison, and conveys us to our palace. The promise of eternal life sealed to us, and the earnests of that life communicated to us in this ordinance, enable us to look with comfort on the other side death; and then we need not look with terror on this side it.

Art thou afraid to give up thy soul! Thou hast already given it up to God in Christ, to be sanctified; and, therefore, mayest then with a holy cheerfulness give it up to God in Christ, to be saved. The dying Jesus, by committing his spirit into the hands of his Father, has emboldened all his followers in a dying hour to do the same. Why should that soul be afraid to go out of the body, and quit this world of sense, which is through Grace allied to, and by faith acquainted with, the blessed world of spirits, and is sure of a guard of angels ready to convey it to that world, and a faithful friend ready to receive it into that world.

Art thou afraid to put off thy body? The covenant sealed to thee at the Lord's Table, is a covenant with thy dust, and gives commandment concerning thy bones. Fear not the return of thine earth to its earth it is in order to its being refined, and in due time restored to its soul, a glorious and incorruptible body. Spiritual blessings are, perhaps for this reason, in the sacraments represented and applied by outward and sensible signs, in the participation of which the body is concerned; that we might thereby be confirmed in our believing hope of the glory prepared and reserved for these bodies of ours, these vile bodies; which, even, while they lie in the grave, still remain united to Christ; and when they shall be raised out of the grave, shall be made like unto his glorious body.

Let the sinners in Sion be afraid to die; let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites, when their souls shall be required of them: let their hearts meditate terror, and their faces gather blackness; who, having lived a carnal, worldly, sensual life, have no interest in Christ and the promises; for they shall call in vain to rocks and mountains to shelter them from the wrath of the Lamb. But let them who have joined themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful to that covenant, lift up their heads with joy, for their redemption draws nigh: death will shortly rend the interposing veil of sense and time, will shortly scatter all the dark and threatening clouds which here hang over our heads, and will open to us a bright and glorious scene in that blessed world of light, life, and love; where we shall enjoy the substance of those things, which at the Lord's Table we are refreshed with the shadows of, and the full vintage of those joys, which here we have the first fruits of.

Learn then, my soul, learn thou to triumph over death and the grave: *O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?* Having laid up thy treasure within the veil, and remitted thy best effects, and best affections thither, and having received the earnest of the purchased possession, be still looking, still longing for that blessed hope. Fear not death, for it cannot hurt thee, but desire it rather, for it will greatly befriend thee. When the *earthly house of this tabernacle* shall *be dissolved*, thou shalt remove to *the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* Wish then, wish daily for the coming of thy Lord, for he shall appear to thy joy. *The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie.* Look through the windows of this house of clay, like the mother of Sisera, when she waited for her son's triumphs, and cry through the lattice, *Why is his chariot so long in coming, why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

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DIRECTIONS

FOR

DAILY COMMUNION WITH GOD,

IN THREE DISCOURSES,

SHEWING HOW TO BEGIN, HOW TO SPEND, AND HOW TO CLOSE EVERY DAY WITH GOD.

To the Reader.

THE two first of these discourses were preached (that is, the substance of them) at the morning lecture at Bednal-Green, the former, Aug. 13. the other, Aug. 21, 1712. The latter of them I was much importuned to publish by many who heard it; which I then had no thoughts at all of doing, because in divers practical treatises, we have excellent directions given, of the same nature and tendency, by better hands than mine. But upon second thoughts I considered, that both those sermons of beginning and spending the day with God, put together, might perhaps be of some use to those into whose hands those larger treatises do not fall. And the truth is, the subject of them is of such a nature, that if they may be of any use, they may be of general and lasting use; whereupon I entertained the thought of writing them over, with very large additions throughout, as God should enable me, for the press. Communicating this thought to some of my friends, they very much encouraged me to proceed in it, but advised me to add a third discourse of closing the day with God, which I thereupon took for my subject at an evening lecture, September 3, and have likewise much enlarged and altered that. And so this came to be what it is.

I am not without hopes, that something may hereby be contributed among plain people, by the blessing of God upon the endeavour, and the working of his grace with it, to the promoting of serious godliness, which is the thing I aim at. And yet I confess that I should not have published it, had I not designed it for a present to my dearly beloved friends in the country, whom I have lately been rent from.

And to them, with the most tender affection, and most sincere respects, I dedicate it, as a testimony of my abiding concern for their spiritual welfare; hoping and praying, that their conversation may be in every thing as becomes the Gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see them, or else be absent, I may hear comfortably of their affairs, that they stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel.

I am,

Their cordial and affectionate

Well-wisher,

Sept. 8, 1712. MAT. HENRY.

THE

FIRST DISCOURSE,

SHEWING HOW TO BEGIN EVERY DAY WITH GOD.

Psalm 5. 3.

My voice shalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

YOU would think it a rude question, if I should ask you, and yet I must intreat you seriously to ask yourselves, What brings you hither so early this morning? and what is your business here? Whenever we are attending on God in holy ordinances (nay, wherever we are) we should be able to give a good answer to the question which God put to the Prophet, *What dost thou here, Elijah?* As when we return from holy ordinances, we should be able to give a good answer to the question, which Christ put to those who attended on John Baptist's ministry, *What went ye out into the wilderness to see?*

It is surprising to see so many assembled together here; surely the fields are white unto the harvest; and I am willing to hope, it is not merely for a walk this pleasant morning, that you are come hither; or for curiosity, because the morning-lecture was never here before; that it is not for company, or to meet your friends here, but that you are come with a pious design to give glory to God, and to receive grace from him, and in both to keep up your communion with him. And if you ask us, who are ministers, what our business is, we hope we can truly say, it is (as God shall enable us) to assist and further you herein. *Comest thou peaceably?* said the elders of Bethlehem to Samuel; and so perhaps you will say to us: to which we answer, as the Prophet did, *Peaceably*, we come to sacrifice unto the Lord, and invite you to the sacrifice.

While the lecture continues with you, you have an opportunity of more than doubling your morning devotions; besides your worshipping of God in secret, and in your families, which this must not supersede, or justle out, you here call upon God's name in the solemn assembly; and it is as much your business in all such

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such exercises to pray a prayer together, as it is to hear a sermon; and it is said, the original of the morning exercise was a meeting for prayer, at the time when the nation was groaning under the dreadful desolating judgment of a civil war. You have also an opportunity of conversing with the word of God; you have *precept upon precept,* and *line upon line:* O that as the opportunity awakens you morning by morning, (so as the Prophet speaks) your *ears* may be *wakened to hear as the learned,* Isa. 50. 4.

But this is not all; we desire that such impressions may be made upon you by this cluster of opportunities, as you may always abide under the influence of; that this morning-lecture may leave you better disposed to morning-worship ever after; that these frequent acts of devotion may so confirm the habit of it, as that henceforward your daily worship may become more easy, and if I may so say, in a manner natural to you.

For your help herein, I would recommend to you holy David's example in the text, who having resolved in general, (v. 2.) that he would abound in the duty of prayer, and abide by it, *Unto thee will I pray,* here fixes one proper time for it, and that is the morning: *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning;* not in the morning only, David solemnly addressed himself to the duty of prayer three times a day, as Daniel did; *Morning and evening, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud,* Ps. 55. 17. Nay, he does not think that enough, but *Seven times a day will I praise thee,* Ps. 119. 164. But particularly in the morning.

Doct. It is our wisdom and duty, to begin every day with GOD.

Let us observe in the text.

I. The good work itself that we are to do. God must hear our voice, we must direct our prayer to him, and we must look up.

II. The special time appointed, and observed for the doing of this good work; and that is in the morning, and again in the morning, that is, every morning, as duly as the morning comes.

I. The good work which by the example of David we are here taught to do, is in one word to pray; a duty dictated by the light and law of nature, which plainly and loudly speaks, *Should not a people seek unto their God?* But which the Gospel of Christ gives us much better instructions in and encouragements to, than any that nature furnishes us with; for it tells us what we must pray for, in whose name we must pray, and by whose assistance, and invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace, and to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. This work we are to do not in the morning only, but at other times, at all times; we read of preaching the word out of season, but we do not read of praying out of season, for that is never out of season; the throne of grace is always open, and humble supplicants are always welcome, and cannot come unseasonably.

But let us see how David here expresses his pious resolutions to abide by this duty.

1. *My voice shalt thou hear.* Two ways David may here be understood: either,

(1.) As promising himself a gracious acceptance with God, *Thou shalt,* that is, thou wilt hear my voice, when in the morning I direct my prayer to thee; so it is the language of his faith, grounded upon God's promise, that his ear shall be always open to his peoples cry. He had prayed, v. 1. *Give ear to my words, O Lord;* and v. 2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry;* and here he receives an answer to that prayer, *Thou wilt hear,* I doubt not but thou wilt; and though I have not presently a grant of the thing I prayed for, yet I am sure my prayer is heard, is accepted, and comes up for a memorial, as the prayer of Cornelius did; it is put upon the file, and shall not be forgotten. If we look inward, and can say by experience, that GOD has prepared our heart, we may look upward, may look forward, and say with confidence, that he will cause his ear to hear.

We may be sure of this, and we must pray in the assurance of it, in a full assurance of this faith, that wherever God finds a praying heart, he will be found a prayer-hearing God; though the voice of prayer be a low voice, a weak voice, yet, if it come from an upright heart, it is a voice that God will hear, that he will hear with pleasure, it is his delight, and that he will return a gracious answer to; he has heard thy prayers, he has seen thy tears. When therefore we stand praying, this ground we must stand upon, this principle we must stand to, nothing doubting, nothing wavering, that whatever we ask of God as a Father, in the name of Jesus Christ the Mediator, according to the will of God revealed in the scripture, it shall be granted us either in kind or kindness; so the promise is, (John 16. 23.) and the truth of it is sealed to by the concurring experience of the saints in all ages, ever since man began to call upon the name of the Lord, that Jacob's God never yet said to Jacob's seed, *Seek ye me in vain,* and he will not begin now. When we come to God by prayer, if we come a right we may be confident of this, that notwithstanding the distance between heaven and earth, and our great unworthiness to have any notice taken of us, or any favour shewed us; yet God does hear our voice, and will not turn away our prayer, or his mercy. Or,

(2.) It is rather to be taken, as David's promising God a constant attendance on him, in the way he has appointed. *My voice shalt thou hear,* that is, I will speak to thee: because thou hast inclined thine ear unto me many a time, therefore, I have taken up a resolution to call upon thee at all times, even to the end of my time. Not a day shall pass, but thou shalt hear from me. Not that the voice is the thing that God regards, as they seemed to think, who in prayer made their voice to be heard on high, Isa. 58. 4. Hannah prayed and prevailed, when her voice was not heard; but it is the voice of the heart that is here meant: God said to Moses, *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* when we do not find that he said one word, Exod. 14. 15. Praying is lifting up the soul to God, and pouring out the heart before him; yet, as far as

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the expressing of the devout affections of the heart by words may be of use to fix the thoughts, and to excite and quicken the desires, it is good to draw near to God, not only with a pure heart, but with an humble voice; so must we *render the calves of our lips.*

However, God understands the language of the heart, and that is the language in which we must speak to God; David prays here, v. 1. not only *give ear to my words*, but *consider my meditation*; and Ps. 19. 14. *Let the words of my mouth*, proceeding from *the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight.*

This therefore we have to do in every prayer, we must speak to God, we must write to him: we say we hear from a friend whom we receive a letter from; we must see to it that God hears from us daily.

1. He expects and requires it. Though he has no need of us or our services, nor can be benefited by them; yet he has obliged us to offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise to him continually.

(1.) Thus he will keep us by his authority over us, and keep us continually in mind of our subjection to him, which we are apt to forget. He requires that by prayer we solemnly pay our homage to him, and give honour to his name, that by this act and deed of our own, thus frequently repeated, we may strengthen the obligations we lie under to observe his statutes, and keep his laws, and be more and more sensible of the weight of them. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him*, that by frequent humble adorations of his perfections, thou mayest make a constant humble compliance with his will the more easy to thee. By doing obeisance, we are learning obedience.

(2.) Thus he will testify his love and compassion towards us. It would have been an abundant evidence of his concern for us, and his goodness to us, if he had only said, " Let me hear from you as often as there is occasion; call upon me in the time of trouble or want, and that is enough:" but to shew his complacency in us, as a father, does his affection to his child when he is sending him abroad, he gives us this charge, " Let me hear from you every day, by every post, though you have no particular business;" which shews, that the prayer of the upright is his delight; it is music in his ears. Christ says to his dove, *Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice*, for *sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely*, Cant. 2. 14. And it is to the spouse the church, that Christ speaks in the close of that song of songs, *O thou that dwellest in the gardens*, (in the original it is feminine) *the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to hear it.* What a shame is this to us, that God is more willing to be prayed to, and more ready to hear prayer, than we are to pray?

2. We have something to say to God every day. Many are not sensible of this, and it is their sin and misery: hey live without God in the world; they think they can live without him, are not sensible of their dependance upon him, and their obligations to him, and, therefore, for their parts they have nothing to say to him; he never hears from them, no more than the father did from his prodigal son, when he was upon the ramble, from one week's end to another. They ask scornfully, *What can the almighty do for them?* And then no marvel if they ask next, *What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?* And the result is, they say to the Almighty, *Depart from us*, and so shall their doom be. But I hope better things of you, my brethren, and that you are not of those who cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God; you are already to own that there is a great deal that the almighty can do for you, and that there is profit in praying to him, and therefore resolve to draw nigh to God, that he may draw nigh to you.

We have something to say to God daily.

(1.) As to a friend we love and have freedom with, such a friend we cannot go by without calling on, and never want something to say to, though we have no particular business with him; to such a friend we unbosom ourselves, we profess our love and esteem, and with pleasure communicate our thoughts: Abraham is called the *Friend of God*, and this honour have all the saints: *I have not called you servants*, (says Christ) *but friends; his secret is with the righteous*; we are invited to acquaint ourselves with him, and to walk with him, as one friend walks with another; the fellowship of believers is said to be *with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*; and have we nothing to say to him then?

Is it not errand enough to the throne of his grace to admire his infinite perfections, which we can never fully comprehend, and yet never sufficiently contemplate, and take complacency in? To please ourselves in beholding the beauty of the Lord, and giving him the glory due to his name? Have we not a great deal to say to him in acknowledgment of his condescending grace and favour to us, in manifesting himself to us and not to the world; and in profession of our affection and submission to him: *Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*

God has something to say to us as a friend every day, by the written word, in which we must hear his voice, by his providences, and by our own consciences; and he hearkens and hears whether we have any thing to say to him by way of reply, and we are very unfriendly if we have not. When he says to us, *Seek ye my face*, should not our hearts answer as to one we love, *Thy face Lord will we seek.* When he says to us, " Return ye backsliding children," should not we readily reply, " Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God?" If he speak to us by way of conviction and reproof, ought not we to return an answer by way of confession and submission? If he speak to us by way of comfort, ought not we to reply in praise? If you love God, you cannot be to seek for something to say to him, something for your hearts to pour out before him, which his grace has already put there.

(2.) As to a master we serve, and have business with. Think how numerous and important the concerns are that lie between us and God, and you will readily acknowledge that you have a great deal to say to him. We have a constant dependance upon him, all our expectation is from him; we have constant dealings with him; he is the God with whom we have to do, Heb. 4. 13.

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Do we not know that our happiness is bound up in his favour; it is life, the life of our souls; it is better than life, than the life of our bodies: and have we not business with God to seek his favour, to intreat it with our whole hearts, to beg as for our lives that he would lift up the light of his countenance upon us, and to plead Christ's righteousness, as that only through which we can hope to obtain God's loving-kindness?

Do we not know that we have offended God, that by sin we have made ourselves obnoxious to his wrath and curse, and that we are daily contracting guilt? And have we not then business enough with him to confess our fault and folly, to ask for pardon in the blood of Christ, and in him who is our peace to make our peace with God, and renew our covenants with him in his own strength, to go and sin no more?

Do we not know that we have daily work to do for God, and our own souls, the work of the day that is to be done in its day? And have we not then business with God to beg of him to shew us what he would have us to do, to direct us in it, and strengthen us for it? To seek to him for assistance and acceptance, that he will work in us both to will and to do that which is good, and then countenance and own his own work? Such business as this the servant has with his master.

Do we not know that we are continually in danger? Our bodies are so, and their lives and comforts, we are continually surrounded with diseases and deaths, whose arrows fly at midnight, and at noon-day; and have we not then business with God, going out and coming in, lying down, and rising up, to put ourselves under the protection of his providence, to be the charge of his holy angels? Our souls much more are so, and their lives and comforts; it is those our adversary the Devil, a strong and subtle adversary, wars against, and seeks to devour; and have we not then business with God to put ourselves under the protection of his grace, and clad ourselves with his armour, that we may be able to stand against the wiles and violences of Satan; so as we may neither be surprised into sin by a sudden temptation, nor over-powered by a strong one?

Do we not know that we are dying daily, that death is working in us, and hastening towards us; and that death fetches us to judgment, and judgment fixes us in our everlasting state? And have we not then something to say to God in preparation of what is before us? Shall we not say, Lord make us to know our end! Lord teach us to number our days! have we not business with God to judge ourselves that we may not be judged, and to see that our matters be right and good?

Do we not know that we are members of that body whereof Christ is the head; and are we not concerned to approve ourselves living members? Have we not then business with God upon the public account to make intercession for his church? Have we nothing to say for Zion? Nothing in behalf of Jerusalem's ruined walls? Nothing for the peace and welfare of the land of our nativity? Are we not of the family, or but babes in it, that we concern not ourselves in the concerns of it?

Have we no relations, no friends who are dear to us, whose joys and griefs we share in? and have we nothing to say to God for them? no complaints to make, no requests to make known? Are none of them sick or in distress? none of them tempted or disconsolate? And have we not errands, at the throne of grace, to beg relief and succour for them?

Now lay all this together, and then consider whether you have not something to say to God every day; and particularly in days of trouble, when it is meet to be said unto God, " I have borne chastisement;" and when, if you have any sense of things, you will say unto God, " Do not condemn me."

3. If you have all this to say to God, What should hinder you from saying it? from saying it every day? Why should not he hear your voice, when you have so many errands to him?

(1.) Let not distance hinder you from saying it. You have occasion to speak with a friend, but he is a great way off, you cannot reach him, you know not where to find him, nor how to get a letter to him, and therefore your business with him is undone: but this needs not keep you from speaking to God; for though it is true, God is in heaven, and we are upon earth, yet, he is nigh to his praying people in all that they call upon him for; he hears their voice wherever they are. *Out of the depths I have cried unto thee,* says David, Ps. 130. 1. *From the ends of the earth I will cry unto thee,* Ps. 61. 2. Nay, *Jonah* says, *Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. Undique ad Cælos tantundem est Viæ—In all places we may find a way open heavenward*: thanks be to him who by his own blood has consecrated for us a new and living way into the holiest, and settled a correspondence between heaven and earth.

(2.) Let not fear hinder you from saying what you have to say to God. You have business with a great man it may be; but he is so far above you, or so stern and severe toward all his inferiors, that you are afraid to speak to him, and you have none to introduce you, or to speak a good word for you, and therefore you choose rather to drop your cause: but there is no occasion for your being thus discouraged in speaking to God; you may come boldly to the throne of his grace, you have there a παῤῥησία, *a Liberty of speech;* leave to pour out your whole souls. And such are his compassions to humble supplicants, that even his terror need not make them afraid. It is against the mind of GOD that you should frighten yourselves, he would have you encourage yourselves, for *you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption,* by which you are brought into this among other the glorious liberties of the children of God. Nor is this all, we have one to introduce us, and to speak for us, an advocate with the Father. Did ever children need an advocate with a father? But that by those two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, we have not only the relation of the father to depend upon,

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upon, but the interest and intercession of an Advocate; a *High Priest over the house of God,* in whose name we have access with confidence.

(3.) Let not his knowing what your business is, and what you have to say to him hinder you; you have business with such a friend, but you think you need not put yourselves to any trouble about it, for he is already apprized of it; he knows what you want, and what you desire, and therefore it is no matter for speaking to him: it is true, all your desire is before God, he knows your wants and burthens, but he will know them from you; he has promised you relief, but his promise must be put in suit, and he will for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them, Ezek. 36. 37. Though we cannot by our prayers give him any information, yet we must by our prayers give him honour. It is true, nothing we can say can have any influence upon him, or move him to shew us mercy, but it may have an influence upon ourselves, and help to put us into a frame fit to receive mercy. It is a very easy and reasonable condition of his favours, *Ask, and it shall be given you.* It was to teach us the necessity of praying, in order to our receiving favour, that Christ put that strange question to the blind men, *What would ye that I should do unto you?* He knew what they would have, but those that touch the top of the golden scepter must be ready to tell, *What is their petition,* and *what is their request.*

(4.) Let not any other business hinder our saying what we have to say to God. We have business with a friend perhaps, but we cannot do it because we have not leisure; we have something else to do, which we think more needful; but we cannot say so concerning the business we have to do with God; for that is without doubt the one thing needful, to which every thing else must be made to give way. It is not at all necessary to our happiness that we be great in the world, or raise estates to such a pitch: but it is absolutely necessary that we make our peace with God, that we obtain his favour, and keep ourselves in his love. Therefore no business for the world will serve to excuse our attendance upon God; but, on the contrary, the more important our worldly business, the more need we have to apply ourselves to God by prayer for his blessing upon it, and so to take him along with us in it. The closer we keep to prayer, and to God in prayer, the more will all our affairs prosper.

Shall I prevail with you now to let God frequently hear from you? let him hear your voice, though it be but the voice of your breathing, (Lam. 3. 56.) that is a sign of life; though it be the voice of your groanings, and those so weak that they cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26. Speak to him, though it be in a broken language, as Hezekiah did; *Like a crane or a swallow so I did chatter,* Isaiah 38. 14. Speak often to him; he is always within hearing. Hear him speaking to you, and have an eye to that in every thing you say to him; as when you write an answer to a letter of business you lay it before you; God's word must be the guide of your desires, and the ground of your expectations in prayer; nor can you expect that he should give a gracious ear to what you say to him, if you turn a deaf ear to what he says to you.

You see that you have frequent occasion to speak with God, and therefore are concerned to grow in your acquaintance with him, to take heed of doing any thing to displease him; and to strengthen your interest in the Lord Jesus, through whom alone it is that you have access with boldness to him. Keep your voice in tune for prayer, and let all your language be a pure language, that you may be fit to call on the name of the Lord. And in every prayer remember you are speaking to God, and make it to appear you have an awe of him upon your spirits; let us not be rash with our mouth, nor hasty to utter any thing before God, but let every word be well weighed, because *God is in heaven, and we upon earth,* Ecc. 5. 2. And if he had not invited and encouraged us to do it, it had been unpardonable presumption for such sinful worms as we are to speak to the Lord of Glory, Gen. 18, 27. And we are concerned to speak from the heart, heartily, for it is for our lives, and for the lives of our souls, that we are speaking to him.

2. We must direct our prayer unto God. He must not only hear our voice, but we must with deliberation and design address ourselves to him. In the original it is no more but *I will direct unto thee;* it might be supplied, *I will direct* my soul *unto thee,* agreeing with Ps. 25. 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* Or, *I will direct my* affections *to thee;* having set my love upon thee, I will let out my love to thee. Our translation supplies it very well, *I will direct my prayer unto thee.* That is,

(1.) When I pray to thee I will direct my prayers; and then it denotes a fixedness of thought, and a close application of mind, to the duty of prayer. We must go about it solemnly, as those who have something of moment much at heart, and much in view therein, and therefore dare not trifle in it. When we go to pray we must not give the sacrifice of fools who think not either what is to be done, or what is to be gained, but speak the words of the wise, who aim at some good end in what they say, and suit it to that end; we must have in our eye God's glory, and our own true happiness; and so well ordered is the covenant of grace, that God has been pleased therein to twist interests with us, so that in seeking his glory we really and effectually seek our own true interests. This is directing the prayer, as he that shoots an arrow at a mark directs it, and with a fixed eye and steady hand takes aim right. This is engaging the heart to approach to God, and in order to that disengaging it from every thing else. He who takes aim with one eye shuts the other; if we would direct a prayer to God, we must look off all other things, must gather in our wandering thoughts, must summon them all to draw near and give their attendance, for here is work to be done that needs them all, and is well worthy of them all; thus we must be able to say with the Psalmist, O God, *my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed.*

(2.) When I direct my prayer, I will *direct it to thee.* And so it speaks,

[1.] The

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[1.] The sincerity of our habitual intention in prayer. We must not direct our prayer to men, that we may gain praise and applause with them, as the Pharisees did, who proclaimed their devotions as they did their alms, that they might gain a reputation, which they knew how to make a hand of: *Verily they have their reward,* men commend them, but God abhors their pride and hypocrisy. We must not let our prayers run at large, as they did who said, *Who will shew us any good?* nor direct them to the world, courting its smiles, and pursuing its wealth, as those who are therefore said not to *cry unto God with their hearts,* because they *assembled themselves for corn and wine,* Hos. 7. 14. Let not self, carnal self, be the spring and centre of your prayers, but God; let the eye of the soul be fixed upon him as your highest end in all your applications to him; let this be the habitual disposition of your souls, to be to your God for a name and a praise; and let this be your design in all your desires, that God may be glorified, and by this let them all be directed, determined, sanctified, and when need is over-ruled. Our Saviour has plainly taught us this, in the first petition of the Lord's prayer; which is *Hallowed be thy name*: in that we fix our end, and other things are desired in order to that; in that the prayer is directed to the glory of God, in all that whereby he has made himself known, the glory of his holiness; and it is with an eye to the sanctifying of his name, that we desire his kingdom may come, and his will be done, and that we may be fed, and kept, and pardoned. An habitual aim at God's glory is that sincerity which is our gospel perfection, that single eye, which where it is, the whole body, the whole soul is full of light. Thus the prayer is directed to God.

[2.] It speaks the steadiness of our actual regard to God in prayer. We must direct our prayer to God, that is, we must continually think of him, as one with whom we have to do in prayer. We must direct our prayer as we direct our speech to the person we have business with. The bible is a letter God has sent to us, prayer is a letter we send to him; now you know it is essential to a letter that it be directed, and material that it be directed right; if it be not, it is in danger of miscarrying, which may be of ill consequence; you pray daily, and therein send letters to God; you know not what you lose if your letters miscarry: will you therefore take instructions how to direct to him?

Give him his titles, as you do, when you direct to a person of honour; address yourselves to him as the great Jehovah, God *over all, blessed for evermore;* the *King of Kings;* and *Lord of Lords;* as *the Lord God, gracious and merciful;* let your hearts and mouths be filled with holy adorings and admirings of him, and fasten upon those titles of his, which are proper to strike a holy awe of him upon your minds, that you may worship him with reverence and godly fear. Direct your prayer to him as the God of glory, with whom is terrible Majesty, and whose greatness is unsearchable, that you may not dare to trifle with him, or to mock him in what you say to him.

Take notice of your relation to him, as his children, and let not that be overlooked and lost in your awful adorations of his glories. I have been told of a good man, among whose experiences, which he kept a record of, after his death, this among other things was found; that such a time in secret prayer, his heart at the beginning of the duty was much enlarged, in giving to God those titles which are awful and tremendous, in calling him the *Great,* the *Mighty,* and the *Terrible* God; but going on thus he checked himself with this thought, "And why not my Father?" Christ has both by his precept and by his pattern taught us to address ourselves to God as *Our Father;* and the Spirit of Adoption teaches us to cry *Abba, Father:* a son, though a prodigal, when he returns and repents, may go to his father, and say unto him, *Father, I have sinned;* and though no more worthy to be called a son, yet humbly bold may call him "Father." When Ephraim bemoans himself *as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke,* God bemoans him as a *dear son,* as a *pleasant child,* (Jer. 31. 18, 20.) and if God is not ashamed, let us not be afraid to own the relation.

Direct your prayer to him in heaven; this our Saviour has taught us in the preface to the Lord's Prayer, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* Not that he is confined to the Heavens, or as if the Heaven, or the Heaven of Heavens could contain him; but there he is said to have prepared his throne, not only his throne of government by which his kingdom ruleth over all, but his throne of grace to which we must by faith draw near. We must eye him as God in Heaven, in opposition to the Gods of the heathens, which dwelt in temples made with hands. Heaven is a high place, and we must address ourselves to him as a God infinitely above us; it is the fountain of light, and to him we must address ourselves as the Father of lights; it is a place of prospect, and we must see his eye upon us, from thence beholding all the children of men; it is a place of purity, and we must in prayer eye him as a Holy God, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness; it is the firmament of his power, and we must depend upon him as one to whom power belongs. When our Lord Jesus prayed, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, to direct us whence to expect the blessings we need.

Direct this letter to be left with the Lord Jesus, the only Mediator between God and Man; it will certainly miscarry if it be not put into his hand, who is that other angel who puts much incense to the prayers of saints, and so perfumed presents them to the Father, Rev. 8. 3. What we ask of the Father must be in his name; what we expect from the Father must be by his hand; for he is the High Priest of our profession, who is ordained for men, to offer their gifts, Heb. 5. 1. Direct the letter to be left with him, and he will deliver it with care and speed, and will make our service acceptable. Mr. George Herbert, in his Poem, called "The Bag," having pathetically described the wound in Christ's side as he was hanging on the cross, makes him speak thus to all believers as he was going to heaven:

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If you have any thing to send or write,
I have no bag, but here is room,
Unto my Father's hands and sight,
Believe me, it shall safely come;
That I shall mind what you impart,
Look, you may put it very near my heart.
Or if hereafter any of my friends
Will use me in this kind, the door
Shall still be open, what he sends
I will present, and something more,
Not to his hurt; sighs will convey
Any thing to me; hark, despair, away.

3. We must look up. That is,

(1.) We must look up in our prayers, as those who speak to one above us, infinitely above us, the *High and Holy one that inhabiteth eternity;* as those who expect every good and perfect gift to come from above, from the Father of Lights; as those who desire in prayer to enter into the holiest, and to draw near with a true heart. With an eye of faith we must look above the world and every thing in it, must look beyond the things of time. What is this world, and all things here below, to one that knows how to put a due estimate upon spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ Jesus? The spirit of a man at death goes upward, (Ecc. 3. 21.) for it returns to God who gave it; and therefore, as mindful of its original, it must in every prayer look upward toward its God, toward its home, as having set its affections on things above, wherein it has laid up its treasure. Let us, therefore, in prayer lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens. It was anciently usual in some churches for the minister to stir up the people to pray with this word, *Sursum Corda,—Up with your hearts; unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our souls.*

(2.) We must look up after our prayers.

[1.] With an eye of satisfaction and pleasure; looking up is a sign of cheerfulness, as a down-look is a melancholy one. We must look up as those who having by prayer referred ourselves to God, are easy and well pleased, and with an entire confidence in his wisdom and goodness patiently expect the issue. Hannah, when she had prayed, looked up, looked pleasant: she went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad, 1. Sam. 1. 18. Prayer is heartsease to a good christian; and when we have prayed we should look up, as those who through grace have found it so.

[2.] With an eye of observation, what returns God makes to our prayers. We must look up as one who has shot an arrow, looks after it to see how near it comes to the mark; we must look within us, and observe what the frame of our spirits is after we have been at prayer, how well satisfied they are in the will of God, and how well disposed to accommodate themselves to it; we must look about us, and observe how Providence works concerning us, that if our prayers be answered, we may return to give thanks; if not, that we may remove what hinders, and may continue waiting. Thus we must set ourselves upon our watch-tower to see what God will say unto us, and must be ready to hear it, (Ps. 85. 8.) expecting that God will give us an answer of peace, and resolving that we will return no more to folly. Thus must we keep up our communion with God; hoping that whenever we lift up our hearts unto him, he will lift up the light of his countenance upon us. Sometimes the answer is quick, *While they are yet speaking I will hear;* quicker than the return of any of your posts, but if it be not, when we have prayed we must wait.

Let us learn thus to direct our prayers, and thus to look up; to be inward with God in every duty, to make heart-work of it, or we make nothing of it. Let us not worship in the outward court, when we are commanded and encouraged to enter within the vail.

II. The particular time fixed in the text for this good work is the morning; and the Psalmist seems to lay an emphasis upon this in the morning, and again in the morning; not then only, but then to begin with; let that be one of the hours of prayer. Under the law we find that every morning there was a lamb offered in sacrifice, (Exod. 29. 39.) and every morning the priests burned incense, (Exod. 30. 7.) and the singers stood every morning to thank the Lord, 1 Chro. 23. 30. And so it was appointed in Ezekiel's temple, Ezek. 46. 13, 14, 15. By which an intimation was plainly given, that the spiritual sacrifices should be offered by the spiritual priests every morning, as duly as the morning comes. Every christian should pray in secret, and every master of a family with his family morning by morning; and there is good reason for it.

1. The morning is the first part of the day, and it is fit that he that is first should have the first, and be first served. The Heathen could say, *A Jove Principium—Let your beginning be with Jupiter.* Whatever you do, begin with God. The world had its beginning from him, we had our's, and therefore whatever we begin, it concerns us to take him along with us in it. The days of our life, as soon as ever the sun of reason rises in the soul, should be devoted to God, and employed in his service; *From the womb of the morning let* Christ have *the dew of the youth,* Ps. 110. 3. The first-fruits were always to be the Lord's, and the firstlings of the flock. By morning and evening prayer we give glory to him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last; with him we must begin and end the day, begin and end the night, who is the beginning and the end, the first cause, and the last end.

Wisdom has said, *Those that seek me early shall find me;* early in their lives, early in the day; for hereby we give to God that which he ought to have, the preference above other things. Hereby we shew that we are in care to please him, and to approve ourselves to him, and that we seek him diligently. What we do earnestly we are said in Scripture to do early, Ps. 101. 8. Industrious men rise betimes; David expresses the strength and warmth of his devotion, when he says, *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee,* Ps. 63. 1.

2. In the morning we are fresh and lively, and in the best frame. When our spirits are revived with the rest and sleep of the night, and we live a kind of new life; and the fatigues of the day before are forgotten; the God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, yet, when he exerts

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exerts himself more than ordinary on his people's behalf, he is said to *awake as one out of sleep*, Ps. 78. 65. If ever we be good for any thing, it is in the morning; it is therefore become a proverb, *Aurora Musis Amica—The morning is a friend to the muses*; and if the morning be a friend to the muses, I am sure it is no less so to the graces. As he that is the first should have the first; so he that is the best should have the best; and when we are fittest for business we should apply ourselves to that which is the most needful business.

Worshipping God is work that requires the best powers of the soul, when they are at the best; and it well deserves them; how can they be better bestowed, or so as to turn to a better account? Let *all that is within me bless his holy name*, says David, and all little enough. If there be any gift in us by which God may be honoured, the morning is the time to stir it up, (2 Tim. 1. 6.) when our spirits are refreshed, and have gained new vigour; then *Awake my glory, awake psaltery and harp, for I myself will awake early*, Ps. 57. 8. Then let us stir up ourselves to take hold on God.

3. In the morning we are most free from company and business, and ordinarily have the best opportunity for solitude and retirement; unless we be of those sluggards who lie in bed with *yet a little sleep, a little slumber*, till the work of their calling calls them up, with, *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?* It is the wisdom of those who have much to do in the world, that they have scarce a minute to themselves of all day, to take time in the morning before business crowds in upon them, for the business of their religion; that they may be intire for it, and therefore the more intent upon it.

As we are concerned to worship God, when we are least burthened with deadness and dulness within, so also when we are least exposed to distraction and diversion from without; the Apostle intimates how much it should be our care to attend upon the Lord without distraction, 1 Cor. 7. 35. And therefore that one day in seven, (and it is the first day too, the morning of the week) which is appointed for holy work, is appointed to be a day of rest from other work. Abraham leaves all at the bottom of the hill, when he goes up into the mount to worship God. In the morning, therefore, let us converse with God, and apply ourselves to the concerns of the other life, before we are entangled in the affairs of this life. Our Lord Jesus has set us an example of this, who, because his day was wholly filled up with public business for God and the souls of men, rose up in the morning a great while before day, and before company came in, and went out into a solitary place, and there prayed, Mat. 1. 35.

4. In the morning we have received fresh mercies from God, which we are concerned to acknowledge with thankfulness to his praise. He is continually doing us good, and loading us with his benefits. Every day we have reason to bless him, for every day he is blessing us; in the morning particularly; and, therefore, as he is giving out to us the fruits of his favour, which are said to be *new every morning*, (Lam. 3. 23.) because though the same we had the morning before, they are still forfeited, and still needed, and upon that account may be called still new; so we should be still returning the expressions of our gratitude to him, and of other pious and devout affections, which like the fire on the altar, must be new every morning, Lev. 6. 12.

Have we had a good night? and have we not an errand to the throne of grace to return thanks for it? How many mercies concurred to make it a good night! Distinguishing mercies granted to us, but denied to others; many have not where to lay their heads, our Master himself had not; *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*; but we have houses to dwell in, quiet and peaceable habitations, perhaps stately ones; we have beds to lie in, warm and easy ones, perhaps beds of ivory, fine ones, such as they stretched themselves upon who were at ease in Zion; and are not put to wander in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, as some of the best of God's saints have been forced to do, of whom the world was not worthy. Many have beds to lie on, yet dare not, or cannot lie down in them, being kept up either by the sickness of their friends, or the fear of their enemies. But we have laid us down, and there has been none to make us afraid; no alarms of the sword, either of war or persecution. Many lay them down and cannot sleep, but are full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day, through pain of body, or anguish of mind. Wearisome nights are appointed to them, and their eyes are held waking; but we have laid us down and slept without any disturbance, and our sleep was sweet and refreshing, the pleasant parenthesis of our cares and toils; it is God who has given us sleep, has given it us as he gives it to his beloved. Many lay them down and sleep, and never rise again, they sleep the sleep of death, and their beds are their graves; but we have slept and waked again, have rested, and are refreshed, we shake ourselves, and it is with us as at other times, because the Lord has sustained us; and if he had not upheld us, we had sunk with our own weight when we fell asleep, Ps. 3. 5.

Have we a pleasant morning? Is the light sweet to us, the light of the sun, the light of the eyes, do these rejoice the heart? and ought we not to own our obligations to him who opens our eyes, and opens the eye-lids of the morning upon us? Have we clothes to put on in the morning, garments that are warm upon us, Job 37. 17. Change of raiment, not for necessity only, but for ornament? We have them from God; it is his wool and his flax that is given to cover our nakedness, and the morning when we dress ourselves is the proper time of returning him thanks for it; yet, I doubt, we do it not so constantly as we do for our food when we sit down to our tables, though we have as much reason to do it. Are we in health and at ease! Have we been long so? We ought to be thankful for a constant series of mercies, as for particular instances of it, especially considering how many are sick and in pain, and how much we have deserved to be so.

Perhaps we have experienced some special mercy to ourselves or our families, in preservation from fire or thieves,

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thieves, from dangers we have been aware of, and many more unseen; weeping perhaps endured for a night, and joy came in the morning, and that calls aloud upon us to own the goodness of God. The destroying angel perhaps has been abroad, and the arrow that flies at midnight, and wastes in darkness, has been shot in at other's windows, but our houses have been passed over, thanks be to God for the blood of the covenant, sprinkled upon our door-posts; and for the ministration of the good angels about us, to which we owe it that we have been preserved from the malice of the evil angels against us, those rulers of the darkness of this world, who, perhaps, creep forth like the beasts of prey, when he makes darkness and it is dark. All the glory be to the God of the Angels.

5. In the morning we have fresh matter ministered to us for the adoration of the greatness and glory of God. We ought to take notice, not only of the gifts of God's bounty to us, which we have the comfort and benefit of, they are little narrow souls that confine their regards to them; but we ought to observe the more general instances of his wisdom and power in the kingdom of providence which redound to his honour, and the common good of the universe. The 19th Psalm seems to have been a morning meditation, in which we are directed to observe how *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work;* and to own not only the advantage we receive from their light and influence, but the honour they do to him who stretched out the heavens like a curtain, fixed their pillars, and established their ordinances, according to which they continue to this day, for they are all his servants. *Day unto day utters this speech, and night unto night sheweth his knowledge,* even the eternal power and godhead of the great Creator of the world, and its great ruler. The regular and constant succession and revolution of light and darkness, according to the original contract made between them, that they should reign alternately, may serve to confirm our faith, in that part of divine revelation which gives us the history of the creation, and the promise of God to Noah and his sons, Gen. 8. 22. His *covenant with the day and with the night,* Jer. 33. 20.

Look up in the morning, and see how exactly the day-spring knows its place, knows its time, and keeps them: how the morning light takes hold of the ends of the earth, and of the air which is turned to it as clay to the seal, instantly receiving the impressions of it, Job 38. 12, 13, 14. I was pleased with an expression of a worthy good minister, I heard lately in his thanksgivings to God, for the mercies of the morning: "How many thousand miles" (said he) "has the sun travelled this last night to bring the light of the morning to us poor sinful wretches, that justly might have been buried in the darkness of the night." Look up and see the sun as a bridegroom richly dressed, and greatly pleased, coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race: observe how bright his beams are, how sweet his smiles, how strong his influences: and, if there be no speech or language where their voice is not heard, the voice of these natural preachers, proclaiming the glory of God, it is pity there should be any speech or language where the voice of his worshippers should not be heard, echoing to the voice of those preachers, and ascribing glory to him who thus makes the morning and evening to rejoice. But whatever others do, let him hear our voice to this purpose in the morning, and in the morning let us direct our praises unto him.

6. In the morning we have, or should have had fresh thoughts of God, and sweet meditations on his name, and those we ought to offer up to him in prayer. Have we been, according to David's example, *remembering God upon our beds,* and *meditating upon him in the night-watches?* When we awake, can we say as he did, *We are still with God?* If so, we have a good errand to the throne of grace by the words of our mouths, to offer up to God the meditations of our hearts, and it will be to him a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour. If the heart has been inditing a good matter, let the tongue be as the pen of a ready writer, to pour it out before God, Ps. 45. 1.

We have the word of God to converse with, and we ought to read a portion of it every morning: by it God speaks to us, and in it we ought to meditate day and night, which, if we do, that will send us to the throne of grace, and furnish us with many a good errand there. If God in the morning by his grace direct his word to us, so as to make it reach our hearts, that will engage us to direct our prayer to him.

7. In the morning it is to be feared, we find cause to reflect upon many vain and sinful thoughts that have been in our minds in the night-season; and upon that account it is necessary that we address ourselves to God by prayer in the morning, for the pardon of them. The Lord's prayer seems to be calculated primarily in the letter of it for the morning; for we are taught to pray *for our daily bread this day:* and yet we are then to pray, *Father forgive us our trespasses;* for as in the hurry of the day we contract guilt by our irregular words and actions, so we do in the solitude of the night by our corrupt imaginations, and the wanderings of an unsanctified ungoverned fancy. It is certain, *The thought of foolishness is sin,* Pro. 24. 9. Foolish thoughts are sinful thoughts; the first-born of the old man, the first beginnings of all sin; and how many of these vain thoughts lodge within us wherever we lodge? their name is Legion, for they are many: who can understand these errors! They are more than the hairs of our head. We read of those who work evil upon their beds, because there they devise it; and when the morning is light they practise it, Mic. 2. 1. How often in the night-season is the mind disquieted and distracted with distrustful careful thoughts; polluted with unchaste and wanton thoughts; intoxicated with proud aspiring thoughts; soured and leavened with malicious revengeful thoughts; or, at the best, diverted from devout and pious thoughts by a thousand impertinences: out of the heart proceed evil thoughts which lie down with us, and rise up with us, for out of that corrupt fountain,

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fountain, which, wherever we go, we carry about with us, these streams naturally flow. Yea, and in the multitude of dreams, as well as in many words, there are also divers vanities, Ecc. 5. 2.

And dare we go abroad till we have renewed our repentance, which we are every night as well as every day thus making work for? Are we not concerned to confess to him who knows our hearts, their wanderings from him, to complain of them to him as revolting and rebellious hearts, and bent to backslide; to make our peace with the blood of Christ, and to pray, that the thought of our heart may be forgiven us? we cannot with safety go into the business of the day under the guilt of any sin unrepented of, or unpardoned.

8. In the morning we are addressing ourselves to the work of the day, and therefore are concerned by prayer to seek unto God for his presence and blessing. We come, and are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace, not only for mercy to pardon what has been amiss, but for grace to help in every time of need: and what time is it that is not a time of need with us? And, therefore, what morning should pass without morning-prayer? We read of that which the duty of every day requires, (Ezr. 3. 4.) and in reference to that we must go to GOD every morning to pray for the gracious disposal of his providence concerning us, and the gracious operations of his Spirit upon us.

We have families to look after, it may be, and to provide for, and are in care to do well for them; let us then every morning by prayer commit them to God, put them under the conduct and government of his grace, and then we effectually put them under the care and protection of his providence. Holy Job rose up early in the morning to offer burnt-offerings for his children, and we should do so to offer up prayers and supplications for them, according to the number of them all, Job 1. 5. Thus we cause the blessing to rest on our houses.

We are going about the business of our callings perhaps, let us look up to God in the first place for wisdom and grace to manage them well, in the fear of God, and to abide with him in them; and then we may in faith beg of him to prosper and succeed us in them, to strengthen us for the services of them, to support us under the fatigues of them, to direct the designs of them, and to give us comfort in the gains of them. We have journies to go, it may be, let us look up to God for his presence with us, and go no whither, where we cannot in faith beg of God to go with us.

We have a prospect perhaps of opportunities of doing or getting good, let us look up to God for a heart to every price in our hands, for skill, and will, and courage to improve it, that it may not be a price in the hand of a fool. Every day has its temptations too, some perhaps we foresee, but there may be many more that we think not of, and are therefore concerned to be earnest with God, that we may not be led into any temptation, but guarded against every one; that whatever company we come into, we may have wisdom to do good, and no hurt to them; and to get good, and no hurt by them.

We know not what a day may bring forth; little think in the morning what tidings we may hear, and what events may befall us before night, and should therefore beg of God, grace to carry us through the duties and difficulties which we do not foresee, as well as those which we do; that in order to our standing complete in all the will of God, as the day is, so the strength may be. We shall find that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, and that, therefore, as it is folly to take thought for to-morrow's event, so it is wisdom to take thought for to-day's duty, that sufficient unto this day, and the duty of it, may be the supplies of the divine grace, thoroughly to furnish us for every good word and work, and thoroughly to fortify us against every evil word and work; that we may not think, or speak, or do any thing in all the day, which we may have cause upon any account to wish unthought, unspoke, and undone at night.

The Application.

1. Let this word put us in mind of our omissions; for omissions are sins, and must come into judgment: how often has our morning-worship been either neglected or negligently performed. The work has been either not done at all, or done deceitfully; either no sacrifice at all brought, or it has been the torn, and the lame, and the sick; either no prayer, or the prayer not directed aright, nor lifted up. We have had the morning's mercies, God has not been wanting in the compassion and care of a Father for us, yet we have not done the morning's service, but have been shamefully wanting in the duty of children to him.

Let us be truly humbled before God this morning for our sin and folly herein, that we have so often robbed God of the honour, and ourselves of the benefit of our morning-worship. God has come into our closets, seeking this fruit, but has found none, or next to none; has hearkened and heard, but either we spake not to him at all, or spake not right. Some trifling thing or other has served for an excuse to put it by once, and when once the good usage has been broken in upon, conscience has been wounded, and its bonds weakened, and we have grown more and more cool to it, and perhaps by degrees it has been quite left off.

2. I beseech you, suffer a word of exhortation concerning this. I know not what an influence it would have upon the prosperity of your souls to be constant and sincere in your secret worship, and, therefore, give me leave to press it upon you with all earnestness; let God hear from you every morning, every morning let your prayer be directed to him, and look up.

(1.) Make conscience of your secret worship; keep it up, not only because it has been a custom you have received by tradition from your fathers, but because it is a duty, concerning which you have received commandments from the Lord. Keep up stated times for it, and be true to them. Let those who have hitherto lived in the total neglect, or in the frequent omission of secret prayer, be persuaded henceforward to look upon

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it as the most needful part of their daily business, and the most delightful part of their daily comfort, and do it accordingly with a constant care, and, yet, with a constant pleasure.

No persons who have the use of their reason, can pretend to an exemption from this duty; what is said to some is said to all, "Pray, pray, continue in prayer, and watch in the same." Rich people are not so much bound to labour with their hands as the poor, poor people are not so much bound to give alms as the rich, but both are equally bound to pray. The rich are not above the necessity of the duty, nor the poor below acceptance with God in it. It is not too soon for the youngest to begin to pray; and those whom the multitude of years has taught wisdom, yet at their end will be fools, if they think they have no further occasion for prayer.

Let none plead they cannot pray; for if you are ready to perish with hunger, you could beg and pray for food; and if you see yourselves undone by reason of sin, can you not beg and pray for mercy and grace? Art thou a christian? Never for shame say, Thou canst not pray, for that is as absurd as for a soldier to say, he knows not how to handle a sword, or a carpenter an ax. What are you called for into the fellowship of Christ, but that by him you may have fellowship with God? You cannot pray so well as others, pray as well as you can, and God will accept of you.

Let none plead that they have not time in a morning for prayer; I dare say, you can find time for other things that are less needful; you had better take time from sleep, than want time for prayer; and how can you spend time better, and more to your satisfaction and advantage? All the business of the day will prosper the better, for your beginning it thus with God.

Let none plead that they have not a convenient place to be private in for this work; Isaac retired into the field to pray; and the Psalmist could be alone with God in a corner of the house top. If you cannot perform it with so much secrecy as you would, yet perform it; it is doing it with ostentation, that is the fault, not doing it under observation, when it cannot be avoided. I remember, when I was a young man coming up hither to London in the stage-coach, in King James's time, there happened to be a gentleman in the company, who then was not afraid to own himself a Jesuit; many rencounter he and I had upon the road, and this was one: he was praising the custom in popish countries of keeping the church doors always open, for people to go into at any time to say their prayers: I told him it looked too much like the practice of the Pharisees, that prayed in the synagogues; and did not agree with Christ's command, *Thou when thou prayest* thyself, *enter* not into the church with the doors open, but *into thy closet and shut thy doors;* when he was pressed with that argument, he replied with some vehemence, "I believe, you Protestants say your prayers no where; for" (said he) "I have travelled a great deal in the coach in company with protestants, have often lain in inns in the same room with them, and have carefully watched them, and could never perceive that any of them said his prayers night or morning but one, and he was a presbyterian." I hope there was more malice than truth in what he said: but I mention it as an intimation, that though we cannot be so private as we would be in our devotions, yet we must not omit them, lest the omission should prove not a sin only, but a scandal.

(2.) Make a business of your secret worship, and be not slothful in this business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Take heed lest it degenerate into a formality, and you grow customary in your accustomed services. Go about the duty solemnly: be inward with God in it; it is not enough to say your prayers, but you must pray your prayers, must pray in praying, as Elijah did, Jam. 5. 17. Let us learn to labour fervently in prayer, as Epaphras did, (Col. 4. 12.) and we shall find that it is the hand of the diligent in this duty that makes rich. God looks not at the length of your prayers, nor shall you be heard for your much speaking, or fine speaking; but God requires truth in the inward part, and it is the prayer of the upright that is his delight. When you have prayed look upon yourselves as thereby engaged and encouraged, both to serve God and to trust in him; that the comfort and benefit of your morning devotions may not be as the morning cloud which passes away, but as the morning light which shines more and more.

THE

SECOND DISCOURSE,

SHEWING HOW TO SPEND THE DAY WITH GOD.

PSALM 25. 5.

——*On thee do I wait all the Day.*

WHICH of us is there that can truly say this? Who lives this life of communion with God, which is so much our business, and so much our blessedness? How far short do we come of the spirit of holy David, though we have much better assistances for our acquaintance with God, than the saints then had, by the clearer discoveries of the mediation of Christ. Yet, that weak christians, who are sincere, may not therefore despair, be it remembered, that David himself was not always in such a frame that he could say so; he had his infirmities, and yet was a *man after God's own heart;* we have our's, which, if they be sincerely lamented and striven against, and the habitual bent of our souls be toward God and Heaven, we shall be accepted through Christ, for we are not under the law, but under grace.

However

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However David's profession in the text, shews us what should be our practice, On God we must wait all the day. That denotes two things, a patient expectation, and a constant attendance.

1. It speaks a patient expectation of his coming to us in a way of mercy; and then, all the day must be taken figuratively, for all the time that the wanted and desired mercy is delayed. David, in the former part of the verse, prayed for divine conduct and instruction, *Lead me in thy truth and teach me.* He was at at a loss, and very desirous to know what God would have him to do, and was ready to do it; but God kept him in suspense, he was not yet clear what was the mind and will of God, what course he should steer, and how he should dispose of himself; will he therefore proceed without divine direction? No, *On thee I will wait all the day,* as Abraham attended on the sacrifice from morning till the sun went down, before God gave him an answer to his inquiries concerning his seed, Gen. 15. 5,-12.) and as Habakkuk stood upon his watch-tower to see what answer God would give him, when he consulted his oracle; and though it do not come presently, yet at the end it shall speak and not lie.

David, in the words before the text, had called God *The God of his salvation,* the God on whom he depended for salvation, temporal and eternal salvation, from whom he expected deliverance out of his present distresses, those troubles of his heart that were enlarged, (v. 17.) and out of the hands of those enemies who were ready to triumph over him, (v. 2.) and who hated him with a cruel hatred, (v. 19.) Hoping that God will be his Saviour, he resolves to wait on him all the day, like a genuine son of Jacob, whose dying profession was, (Gen. 49. 18.) *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.* Sometimes God precedes his people with the blessings of his goodness, before they call he answers them, is in the midst of his Church, to help her, and that right early, Ps. 46. 5. But at other times he seems to stand afar off, he delays the deliverance, and keeps them long in expectation of it, nay, and in suspense about it; the light is neither clear nor dark, it is day, and that is all, it is a cloudy and dark day, and it is not till evening time, that it is light, that the comfort comes which they have been kept all the day waiting for; nay, perhaps it comes not till far in the night, it is at midnight that the cry is made, *Behold the bridegroom comes.* The deliverance of the church out of her troubles, the success of her struggles and rest from them, a rescue from under the rod of the wicked, and the accomplishment of all that which God has promised concerning it, is what we must continue humbly waiting upon God for without distrust or impatience; we must wait all the day.

(1.) Though it be a long day; though we be kept waiting a great while, quite beyond our own reckoning: though when we have waited long, we are still obliged to wait longer, and are bid with the Prophet's servant to *go yet seven times* (1 Kin. 18. 43.) before we perceive the least sign of mercy coming. *We looked that this* and the other *had been he that should have delivered Israel,* but are disappointed; *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,* Jer. 8. 20. The time is prolonged, nay, the opportunities are let slip, the summer time, and harvest time, when we thought to have reaped the fruit of all our prayers and pains, and patience, is past and ended, and we are as far as ever from salvation; the time that the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, was long, much longer than it was thought it would have been, when it was first lodged there; it was twenty years, so that the whole house of Israel lamented after the Lord, and began to fear it would abide for ever in that obscurity, 1 Sam. 7. 2.

But though it be a long day, it is but a day, but one day, and it is known to the Lord, Zec. 14. 7. It seems long while we are kept waiting, but the happy issue will enable us to reflect upon it as short, and but for a moment. It is no longer than God has appointed, and we are sure his time is the best time; and his favours are worth waiting for. The time is long, but it is nothing to the days of eternity, when those who had long patience shall be recompensed for it with an everlasting salvation.

(2.) Though it be a dark day, yet let us wait upon God all the day. Though while we are kept waiting for what God will do, we are kept in the dark concerning what he is doing, and what is best for us to do, yet, let us be content to wait in the dark. Though we see not our signs, though there is none to tell us how long, yet let us resolve to wait, how long soever it be; for though what God does we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter, when the mystery of God shall be finished.

Never was man more at a loss concerning God's dealings with him than poor Job was; *I go forward, but he is not there; backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, on the right hand, but I cannot see him,* (Job. 23. 8, 9.) yet he sits down, v. 10. resolving to wait on God all the day with a satisfaction in this, that though he know not the way that he takes, *he knows the way that I take,* and *when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold,* approved and improved. He sits by as a refiner, and will take care that the gold be in the furnace, no longer than his needful for the refining of it. When God's way is in the sea, so that he cannot be traced, yet we are sure his way is in the sanctuary, so that he may be trusted, see Ps. 77. 18, 19. And when *clouds and darkness are round about him,* yet even then *justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

(3.) Though it be a stormy day, yet we must wait upon God all the day. Though we are not only becalmed, and do not get forward, but though the wind be contrary, and drive us back, nay, though it be boisterous, and the church be tossed with tempests, and ready to sink, yet we must hope the best; yet we must wait, and weather the storm by patience. It is some comfort, that Christ is in the ship, the church's cause is Christ's cause, he has espoused it, and he will own it; he is embarked in the same vessel with his people, and therefore, *Why are you fearful?* Doubt not but the ship will come safe to Land; though Christ's seem for the present to be asleep, the prayers of

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of his disciples will awake him, and he will rebuke the winds and the waves; though the bush burn, if God be in it, it shall not be consumed. Yet this is not all, Christ is not only in the ship, but at the helm, whatever threatens the church is ordered by the Lord Jesus, and shall be made to work for its good. It is excellently expressed by Mr. George Herbert.

Away despair, my Gracious God doth hear,
When winds and waves assault my keel,
He doth preserve it, he doth steer,
E'en when the boat seems most to reel.
Storms are the triumph of his art,
Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.

It is a seasonable word at this day; what GOD will do with us we cannot tell; but this we are sure of, that he is a God of judgment, infinitely wise and just, and therefore, *Blessed are all they that wait for him*, Isa. 30. 18. He will do his own work in his own way and time; and though we be hurried back into the wilderness, when we thought we had been upon the borders of Canaan, we suffer justly for our unbelief and murmurings, but God acts wisely, and will be found faithful to his promise; his time to judge for his people, and to repent himself concerning his servants, is when he sees that their strength is gone. This was seen of old in the mount of the Lord, and shall be again. And therefore let us continue in a waiting frame. Hold out faith and patience, for *It is good that a man should both hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.*

2. It speaks a constant attendance upon him in a way of duty. And so we understand the day literally; it was David's practice to wait upon God all the day, בל־יום It signifies both *every day*, and all *the day long*; it is the same with that command, (Pro. 23. 17.) *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

Doct. It is not enough for us to begin every day with God, but on him we must wait every day, and all the day long.

For the opening of this I must shew, I. What it is to wait upon God: II. That we must do this every day, and all the day long.

I. Let us inquire, what it is to wait upon God. You have heard how much it is our duty in the morning to speak to him, in solemn prayer. But have we then done with him for all day? No, we must still be waiting on him; as one to whom we stand very nearly related, and very strongly obliged. To wait on God is to live a life of desire toward him, delight in him, dependance on him, and devotedness to him.

1. It is to live a life of desire toward God; to wait on him, as the begger waits on his benefactor, with earnest desire to receive supplies from him; as the sick and sore in Bethesda's pool waited for the stirring of the water, and attended in the porches with desire to be helped in and healed. When the Prophet had said, *Lord, in the way of thy judgments we have waited for thee*, he explained himself thus in the next words, *The desire of our soul is thy name, and to the remembrance of thee;* and *with my soul have I desired thee*, Isa. 26. 8, 9. Our desire must be not only toward the good things that God gives, but toward God himself, his favour and love, the manifestation of his name to us, and the influence of his grace upon us. Then we wait on God, when our souls pant after him, and his favour, when we thirst for God, for the living God; O that I may behold the beauty of the Lord! O that I may taste his goodness! O that I may bear his image, and be entirely conformed to his will! for there is none in heaven or earth, that I can desire in comparison of him. O that I may know him more, and love him better, and be brought nearer to him, and made fitter for him. Thus upon the wings of holy desire should our souls be still soaring upward toward God, still pressing forward, forward toward heaven.

We must not only pray solemnly in the morning, but that desire which is the life and soul of prayer, like the fire upon the altar, must be kept continually burning, ready for the sacrifices that are to be offered upon it. The bent and bias of the soul in all its motions must be toward God, the serving of him in all we do, and the enjoying of him in all we have. And this is principally intended in the commands given us to pray alway, to pray without ceasing, to continue in prayer. Even when we are not making actual addresses to God, we must have habitual inclinations toward him; as a man in health, though he is not always eating, yet has always a disposition in him, toward the nourishment and delights of the body. Thus must we be always waiting on God, as our chief good, and moving toward him.

2. It is to live a life of delight in God, as the lover waits on his beloved. Desire is love in motion, as a bird upon his wing; delight is love at rest, as a bird upon the nest; now though our desire must still be so toward God, that we must be wishing for more of God, yet our delight must be so in God, that we must never wish for more than God. Believing him to be a God All-sufficient, in him we must be entirely satisfied; let him be mine, and I have enough. Do we love to love God? Is it a pleasure to us to think that there is a God? that he is such a one as he has revealed himself to be? that he is our God by creation to dispose of us as he pleases; our God in covenant to dispose of all for the best to us? this is waiting on our God, always looking up to him with pleasure.

Something or other the soul has that it values itself by, something or other that it reposes itself in; and what is it? God or the world? What is it that we pride ourselves in, which we make the matter of our boasting? it is the character of worldly people, that they boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, (Ps. 49. 6.) and of their own might, and the power of their own hands, which they think have gotten them this wealth; it is the character of godly people, that *in God they boast all the day long*, Ps. 44. 8. That is waiting on God; having our eye alway upon him with a secret complacency, as men have upon that which is their glory, and which they glory in.

What is it that we please ourselves with, which we embrace

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embrace with the greatest satisfaction, in the bosom of which we lay our heads, and in having which we hug ourselves, as having all we would have? the worldly man, when his barns are full of corn, says, *Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;* the godly man can never say so till he finds his heart full of God and Christ, and Grace; and then, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul,* here repose thyself; the gracious soul dwells in God, is at home in him, and there dwells at ease, is in him perpetually pleased; and whatever he meets with in the world to make himself uneasy, he finds enough in God to balance it.

3. It is to live a life of dependance on God, as the child waits on his father, whom he has a confidence in, and on whom he casts all his care. To wait on God is to expect all good to come to us from him, as the worker of all good for us, and in us, the giver of all good to us, and the protector of us from all evil. Thus David explains himself, (Ps. 62. 5.) *My soul, wait thou only upon God,* and continue still to do so, for *my expectations is from him,* I look not to any other for the good I need; for I know that every creature is that to me, and no more than he makes it to be, and from him every man's judgment proceeds. Shall we lift up our eyes to the hills? Does our help come thence? Does the dew that waters the vallies come no further than from the tops of the hills? Shall we go higher, and lift up our eyes to the heavens, to the clouds? Can they of themselves give rain? No, If God hear not the heavens, they hear not the earth; we must therefore look above the hills, above the heavens, for all our help cometh from the Lord; it was the acknowledgment of a king, and no good one neither, *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee, out of the barn floor, or out of the wine press?*

And our expectations from God, as far as they are guided by, and grounded upon the word which he has spoken, ought to be humbly confident, and with a full assurance of faith. We must know and be sure that no word of God shall fall to the ground, that the expectation of the poor shall not perish. Worldly people say to their gold, *Thou art my hope;* and to the fine gold, *Thou art my confidence,* and the rich man's wealth is his strong city: but God is the only refuge and portion of the godly man here in the land of the living; it is to him only that he says, and he says it with a holy boldness, *Thou art my hope and my confidence.* The eyes of all things wait on him, for he is good to all; but the eyes of his saints especially, for he is in a peculiar manner good to Israel, good to them. They know his name, and therefore will trust and triumph in him, as those who know they shall not be made ashamed of their hope.

4. It is to live a life of devotedness to God, as the servant waits on his master, ready to observe his will, and to do his work, and in every thing to consult his honour and interest. To wait on God is entirely and unreservedly to refer ourselves to his wise and holy directions and disposals, and cheerfully to acquiesce in them, and comply with them. The servant that waits on his master chuses not his own way, but follows his master, step by step; thus must we wait on God as those who have no will of our own, but what is wholly resolved into his; and must therefore study to accommodate ourselves to his. It is the character of the redeemed of the Lord, that they follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes, with an implicit faith and obedience. As the eyes of a servant are to the hand of his master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress, so must our eyes wait on the Lord, to do what he appoints us, to take what he allots us; *Father thy will be done;* Master thy will be done.

The servant waits on his master, not only to do him service, but to do him honour; and thus must we wait on God, that we may be to him for a name, and for a praise. His glory must be our ultimate end, to which we, and all we are, have, and can do, must be dedicated; we wear his livery, attend in his courts, and follow his motions as his servants, for this end, that he may in all things be glorified.

To wait on God is to make his will our rule.

(1.) To make the will of his precept the rule of our practice, and to do every duty with an eye to that. We must wait on him to receive his commands, with a resolution to comply with them, how much soever they may contradict our corrupt inclinations or secular interests. We must wait on him as the holy angels do who always behold the face of their father, as those who are at his beck, and are ready to go upon the least intimation of his will, though but by a wink of his eye, wherever he sends them. Thus must we do the will of God, as the angels do it who are in heaven, those ministers of his that do his pleasure, and are always about his throne in order to it, and never out of the way.

David here prays, that God would shew him his way, and lead him, and teach him, and keep him, and forward him in the way of his duty; and so the text comes in as a plea to enforce that petition, for *on thee do I wait all the day;* ready to receive the law from thy mouth, and in every thing to observe thine orders. And then it intimates this, that those, and those only, can expect to be taught of God, who are ready and willing to do as they are taught. If any man will do his will, he stedfastly resolved in the strength of his grace to comply with it, he shall know what his will is. David prays, Lord, *Give me understanding,* and then promises himself, *I shall keep thy law, yea, I shall observe it;* as the servant that waits on his master. They that go up to the house of the Lord, with an expectation that he will teach them his ways, it must be with an humble resolution, that they will walk in his paths, Isa. 2. 3. Lord, let the pillar of cloud and fire go before me, for I am determined with full purpose of heart to follow it, and thus to wait on my God all the day.

(2.) To make the will of his providence the rule of our patience, and to bear every affliction with an eye to that. We are sure it is God who performs all things for us, and he performs the things that is appointed for us; we are as sure that all is well that God does, and shall be made to work for good to all that love him;

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him; and in order to that we ought to acquiesce in, and accommodate ourselves to the whole will of God. To wait on the Lord, is to say, It is the Lord, let him do to me as *seemeth good* to him, because nothing seemeth good to him but what is really good; and so we shall see, when God's work appears in a full light; it is to say, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt,* for *should it be according to my mind?* It is to bring our mind to our condition in every thing, so as to keep it calm and easy, whatever happens to make us uneasy.

And we must therefore bear the affliction, whatever it is; because it is the will of God; it is what he has allotted us, who does all according to the counsel of his own will. This is Christian patience; I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, not because it was to no purpose to complain, but because thou didst it, and therefore I had no reason to complain. And this will reconcile us to every affliction, one as well as another, because whatever it is, it is the will of God, and in compliance with it we must not only be silent, because of the sovereignty of his will, *Wo unto him that strives with his Maker;* but we must be satisfied because of the wisdom and goodness of it. Whatever the disposals of God's providence may be concerning those who wait on him, we may be sure that as he does them no wrong, so he means them no hurt: nay, they may say as the Psalmist did, even when he was plagued all the day long, and chastened every morning, however it be yet God is good, and therefore *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, yet will I wait on him.*

I might open this duty of waiting on God by other Scripture expressions which speak the same thing, and are, as this, comprehensive of a great part of that homage, which we are bound to pay to him, and that communion which it is our interest to keep up with him. *Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ.*

It is to set God always before us, Ps. 16. 8. To look upon him as one always near us, always at our right hand, and who has his eye upon us wherever we are, and whatever we are doing; nay, as one in whom we live and move, and have our being, with whom we have to do, and to whom we are accountable. This is pressed upon us, as the great principle of gospel obedience; *Walk before me, and be thou upright;* herein consists that uprightness which is our evangelical perfection, in walking at all times as before God, and studying to approve ourselves to him.

It is to have our eyes ever toward the Lord, as it follows here, Ps. 25. 15. Though we cannot see him by reason of our present distance and darkness, yet we must look toward him, toward the place where his honour dwells; as those who desire the knowledge of him and his will, and direct all to his honour as the mark we aim at, labouring in this, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. To wait on him, is to follow him with our eye in all those things wherein he is pleased to manifest himself, and to admit the discoveries of his being and perfections.

It is to acknowledge God in all our ways, (Pro. 3. 6.) in all the actions of life, and in all the affairs of life. we must walk in his hand, and set ourselves in the way of his steps. In all our undertakings, we must wait upon him for direction and success, and by faith and prayer commit our way to him to undertake for us, and him we must take with us wherever we go; *If thy presence go not up with us, carry us not up hence.* In all our comforts we must see his hand giving them out to us, and in all our crosses we must see the same hand laying them upon us, that we may learn to receive both good and evil, and to bless the name of the Lord both when he gives and when he takes.

It is to follow the Lord fully, as Caleb did, Num. 14. 24. It is to *fulfil after the Lord,* so the word is; to have respect to all his commandments, and to study to stand complete in his whole will. Wherever God leads us, and goes before us, we must be *followers of him as dear children,* must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, and take him for our guide whithersoever we go.

This is to wait on God, and those who do so may cheerfully wait for him, for he will without fail appear in due time to their joy, and that word of *Solomon* shall be made good to them, *He who waits on his master shall be honoured,* for Christ has said, *Where I am, there shall also my servant be,* Pro. 27. 18.

II. Having shewed you what it is to wait on God, I come next to shew, that this we must do every day, and all the day long.

1. We must wait on our God, *Omni Die—every day,* so some. This is the work of every day which is to be done in its day, for the duty of every day requires it. Servants in the courts of princes have their weeks or months of waiting appointed them, and are obliged to attend only at certain times. But God's servants must never be out of waiting; all the days of our appointed time, the time of our work and warfare here on earth we must be waiting, (Job. 14. 14.) and not desire or expect to be discharged from this attendance, till we come to heaven, where we shall wait on God, as angels do, more nearly and constantly.

We must wait on God every day.

(1.) Both on sabbath-days, and on week-days. The Lord's Day is instituted and appointed on purpose for our attendance on God in the courts of his house, there we must wait on him to give glory to him, and to receive both commands and favours from him. Ministers must then wait on their ministry, (Rom. 12. 7.) and people must wait on it too, saying as Cornelius for himself and his friends, *Now we are all here ready before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God,* Acts 10. 33. It is for the honour of God to help to fill up the assemblies of those who attend at the foot stool of his throne, and to add to their number. The whole Sabbath-time, except what is taken up in works of necessity and mercy, must be employed in waiting on our God. Christians are spiritual priests, and as such it is their business to wait in God's house at the time appointed.

But that is not enough; we must wait upon our God on week-days too, for every day of the week we want

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want mercy from him, and have work to do for him. Our waiting upon him in public ordinances on the first day of the week is designed to fix us to, and fit us for communion with him all the week after; so that we answer not the intentions of the Sabbath, unless the impressions of it abide upon us, and go with us into the business of the week, and be kept always in the imagination of the thought of our heart. Thus from one Sabbath to another, and from one new moon to another, we must keep in a holy gracious frame; must be so in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, as to walk in the Spirit all the week.

(2.) Both on idle days and busy days we must be found waiting on God. Some days of our lives are days of labour and hurry, when our particular calling calls for our close and diligent application; but we must not think that will excuse us from our constant attendance on God. Even when our hands are working about the world, our hearts may be waiting on our God, by an habitual regard to him, to his providence as our guide, and his glory as our end in our worldly business; and thus we must abide with him in them. Those who rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness in pursuit of the world, yet are concerned to wait on God, because otherwise all their care and pains will signify nothing; it is labour in vain, (Ps. 127. 1. 2.) nay, it is labour in the fire.

Some days of our lives we relax from business, and take our ease. Many of you have your time for diversion, but then when you lay aside other business, this of waiting upon God must not be laid aside. When you prove yourselves with mirth, as Solomon did, and say, you will enjoy pleasure a little, yet let this wisdom remain with you, (Ecc. 2. 1, 3.) let your eye be then up to God, and take heed of dropping your communion with him, in that which you call an agreeable conversation with your friends. Whether it be a day of work, or a day of rest, we shall find nothing like waiting upon God, both to lighten the toil of our work, and to sweeten the comfort of our repose. So that whether we have much to do, or little to do in the world, still we must wait upon God, that we may be kept from the temptation that attends both the one and the other.

(3.) Both in days of prosperity, and in days of adversity, we must be found waiting upon God. Does the world smile upon us, and court us? yet let us not turn from attending on God to make our court to it: if we have ever so much of the wealth of the world, yet we cannot say we have no need of God, no further occasion to make use of him, as David was ready to say, when in his prosperity he said he should never be moved; but soon saw his error, when God hid his face, and he was troubled, Ps. 30. 6. When our affairs prosper, and into our hands God brings plentifully, we must wait upon God as our great landlord, and own our obligations to him; must beg his blessing on what we have, and his favour with it, and depend upon him both for the continuance, and for the comfort of it. We must wait upon God for wisdom and grace, to use what we have in the world for the ends for which we are intrusted with it, as those who must give account, and know not how soon. And how much soever we have of this world, and how richly soever it is given us to enjoy it, still we must wait upon God for better things, not only than the world gives, but than he himself gives in this world. "Lord put me not off with this for a portion."

And when the world frowns upon us, and things go very cross, we must not so fret ourselves at its frowns, or so frighten ourselves with them, as thereby to be driven off from waiting on God, but rather let us thereby be driven to it. Afflictions are sent for this end, to bring us to the throne of grace, to teach us to pray, and to make the word of God's grace precious to us. In the day of our sorrow we must wait upon God for those comforts which are sufficient to balance our griefs; Job, when in tears, fell down and worshipped God, taking away, as well as giving. In the day of our fear we must wait upon God for those encouragements that are sufficient to silence our fears; Jehoshaphat in his distress waited upon God, and it was not in vain, his heart was established by it; and so was David's often, which brought him to this resolution, which was an anchor to his soul, *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.*

(4.) Both in the days of youth, and in the days of old age, we must be found waiting on God. Those who are young cannot begin their attendance on God too soon: the child Samuel ministered to the Lord, and the Scripture story puts a particular mark of honour upon it; and Christ was wonderfully pleased with the hosannas of the children who waited on him, when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem: when Solomon in his youth, upon his accession to the throne, waited upon God for wisdom, it is said *The saying pleased the Lord. I remember thee* (says God to Israel) even *the kindness of thy youth, when thou wentest after me*, and didst wait upon me *in a wilderness*, Jer. 2. 2. To wait upon God is to be mindful of our Creator, and the proper time for that is in the days of our youth, Ecc. 12. 1. Those who would wait upon God aright, must learn betimes to do it; the most accomplished courtiers are those who are brought up at court.

And may the old servants of Jesus be dismissed from waiting on him! No, their attendance is still required, and shall be still accepted; they shall not be cast off by their master in the time of old age, and, therefore, let not them desert his service. When through the infirmities of age they can no longer be working servants in God's family, they may be waiting servants. Those who like Barzillai are unfit for the entertainments of the courts of earthly princes, may relish the pleasures of God's courts as well as ever. The Levites when they were past the age of fifty, and were discharged from the toilsome part of their ministration, yet still must wait on God, must be quietly waiting to give honour to him, and to receive comfort from him. Those who have done the will of God, and their doing work is at an end, have need of patience to enable them to wait till they inherit the promise: and the nearer the happiness is which they are waiting for, the dearer

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should the God be they are waiting on, and hope shortly to be with, to be with eternally.

2. We must wait on our God, *Toto Die—all the day*, so we read it. Every day from morning to night we must continue waiting on God; whatever change there may be of our employment, this must be the constant disposition of our souls, we must attend upon God, and have our eyes ever toward him; we must not at any time allow ourselves to wander from God, or to attend on any thing beside him, but what we attend on for him; in subordination to his will, and in subserviency to his glory.

(1.) We must cast our daily cares upon him. Every day brings with it its fresh cares, more or less, these awake with us every morning, and we need not go so far forward as to-morrow to fetch in care, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;* you who are great dealers in the world, have your cares attending you all the day; though you keep them to yourselves, yet, they sit down with you, and rise up with you; they go out and come in with you, and are more a load upon you than those you converse with are aware of. Some, through the weakness of their spirits, can scarce determine any thing but with fear and trembling.

Let this burthen be cast upon the Lord, believing that his providence extends itself to all your affairs, to all events concerning you, and to all the circumstances of them, even the most minute and seemingly accidental; that your times are in his hand, and all your ways at his disposal; believe his promise, that all things shall be made to work for good to those that love him, and then refer it to him in every thing, to do with you and your's as seemeth good in his eyes, and rest satisfied in having done so, and resolve to be easy. Bring your cares to God by prayer in the morning, spread them before him, and then make it to appear all the day, by the composedness and cheerfulness of your spirits, that you left them with him as Hannah did, who, when she had prayed, went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. 1. 18. Commit your way to the Lord, and then submit to his disposal of it, though it may cross your expectations; and bear up yourselves upon the assurances God has given you, that he will care for you as the tender father for the child.

(2.) We must manage our daily business for him, with an eye to his Providence, putting us into the calling and employment wherein we are; and to his Precept, making diligence in it our duty; with an eye to his blessing, as that which is necessary to make it comfortable and successful; and to his glory, as our highest end in all. This sanctifies our common actions to God, and sweetens them, and makes them pleasant to ourselves. If Gaius brings his friends whom he is parting with a little way on their journey; it is but a piece of common civility, but let him do it after a godly sort; let him in it pay respect to them, becausethey belong to Christ, and for his sake; let him do it that he may have an opportunity of so much more profitable communication with them, and then it becomes an act of Christian piety, 3 John 6. It is a general rule by which we must govern ourselves in the business of every day, *Whatever we do in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, (Col. 3. 17.) and, thus, in and by the Mediator we wait on our God.

This is particularly recommended to servants, though their employments are but mean, and they are under the command of their masters according to the flesh, yet, let them do their servile works as the servants of Christ, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; let them do it with singleness of heart as unto Christ, and they shall be accepted of him, and from him shall receive the reward of the inheritance, Eph. 6. 5, 6, 7, 8. Col. 3. 22, 24. Let them wait on God all the day, when they are doing their day's work, by doing it faithfully and conscientiously, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by aiming at his glory even in common business: they work that they may get bread, they would get bread that they may live, they would live not that they may live to themselves, and please themselves, but that they may live to God, and please him. They work that they may fill up time, and fill up a place in the world, and because that God who made and maintained us, has appointed us with quietness to work and mind our own business.

(3.) We must receive our daily comforts from him; we must wait on him as our benefactor, as the eyes of all things wait upon him, to give them their food in due season, and what he gives them, that they gather. To him we must look as to our Father for our daily bread, and from him we are appointed to ask it, yea, though we have it in the house, though we have it upon the table. We must wait upon him for a covenant right to it, for leave to make use of it, for a blessing upon it, for a nourishment by it, and for comfort in it. It is in the word and prayer that we wait on God, and keep up communion with him, and by these every creature of God is sanctified to us, (1 Tim. 4. 4, 5.) and the property of it is altered, *To the pure, all things are pure;* they have them from the covenant, and not from common providence, which makes a little that the righteous man has, better than the riches of many wicked, and much more valuable and comfortable.

No inducement can be more powerful to make us see to it, that what we have we get honestly, and use it soberly, and give God his due out of it, than this consideration, that we have our all from the hand of God, and are intrusted with is as stewards, and consequently are accountable. If we have this thought as a golden thread running through all the comforts of every day, these are God's gifts, every bit we eat, and every drop we drink is his mercy, every breath we draw, and every step we take, his mercy; this will keep us continually waiting upon him, as the ass on his master's crib, and will put a double sweetness into all our enjoyments. God will have his mercies taken fresh from his compassions, which for this reason are said to be new every morning; and, therefore, it is not once a week that we are to wait upon him, as people go to market

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market to buy provisions for the whole week, but we must wait on him every day, and all the day, as those who live from hand to mouth, and yet live very easy.

(4.) We must resist our daily temptation, and do our daily duties in the strength of his grace. Every day brings its temptation with it; our master knew that when he taught us, as duly as we pray for our daily bread, to pray *Lead us not into temptation.* There is no business we engage in, no enjoyment we partake of, but it has its snares attending it; Satan by it assaults us, and endeavours to draw us into sin: now sin is the great evil we should be continually upon our guard against, as Nehemiah was, (Ch. 6. 13.) *That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin.* And we have no way to secure ourselves but by waiting on God all the day, we must not only in the morning put ourselves under the protection of his grace, but we must all the day keep ourselves under the shelter of it; must not only go forth, but go on in dependance upon that grace which he has said shall be sufficient for us, that care which will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able. Our waiting upon God will furnish us with the best arguments to make use of in resisting temptations, and with strength according to the day. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,* and then we wait on the Lord all the day.

We have duty to do, many an opportunity of speaking good words, and doing good works, and we must see and own that we are not sufficient of ourselves for any thing that is good, not so much as to think a good thought; we must therefore wait upon God, must seek to him, and depend upon him, for that light and fire, that wisdom and zeal, which is necessary to the due discharge of our duty; that by his grace we may not only be fortified against every evil word and work, but furnished for every good word and work. From the fulness that is in Jesus Christ, we must by faith be continually drawing *Grace for Grace;* grace for all gracious exercises; grace to help in every time of need: we must wait on his grace, must follow the conduct of it, comply with the operations of it, and must be turned to it as wax to the seal.

(5.) We must bear our daily afflictions with submission to his will: we are bid to expect trouble in the flesh, something or other happens every day that grieves us, something in our relations, something in our callings, events concerning ourselves, our families, or friends, that are causes of sorrow: perhaps, we have every day some bodily pain or sickness; or, some cross and disappointment in our affairs; now in these we must wait upon God. Christ requires it of all his disciples, that they take up their cross daily, Mat. 16. 24. We must not wilfully pluck the cross down upon us, but must take it up when God lays it in our way, and not go a step out of the way of duty, either to meet it, or to miss it. It is not enough to bear the cross, but we must take it up, we must accommodate ourselves to it, and acquiesce in the will of God in it. Not, "This is an evil, and I must bear it," because I cannot help it, but "This is an evil and I will bear it," because it is the will of God.

We must see every affliction allotted us by our heavenly Father, and in it must discover his correcting hand, and, therefore, must wait on him to know the cause wherefore he contends with us, what the fault is for which we are in this affliction chastened; what the distemper is which is to be by this affliction cured, that we may answer God's end in afflicting us, and so may be made partakers of his holiness. We must attend the motions of Providence, keep our eye upon our Father when he frowns, that we may discover what his mind is, and what the obedience is which we are to learn, by the things that we suffer.

We must wait on God for support under our burthens; must put ourselves into, and stay ourselves upon the everlasting arms which are laid under the children of God to sustain them, when the rod of God is upon them. And him we must attend for deliverance; must not seek to extricate ourselves by any sinful indirect methods, nor look to creatures for relief, but still wait on the Lord until he have mercy on us; well content to bear the burthen till God ease us of it, and ease us in mercy, Ps. 123. 2. If the affliction be lengthened out, yet we must wait upon the Lord, even when he hides his face, (Isa. 8. 17.) hoping it is but in a little wrath, and for a small moment, Isa. 54. 7. 8.

(6.) We must expect the tidings and events of every day, with a cheerful and entire resignation to the divine Providence. While we are in this world we are still expecting, hoping well, fearing ill; we know not what a day, or a night, or an hour will bring forth, (Pro. 27. 1.) but it is big with something, and we are too apt to spend our thoughts in vain about things future, which happen quite differently from what we imagined. Now in all our prospects we must wait upon God.

Are we in hopes of good tidings, a good issue? let us wait on God as the giver of the good we hope for, and be ready to take it from his hand; and to meet him with suitable affections when he is coming toward us in a way of mercy. Whatever good we hope for, it is God alone, and his wisdom, power and goodness, that we must hope in. And therefore our hopes must be humble and modest, and regulated by his will; what God has promised us, we may with assurance promise ourselves, and no more. If thus we wait on God in our hopes, should the hope be deferred, it would not make the heart sick; no, nor if it should be disappointed, for the God we wait on, will over-rule all for the best: but when the desire comes, in prosecution of which we have thus waited on God, we may see it coming from his love, and it will be *A tree of life,* Pro. 13. 12.

Are we in fear of evil tidings, of melancholy events, and a sad issue of the depending affairs? Let us wait on God to be delivered from all our fears, from the things themselves we are afraid of, and from the amazing tormenting fears of them, Ps. 34. 4. When Jacob was with good reason afraid of his brother Esau, he waited on God, brought his fears to him, wrestled with him, and prevailed for deliverance! *What time I am afraid,* says David, *I will trust in thee,* and wait on

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thee; and that shall establish the heart, shall fix it, so as to set it above the fear of evil tidings.

Are we in suspence between hope and fear? sometimes one prevails; and sometimes the other; let us wait on God, as the God to whom belong the issues of life and death, good and evil, from whom our judgments, and every man's, proceed, and compose ourselves into a quiet expectation of the event, whatever it may be, with a resolution to accommodate ourselves to it: hope the best, and get ready for the worst, and then take what God sends.

The Application.

I. Let me further urge upon you this duty of waiting upon God all the day, in some more particular instances, according to what you have to do all the day, in the ordinary business of it. We are weak and forgetful, and need to be put in mind of our duty in general, upon every occasion for the doing of it; and therefore I chuse to be thus particular, that I may be your remembrancer.

(1.) When you meet with your families in the morning, wait upon God for a blessing upon them, and attend him with your thanksgivings for the mercies you and your's have jointly received from God the night past; you and your houses must serve the Lord, must wait on him. See it owing to his goodness, who is the Founder and Father of the families of the righteous, that you are together, that the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in your tabernacles, and therefore wait upon him to continue you together, to make you comforts to one another, to enable you to do the duty of every relation, and to lengthen out the days of your tranquillity. In all the conversation we have with our families, the provision we make for them, and the orders we give concerning them, we must wait upon God, as the God of all the families of Israel, (Jer. 31. 1.) and have an eye to Christ, as he in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

Every member of the family sharing in family mercies, must wait on God for grace to contribute to family duties. Whatever disagreeableness there may be in any family relation, instead of having the spirit either burthened with it, or provoked by it, let it be an inducement to wait on God, who is able either to redress the grievance, or to balance it, and give grace to bear it.

(2.) When you are pursuing the education of your children, or the young ones under your charge, wait upon God for his grace to make the means of their education successful. When you are yourselves giving them instruction in things pertaining either to life or godliness, their general or particular calling, when you are sending them to school in a morning, or ordering them the business of the day, wait upon God to give them an understanding, and a good capacity for their business; especially their main business, for it is God that giveth wisdom. If they are but slow, and do not come on as you could wish, yet wait on God to bring them forward, and to give them his grace in his own time; and while you are patiently waiting on him, that will encourage you to take pains with them, and will likewise make you patient and gentle towards them.

And let children and young people wait on God in all their daily endeavours, to fit themselves for the service of God and their generation; you desire to be comforts to your relations, to be good for something in this world, do you not? Beg of God then a wise and an understanding heart, as Solomon did, and wait upon him all the day for it, that you may be still increasing in wisdom, as you do in stature, and in favour with God and man.

(3.) When you go to your shops, or apply yourselves to the business of your particular calling, wait upon God for his presence with you. Your business calls for your constant attendance every day, and all the day; keep the shop, and thy shop will keep thee; but let your attendance on God in your calling be as constant as your attendance on your callings. Eye God's providence in all the occurrences of them. Open shop with this thought, I am now in the way of my duty, and I depend upon God to bless me in it. When you are waiting for customers, wait on God to find you something to do in that calling to which he has called you; those you call chance customers, you should rather call providence customers, and should say of the advantage you made by them, *The Lord my God brought it to me.*

When you are buying and selling, see God's eye upon you to observe, whether you are honest and just in your dealings, and do no wrong to those you deal with: and let your eye then be up to him, for that discretion to which God does instruct not only the husbandman, but the tradesman, (Isa. 28. 26.) that prudence which directs the way, and with which it is promised the good man shall order his affairs; for that blessing which makes rich, and adds no sorrow with it; for that honest profit which may be expected in the way of honest diligence.

Whatever your employments be, in country-business, city-business, or sea-business, or only in the business of the house, go about them in the fear of God, depending upon him to make them comfortable and successful, and to prosper the work of your hands unto you. And hereby you will arm yourselves against the many temptations you are compassed about with in your worldly business; by waiting on God, you will be freed from the care and cumber which attends much serving, will have your minds raised above the little things of sense and time, will be serving God when you are most busy about the world, and will have God in your hearts, when your hands are full of the world.

(4.) When you take a book into your hands, God's book, or any other useful good book, wait upon God for his grace to enable you to make a good use of it. Some of you spend a deal of time every day in reading, and I hope none of you let a day pass without reading some portions of scripture, either alone or with your families; take heed that the time you spend in reading

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reading be not lost time; it is so, if you read that which is idle and vain, and unprofitable; it is so, if you read that which is good, even the word of God itself, and do not mind it, or observe it, or aim to make it of any advantage to you; wait upon God, who gives you those helps for your souls, to make them helpful indeed to you. The Eunuch did so, when he was reading the book of the Prophet Isaiah in his chariot, and God presently sent him one, who made him understand what he read.

You read perhaps now and then the histories of former times; in acquainting yourselves with them, you must have an eye to God, and to that wise and gracious providence which governed the world before we were born, and preserved the church in it, and therefore may be still depended upon to do all for the best, for he is Israel's King of old.

(5.) When you sit down to your tables, wait on God, see his hand spreading and preparing a table before you in despite of your enemies, and in the society of your friends; often review the grant which God made to our first Father Adam, and in him to us, of the products of the earth, (Gen. 1. 29.) *Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed,* Bread-Corn especially, *to you it shall be for meat.* And the grant he afterwards made to Noah our second Father, and in him to us, (Gen. 9. 3.) *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb;* and see in those what a bountiful Benefactor he is to mankind, and wait upon him accordingly.

We must eat and drink to the glory of God, and then we wait on him in eating and drinking. We must receive nourishment for our bodies, that they may be fitted to serve our souls in the service of God, to his honour in this world. We must taste covenant love in common mercies, and enjoy the Creator while we are using the creature; we must depend upon the word of blessing from the mouth of God, to make our food nourishing to us; and if our provisions be mean and scanty, we must make up the want of them by faith in the promise of God, and rejoice in him, as the *God of our salvation, though the fig-tree doth not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine.*

(6.) When you visit your friends, or receive their visits, wait upon God; let your eye be to him with thankfulness for your friends and acquaintance, that you have comfort in; that the wilderness is not made your habitation, and the solitary and desart land your dwelling; that you have comfort not only in your own houses, but in those of your neighbours, with whom you have freedom of converse; and that you are not driven out from among men, and made a burden and terror to all about you. That you have cloathing not only for necessity but for ornament, to go abroad in, is a mercy, which, that we may not pride ourselves in, we must take notice of God in, *I decked thee with ornaments,* says God, *and put earrings in thine ears,* Ezek. 16. 11, 12. That you have houses, furniture, and entertainment, not only for yourselves but for your friends, is a mercy in which God must be acknowledged.

And when we are in company, we must look up to God for wisdom to carry ourselves so that we may do much good to, and get no harm by those with whom we converse. Wait on God for that grace with which our speech should be always seasoned, by which all corrupt communication may be prevented, and we may abound in that which is good, and to the use of edifying, and which may minister grace to the hearers, that our lips may feed many.

(7.) When you give alms, or do any act of charity, wait on God, do it as unto him, give to a disciple in the name of a disciple, to the poor because they belong to Christ; do it not for the praise of men, but for the glory of God, with a single eye, and an upright heart, direct it to him, and then your alms as well as your prayers, like those of Cornelius, come up for a memorial before God, Acts 10. 4. Beg of God to accept what you do for the good of others, that your alms may indeed be offerings, Acts 24. 17. May be an *odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God,* Phil. 4. 18.

Desire of God a blessing upon what you give in charity, that it may be comfortable to those to whom it is given, and that though what you are able to give is but a little, like the widow's two mites, yet that by God's blessing it may be doubled, and made to go a great way, like the widow's meal in the barrel, and oil in the cruise.

Depend upon God to make up to you what you lay out in good works, and to recompense it abundantly in the resurrection of the just; nay, and you are encouraged to wait upon him, for a return of it even in this life; it is bread cast upon the waters, which you shall find again after many days; and you should carefully observe the providence of God, whether it do not make you rich amends for your good works, according to the promise, that you may understand the lovingkindness of the Lord, and his faithfulness to the word which he has spoken.

(8.) When you inquire after public news, in that wait upon God; do it with an eye to him; for this reason, because you are truly concerned for the interests of his kingdom in the world, and lay them near your hearts; because you have a compassion for mankind, for the lives and souls of men, and especially of God's people; ask, "*What News?*" Not as the Athenians, only to satisfy a vain curiosity, and to pass away an idle hour or two, but that you may know how to direct your prayers and praises, and how to balance your hopes and fears, and may gain such an understanding of the times, as to learn what you and others ought to do.

If the face of public affairs be bright and pleasing, wait upon God to carry on and perfect his own work; and depend not upon the wisdom or strength of any instruments; if it be dark and discouraging wait upon God to prevent the fears of his people, and to appear for them when he sees that their strength is gone. In the midst of the greatest successes of the church, and the smiles of second causes, we must not think it needless to wait on God; and in the midst of its greatest

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greatest discouragements, when its affairs are reduced to the last extremity, we must not think it fruitless to wait upon God; the creatures cannot help without him, but he can help without them.

(9.) When you are going journies wait on God, put yourselves under his protection, commit yourselves to his care, and depend upon him to give his angels a charge concerning you, to bear you up in their arms when you move, and to pitch their tents about you where you rest. See how much you are indebted to the goodness of his providence for all the comforts and conveniences you are surrounded with in your travels. It is he who has cast our lot in a land where we wander not in wildernesses, as in the desarts of Arabia, but have safe and beaten roads; and that through the terrors of war the highways are not unoccupied; to him we owe it that the inferior creatures are serviceable to us, and that our going out and coming in are preserved; that when we are abroad we are not in banishment, but have liberty to come home again; and when we are at home, we are not under confinement, but have liberty to go abroad.

We must, therefore, have our eyes up to God at our setting out, "Lord go along with me where I go;" under his shelter we must travel, confiding in his care of us, and encouraging ourselves with that in all the dangers we meet with; and in our return must own his goodness; all our bones must say, *Lord, who is like unto thee,* for he *keepeth all our bones, not one of them is broken.*

(10.) When we retire into solitude, to be alone walking in the fields, or alone reposing ourselves in our closets, still we must be waiting on God; still we must keep up our communion with him, when we are communing with our own hearts. When we are alone we must not be alone, but the Father must be with us, and we with him. We shall find temptations even in solitude, which we have need to guard against; Satan set upon our Saviour, when he was alone in a wilderness; but there also we have opportunity, if we know but how to improve it, for that devout, for that divine contemplation, which is the best conversation, so that we may never be less alone than when alone. If when we sit alone and keep silence, withdrawn from business and conversation, we have but the art, I should say the heart, to fill up those vacant minutes with pious meditations of God and divine things, we then gather up the fragments of time which remain, that nothing may be lost, and so are we found waiting on God all the day.

2. Let me use some motives to persuade you thus to live a life of communion with God, by waiting on him all the day.

(1.) Consider, the eye of God is always upon you. When we are with our superiors, and observe them to look upon us, that engages us to look upon them; and shall we not then look up to God, whose eyes always behold, and whose eye-lids try the children of men. He sees all the motions of our hearts, and sees with pleasure the motions of our hearts towards him, which should engage us to set him always before us.

The servant, though he be careless at other times, yet when he is under his master's eye, will wait in his place and keep close to his business; we need no more to engage us to diligence, than to do our work with eye-service, while our master looks on, and because he does so, for then we shall never look off.

(2.) The God you are to wait on, is one with whom you have to do. Heb. 4. 13. *All things,* even the thoughts and intents of the heart, *are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;* πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος,—*with whom we have business,* or word; who has something to say to us, and to whom we have something to say; or, as some read it, *To whom for us there is an account;* there is a reckoning, a running account between us and him: and we must every one of us shortly give account of ourselves to him, and of every thing done in the body, and, therefore, are concerned to wait on him; that all may be made even daily, between us and him in the blood of Christ, which balances the account. Did we consider how much we have to do with God every day, we would be more diligent and constant in our attendance on him.

(3.) The God we are to wait upon, continually waits to be gracious to us; he is always doing us good, precedes us with the blessings of his goodness, daily loads us with his benefits, and slips no opportunity of shewing his care of us when we are in danger; his bounty to us when we are in want; and his tenderness for us when we are in sorrow. His good Providence waits on us all the day, to preserve our going out and our coming in, (Isa. 30. 18.) to give us relief and succour in due season, to be seen in the mount of the Lord. Nay, his good grace waits on us all the day, to help us in every time of need; to be strength to us according as our day is, and all the occurrences of the day. Is God thus forward to do us good, and shall we be backward and remiss in doing him service?

(4.) If we attend upon God, his holy angels shall have a charge to attend upon us. They are all appointed to be ministering spirits, to minister for the good of them who shall be heirs of salvation, and more good offices they do us every day than we are aware of. What an honour, what a privilege is it to be waited on by holy angels, to be borne up in their arms, to be surrounded by their tents? What a security is the ministration of those good spirits against the malice of evil spirits? This honour have all they that wait on God all the day.

(5.) This life of communion with God, and constant attendance upon him is a heaven upon earth. It is doing the work of heaven, and the will of God, as they do it who are in heaven; whose business it is always to behold the face of our Father. It is an earnest of the blessedness of heaven, it is a preparative for it, and a preludium to it; it is having our conversation in heaven, whence we look for the Saviour. Looking for him as our Saviour, we look to him as our director; and by this we make it to appear, that our Hearts are there, which will give us good ground to expect that we shall be there shortly.

3. Let

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3. Let me close all with some directions, what you must do, that you may thus wait on God all the day.

(1.) See much of God in every creature. Of his wisdom and power in the making and placing of it, and of his goodness in its serviceableness to us. Look about you, and see what a variety of wonders, what an abundance of comforts you are surrounded with; and let them all lead you to him, who is the fountain of being, and the giver of all good; all our springs are in him, and from him are all our streams; this will engage us to wait on him, since every creature is that to us, that he makes it to be. Thus the same things which draw a carnal heart from God, will lead a gracious soul to him; and since all his works praise him, his saints will thence take continual occasion to bless him.

It was (they say) the custom of the pious Jews of old, whatever delight they took in any creature, to give to God the glory of it; when they smelled a flower, they said, "Blessed be he that made this flower sweet;" if they eat a morsel of bread, "Blessed be he that appointed bread to strengthen man's heart." If thus we taste in every thing that the Lord is gracious, and suck all satisfaction from the breasts of his bounty (and some derive his name שדי from שד *Mamma—a breast*) we shall thereby be engaged constantly to depend on him, as the child is said to hang on the mother's breast.

(2.) See every creature to be nothing without God; the more we discern of the vanity and emptiness of the world, and all our enjoyments in it, and their utter insufficiency to make us happy, the closer we shall cleave to God, and the more intimately we shall converse with him, that we may find that satisfaction in the Father of spirits, which we have in vain sought for in the things of sense. What folly is it to make our court to the creatures, and to dance attendance at their door, whence we are sure to be sent away empty, when we have the Creator himself to go to, who is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, is full, and free, and faithful? What can we expect from lying vanities? Why then should we observe them, and neglect our own mercies? Why should we trust to broken reeds, when we have a *Rock of Ages*, to be the foundation of our hopes? And why should we draw from broken cisterns, when we have the *God of all Consolation* to be the fountain of our joys?

(3.) Live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot with any confidence wait upon God, but in and through a Mediator, for it is by his Son that God speaks to us, and hears from us: all that passes between a just God and poor sinners, must pass through the hands of that blessed *Days-man, who has laid his hand upon them both*; every prayer passes from us to God, and every mercy from God to us by that hand; it is in the face of the anointed that God looks upon us; and in the face of Jesus Christ, that we behold the glory and grace of God shining; it is by Christ that we have access to God, and success with him in prayer, and, therefore, must make mention of his righteousness, even of his only; and in that habitual attendance we must be all the day living upon God, we must have an habitual dependence on him, who always appears in the presence of God for us; always gives attendance to be ready to introduce us.

(4.) Be frequent and serious in pious ejaculations. In waiting upon God we must often speak to him, must take all occasions to speak to him; and when we have not opportunity for a solemn address to him, he will accept of a sudden address, if it come from an honest heart. In these David waited on God all day, as appears by v. 1. *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul*; to thee do I dart it, and all its gracious breathings after thee. We should in a holy ejaculation ask pardon for this sin, strength against this corruption, victory over this temptation, and it shall not be in vain. This is to pray always, and without ceasing; it is not the length or language of the prayer that God looks at, but the sincerity of the heart in it; and that shall be accepted, though the prayer be very short, and the groanings such as cannot be uttered.

(5.) Look upon every day, as those who know not but it may be your last day, at such an hour as we think not, the Son of Man comes; and therefore we cannot any morning be sure, that we shall live till night; we hear of many lately who have been snatched away very suddenly: *What manner of persons therefore ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* Though we cannot say, we ought to live as if we were sure this day would be our last, yet, it is certain, we ought to live as those who do not know but it may be so? and the rather, because we know the day of the Lord will come first or last; and, therefore, we are concerned to wait on him. For on whom should poor dying creatures wait, but on a living God?

Death will bring us all to God, to be judged by him; it will bring all the saints to him, to the vision and fruition of him: and one we are hastening to, and hope to be for ever with, we are concerned to wait upon, and to cultivate an acquaintance with. Did we think more of death, we would converse more with God; our dying daily is a good reason for our worshipping daily; and, therefore, wherever we are, we are concerned to keep near to God, because we know not where death will meet us: this will alter the property of death; Enoch, who walked with God, was translated that he should not see death; and this will furnish us with that which will stand us in stead on the other side death and the grave. If we continue waiting on God every day, and all the day long, we shall grow more experienced, and consequently more expert in the great mystery of communion with God, and thus our last days will become our best days, our last works our best works, and our last comforts our sweetest comforts: in consideration of which take the prophet's advice, (Hos. 12. 6.) *Turn thou to thy God; keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.*

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THE

THIRD DISCOURSE,

SHEWING HOW TO CLOSE THE DAY WITH GOD.

PSALM 4. 8.

I will both lay me down in Peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in Safety.

THIS may be understood either figuratively, of the respose of the soul, in the assurances of God's grace; or literally, of the repose of the body, under the protection of his providence; I love to give Scripture its full latitude, and therefore take in both.

1. The Psalmist having given the preference to God's favour above any good, having chosen that, and portioned himself in that, here expresses his great complacency in the choice he had made; while he saw many making themselves perpetually uneasy with that fruitless inquiry, *Who will shew us any good?* wearying themselves for very vanity: he had made himself perfectly easy, by casting himself upon the divine good will, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us:* any good, short of God's favour, will not serve our turn, but that is enough, without the world's smiles. The moon, and stars, and all the fires and candles in the world will not make day without the sun: but the sun will make day without any of them. These are David's sentiments, and all the saints agree with him: finding no rest, therefore, like Noah's dove in a deluged defiled world, he flies to the ark, that type of Christ, *Return unto thy rest,* unto thy *Noah,* (so the word is in the original, for Noah's name signifies rest) *O my Soul,* Ps. 116. 7.

If God lift up the light of his countenance upon us, as it fills us with a holy joy, it puts gladness into the heart more than they have, whose corn and wine increase, (v. 7.) so it fixes us in a holy rest, I will lay me down and sleep. God is my God, and I am pleased, I am satisfied, I look no further, I desire no more, I dwell in safety, or in confidence; while I walk in the light of the Lord, as I want no good, nor am sensible of any deficiency, so I fear no evil, nor am apprehensive of any danger. The Lord God is to me both a *Sun* and a *Shield;* a sun to enlighten and comfort me, a shield to protect and defend me.

Hence learn, that those who have the assurances of God's favour toward them, may enjoy and should labour after, a holy serenity, and security of mind. We have both these put together in that precious promise, (Isa. 32. 17.) *But the work of righteousness shall be peace;* there is a present satisfaction in doing good; and in the issue, *the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever;* quietness in the enjoyment of good, and assurance in a freedom from evil.

(1.) A holy Serenity is one blessed fruit of God's favour; *I will now lay me down in peace, and sleep.* While we are under God's displeasure, or in doubt concerning his favour, how can we have any enjoyment of ourselves! while this great concern is unsettled, the soul cannot but be unsatisfied. Has God a controversy with thee? Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids, till thou hast got the controversy taken up; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend, thy best friend, and when thou hast made thy peace with him, and hast some comfortable evidence that thou art accepted of him, then say wisely and justly, what that carnal worldling said foolishly and without ground, *Soul, take thine ease,* for in God, and in the covenant of grace *thou hast goods laid up for many years,* goods laid up for eternity, Luke 12. 19. Are thy sins pardoned? Hast thou an interest in Christ's mediation? Does God now in him accept thy works? *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart,* Ecc. 9. 7. Let this still every storm and command, and create a calm in thy soul.

Having God to be our God in covenant, we have enough, we have all; and though the gracious soul still desires more of God, it never desires more than God; in him it reposes itself with a perfect complacency; in him it is at home, it is at rest; if we be but satisfied of his loving kindness, we may be satisfied with his loving kindness, abundantly satisfied: there is enough in this to satiate the weary soul, and to replenish every sorrowful soul, (Jer. 31. 25.) to fill even the hungry with good things, with the best things; and being filled they should be at rest, at rest for ever, and their sleep here should be sweet.

(2.) A holy security is another blessed fruit of God's favour. Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety; when the light of thy countenance shines upon me I am safe, and I know I am so, and I am therefore easy, for *with thy favour wilt thou compass me as with a shield,* Ps. 5. 12. Being taken under the protection of the divine favour, though an host of enemies should encamp against me, yet my heart shall not fear, in this I will be confident, (Ps. 27. 3.) Whatever God has promised me I can promise myself, and that is enough to indemnify me, and save me harmless, whatever difficulties and dangers I may meet with in the way of my duty. *Though the earth be removed, yet will not we fear,* (Ps. 46. 2.) not fear any evil, no not in the valley of the shadow of death, in the territories of the King of terrors himself; for there thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. What the rich man's wealth is to him, in his own conceit, a strong city and a high wall, that the good man's God is to him, Prov. 18. 10, 11. *The Almighty shall be thy gold, thy defence,* Job 22. 25. *Marg.*

Nothing is more dangerous than security in a sinful way, and men crying Peace, Peace, to themselves, while they continue under the reigning power of a vain and carnal mind: O that the sinners that are at ease were made to tremble! Nothing is more foolish than a security built upon the world, and its promises, for they are all vanity and a lie; but nothing more reasonable in itself, or more advantageous to us, than for good people to build with assurance upon the promises of a good God; for those who keep in the way of duty, to be quiet from the fear of evil; as those who know no evil

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evil shall befal them, no real evil, no evil but what shall be made to work for their good; as those who know, while they continue in their allegiance to God as their King, that they are under his protection, under the protection of Omnipotence itself, which enables them to bid defiance to all malignant powers; *If God be for us, who can be against us?* This security even the heathen looked upon every honest virtuous man to be entitled to, that is,

Integer vitæ, scelerisque purus.
He whose life was upright and free from iniquity.

And thought that

Et si fractus illabatur Orbis,
Impavidum ferient Ruinæ.
If the world should fall in pieces about his ears, he needed not fear being lost in the dissolutions of it.

Much more reason have christians, who hold fast their integrity, to lay claim to it, for who is he? or what is it that shall harm us, if we be followers of him that is good, in his goodness.

[1.] It is the privilege of good people, that they may be thus easy and satisfied: this holy serenity and security of mind is allowed them, God gives them leave to be cheerful; nay, it is promised them, *God will speak peace to his people and to his saints;* he will fill them with joy and peace in believing; his peace shall keep their hearts and minds, keep them safe, keep them calm. Nay, there is a method appointed for their obtaining this promised serenity and security. The scriptures are written to them that their joy may be full, and that through patience and comfort of them they may have hope. Ordinances are instituted to be wells of salvation, out of which they may draw water with joy. Ministers are ordained to be their comforters, and the helpers of their joy. Thus willing has God been to shew the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, that they might have strong consolation, Heb. 6. 17, 18.

[2.] It is the duty of good people to labour after this holy security and serenity of mind, and to use the means appointed for the obtaining it. Give not way to the disquieting suggestions of Satan, and to those tormenting doubts and fears that arise in your own souls. Study to be quiet, chide yourselves for your distrusts, charge yourselves to believe, and to hope in God, that you shall yet praise him. You are in the dark concerning yourselves, do as Paul's mariners did, cast anchor and wish for the day. Poor trembling christian, that art tossed with tempests and not comforted, try to lay thee down in peace and sleep; compose thyself into a sedate and even frame; in the name of him whom winds and seas obey, command down thy tumultuous thoughts, and say, *Peace, be still;* lay that aking trembling head of thine where the beloved disciple laid his, in the bosom of the Lord Jesus; or, if thou hast not yet attained such boldness of access to him, lay that aking trembling heart of thine at the feet of the Lord Jesus by an intire submission and resignation to him, saying, *If I perish, I will perish here;* put it into his hand by an intire confidence in him; submit it to his operation and disposal, who knows how to speak to the heart. And if thou art not yet entered into this Sabbatism, as the Word is, (Heb. 4. 9.) this present rest that remaineth for the people of God, yet look upon it to be a land of promise, and therefore though it tarry, wait for it, for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie. *Light is sown for the righteous,* and what is sown shall come up again at last in a harvest of joy.

2. The Psalmist having done his day's work, and perhaps fatigued himself with it, it being now bed-time, and having given good advice to those to whom he had wished a good night, to commune with their own hearts upon their beds, and to offer the evening sacrifices of righteousness, (v. 4, 5.) now retires to his chamber with this word, *I will lay me down in peace and sleep.* That which I chose this text for will lead me to understand it literally, as the disciples understood their Master, when he said, *Lazarus sleepeth,* of *taking rest in sleep,* John 11. 12, 13. And so we have here David's pious thoughts when he was going to bed. As when he awakes he is still with God, he is still so when he goes to sleep, and concludes the day as he opened it, with meditations on God, and sweet communion with him.

It should seem David penned this Psalm when he was distressed and persecuted by his enemies; perhaps it was penned on the same occasion with the foregoing Psalm, when he fled from Absalom his son; without were fightings, and then no wonder that within were fears; yet then he puts such a confidence in God's protection, that he will go to bed at his usual time, and, with his usual quietness and cheerfulness, will compose himself as at other times: he knows that his enemies have no power against him, but what is given them from above: and they shall have no power given them but what is still under the divine check and restraint; nor shall their power be permitted to exert itself so far as to do him any real mischief, and therefore he retires into the secret place of the most High, and abides under the shadow of the Almighty, and is very quiet in his own mind. That will break a worldly man's heart which will not break a godly man's sleep; let them do their worst, says David, *I will lay me down and sleep, the will of the Lord be done.* Now observe here,

(1.) His confidence in God; *Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety;* not only makest me safe, but makest me know that I am so; makest me to dwell with a good assurance. It is the same word that is used concerning him who walks uprightly, that he walks surely, Prov. 10. 9. He goes boldly in his way, so David here goes boldly to his bed. He does not dwell carelessly as the men of Laish, (Judg. 18. 7.) but dwells at ease in God, as the sons of Zion, in the city of their solemnities, when their eyes see it a quiet habitation, Isa. 33. 20.

There is one word in this part of the text that is observable; thou, Lord, *only* dost secure me. Some refer it to David; "even when I am alone have none of my

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my privy-counsellors about me to advise me, none of my life-guards to fight for me, yet I am under no apprehension of danger while God is with me." The Son of David comforted himself with this, that when all his disciples forsook him, and left him alone, yet he was not alone, for the Father was with him. Some weak people are afraid of being alone, especially in the dark, but a firm belief of God's presence with us in all places, and that divine protection which all good people are under, would silence those fears, and make us ashamed of them. Nay, our being alone a peculiar people, whom God has set apart for himself, (as it is here, v. 8.) will be our security. A sober singularity will be our safety and satisfaction, as Noah's was in the old world; Israel is a people that shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations, and therefore may set them all at defiance till they foolishly mingle themselves among them, *Israel shall then dwell in safety alone*, Deut. 33. 28. The more we dwell alone, the more safe we dwell. But our translation refers it to God; *Thou alone makest me to dwell safely.* It is done by thee only; God in protecting his people needs not any assistance; though he sometimes make use of instruments; the earth helped the woman, yet he can do it without them; and, when all our refuges fail, his own arm works salvation; *so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange God with him*, Deut. 32. 12. Yet that is not all, I depend on thee only to do it; therefore I am easy, and think myself safe, not because I have hosts on my side, but purely because I have the Lord of Hosts on my side.

Thou makest me to dwell in safety: it may look either backward or forward, or rather, both: thou hast made me to dwell in safety all day, so that the sun has not smitten me by day; and then it is the language of his thankfulness for the mercies he had received; or, thou wilt make me to dwell in safety all night, that the moon shall not smite me by night; and then it is the language of his dependence upon God for further mercies; and both these should go together; and our eye must be to God as ever the same, who was, and is, and is to come; who has delivered, and does, and will.

(2.) His composedness in himself inferred hence, *Simul*, or *pariter in pace cubabo—I will both lay me down and sleep.* They who have their corn and wine increasing, who have abundance of the wealth and pleasure of this world, lay them down and sleep contentedly, as Boaz at the end of the heap of corn, Ruth 3. 7. But though I have not what they have, I can lay me down in peace, and sleep as well as they. We make it to join, his lying down and his sleeping: I will not only lay me down, as one that desires to be composed, but will sleep as one that really is so. Some make it to intimate his falling asleep presently after he had laid him down: so well wearied was he with the work of the day, and so free from any of those disquieting thoughts which would keep him from sleeping.

Now these are words put into our mouths with which to compose ourselves when we retire at night to our repose; and we should take care so to manage ourselves all day, especially, when it draws towards night, that we may not be disfitted, and put out of frame for our evening devotions; that our hearts may not be overcharged either on the one hand with surfeiting and drunkenness, as their's often are who are men of pleasure; or on the other hand with the cares of this life, as their's often are who are men of business: but that we may have such a command both of our thoughts, and of our time, that we may finish our daily work well; which will be an earnest of our finishing our life's work well; and all is well indeed that ends everlastingly well.

Doct. As we must begin the day with God, and wait upon him all the day, so we must endeavour to close it with him.

This duty of closing the day with God, and in a good frame, I know not how better to open to you, than by going over the particulars in the text in their order; and recommending to you David's example.

1. Let us retire to lay us down: nature calls for rest as well as food; *Man goes forth to his work and labour*, and goes to and fro about it, but it is only till evening, and then it is time to lie down. We read of Ishbosheth, that he lay on his bed at noon, but death met him there, (2 Sam 4. 5, 6.) and of David himself, that he came off from his bed at evening-tide, but sin, a worse thing than death, met him there. We must work the works of him that sent us while it is day, it will be time enough to lie down when the night comes and no man can work; and it is then proper and seasonable to lie down: It is promised, (Zeph. 2. 7.) *They shall lie down in the evening*, and with that promise we must comply, and rest in the time appointed for rest; and not turn day into night, and night into day, as many do upon some ill account or other.

1. Some sit up to do mischief to their neighbours; to kill, and steal, and to destroy: *In the dark they dig through houses which they had marked for themselves in the day time*, Job 24. 16. David complains of his enemies, that at evening they go round about the city, Ps. 59. 6. They that do evil hate the light. Judas the traitor was in quest of his Master, with his band of men, when he should have been in his bed. And it is an aggravation of the wickedness of the wicked, when they take so much pains to compass an ill design; and have their hearts so much upon it, that they *sleep not except they have done mischief*, Pro. 4. 16. It is a shame to those who profess to make it their business to do good, that they cannot find in their hearts to entrench upon any of the gratifications of sense in pursuance of it;

Ut jugulent Homines surgunt de nocte Latrones;
Tuque ut te serves non expergisceris?
Robbers arise in the night that they may slay men;
And will not you awake that you may preserve yourself?

Say

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Say then, while others sit up watching for an opportunity to be mischievous, *I will lay me down* and be quiet, and do nobody any harm.

2. Others sit up in the pursuit of the world and the wealth of it. They do not rise up early but they sit up late, in the eager prosecution of their covetous practices, (Ps. 127. 2.) and either to get or save, deny themselves their most necessary sleep; and this their way is their folly, for hereby they deprive themselves of the comfortable enjoyment of what they have, which is the end, under pretence of care and pains to obtain more, which is but the means. Solomon speaks of those who *neither day nor night see sleep with their eyes*, (Ecc. 8. 16.) who make themselves perfect slaves and drudges to the world, than which there is not a more cruel task-master: and, thus, they make that which of itself is vanity, to be to them vexation of spirit, for they weary themselves for very vanity, (Heb. 4. 3.) and are so miserably in love with their chain, that they deny themselves not only the spiritual rest God has provided for them as the God of grace, but the natural rest, which, as the God of nature, he has provided; and it is a specimen of the wrong sinners do to their own bodies, as well as their own souls. Let us see the folly of it, and never labour thus for the meat that perisheth, and that abundance of the rich, which will not suffer him to sleep; but let us labour for that meat which endureth to eternal life, that grace which is the earnest of glory, the abundance of which will make our sleep sweet to us.

3. Others sit up in the indulgence of their pleasures; they will not lay them down in due time, because they cannot find in their hearts to leave their vain sports and pastimes, their music, and dancing, and plays, their cards and dice; or, which is worse, their rioting and excess; for they that are drunk are drunk in the night. It is bad enough when these gratifications of a base lust, or at least of a vain mind, are suffered to devour the whole evening, and then to engross the whole soul, as they are apt enough to do insensibly; so that there is neither time nor heart for the evening devotions, either in the closet, or in the family: but it is much worse when they are suffered to go far into the night too, for then of course they trespass upon the ensuing morning, and steal away the time that should then also be bestowed upon the exercises of religion. Those who can of choice, and with so much pleasure sit up, till I know not what time of night, to make, as they say, "a merry night of it," to spend their time in filthiness and foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, would think themseves hardly dealt with, if they should be kept one half hour past their sleeping time, engaged in any good duties; and would have called blessed Paul himself a tedious preacher, and have censured him as very indiscreet, when, upon a particular occasion he continued his speech till midnight, Acts 20. 7. And how loth would they be with David at midnight, to rise and give thanks to God; or with their Master, to continue all night in prayer to God.

Let the corrupt affections which run out thus and transgress, be mortified, and not gratified. Those who have allowed themselves in such irregularities, if they have allowed themselves an impartial reflection, cannot but have found the inconvenience of them, and they have been a prejudice to the prosperity of the soul, and should therefore deny themselves for their own good. One rule for the closing of the day well is to keep good hours: *Every thing is beautiful in its season.* I have heard it said long since, and I beg leave to repeat it now, that

> "Early to bed, and early to rise,
> Is the way to be healthy, and wealthy, and wise."

We shall now take it for granted, that unless some necessary business, or some work of mercy, or some more than ordinary act of devotion keep you up beyond your usual time; you are disposed to lay you down. And let us lay us down with thankfulness to God, and with thoughts of dying; with penitent reflections upon the sins of the day; and with humble supplications for the mercies of the night.

(1.) Let us lie down with thankfulness to God. When we retire to our bedchambers or closets, we should lift up our hearts to God, the God of our mercies, and make him the God of our praises; whenever we go to bed, I am sure we do not want matter for praise, if we did not want a heart. Let us therefore address ourselves then to that pleasant duty, that work which is its own wages. The evening sacrifice was to be a sacrifice of praise.

[1.] We have reason to be thankful for the many mercies of the day past, which we ought particularly to review, and to say, *Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with his benefits.* Observe the constant series of mercies, which has not been interrupted, or broken in upon any day. Observe the particular instance of mercy with which some days have been signalized and made remarkable. It is he who has granted us life and favour; it is his visitation that preserves our spirits. Think how many are the calamities which we are every day preserved from; the calamities which we are sensibly exposed to, and perhaps have been delivered from the imminent danger of, and those which we have not been apprehensive of; many of which we have deserved, and, which, others, better than we are, groan under. All our bones have reason to say, *Lord, who is like unto thee?* For it is God who keepeth all our bones, not one of them is broken: it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.

Think how many are the comforts we are every day surrounded with, all which we are indebted to the bounty of the divine providence for; every bit we eat, and every drop we drink, is mercy; every step we take, and every breath we draw, mercy. All the satisfaction we have in the agreeableness and affections of our relations, and in the society and serviceableness of our friends: all the success we have in our callings aad employments, and the pleasure we take in them: all the joy which Zebulun has in his going out, and Issa-

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char in his tents, is what we have reason to acknowledge with thankfulness to God's praise.

Yet it is likely that the day has not past without some cross accidents, something or other has afflicted and disappointed us, and if it has, yet that must not indispose us for praise; however it be, yet God is good; and it is our duty in every thing to give thanks, and to bless the name of the Lord when he takes away, as well as when he gives; for our afflictions are but few, and a thousand times deserved; our mercies are many, and a thousand times forfeited.

[2.] We have reason to be thankful for the shadows of the evening, which call us to retire and lie down. The same wisdom, power and goodness which make the morning, make the evening also to rejoice; and give us cause to be thankful for the drawing of the curtains of the night about us in favour to our repose, as well as for the opening of the eye-lids of the morning upon us in favour to our business. When God divided between the light and the darkness, and allotted to both of them their time successively, he saw that it was good, it should be so; in a world of mixtures and changes, nothing more proper. Let us therefore give thanks to that God who forms the light, and creates the darkness; and believe, that in the revolutions of time, so in the revolutions of the events of time, the darkness of affliction may be as needful for us in its season, as the light of prosperity. If the hireling longs till the shadow comes, let him be thankful for it when it does come, that the burthen and heat of the day is not perpetual.

[3.] We have reason to be thankful for a quiet habitation to lie down in; that we are not driven out from among men as Nebuchadnezzar, to lie down with the beasts of the field; that though we were born like the wild ass's colt, yet we have not with the wild ass the wilderness for our habitation, and the desolate and barren land for our dwelling. That we are not put to wander in desarts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, as many of God's dear saints and servants have been forced to do, of whom the world was not worthy: but the good Shepherd makes us to lie down in green pastures. That we have not, as Jacob, the cold ground for our bed, and a stone for our pillow, which, yet one would be content with, and covet, if, with it, one could have his dream.

[4.] We have reason to be thankful that we are not forced to sit up; that our master not only gives us leave to lie down, but orders that nothing shall prevent our lying down. Many go to bed, but cannot lie down there, by reason of painful and languishing sicknesses, of that nature, that if they lie down they cannot breathe: our bodies are of the same mould, and it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not so afflicted. Many are kept up by sickness in their families; children are ill, and they must attend them: if God takes sickness away from the midst of us, and keeps it away, so that no plague comes near our dwellings, a numerous family perhaps, and all well, it is a mercy we are bound to be very thankful for, and to value in proportion to the greatness of the affliction where sickness prevails. Many are kept up by the fear of enemies, of soldiers, of thieves. The good man of the house watches that his house may not be broken through; but our lying down is not prevented or disturbed by the alarms of war, we are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of our repose; there therefore should we rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even his righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel, which under his protection are as safe as walled cities with gates and bars. When we lie down, let us thank God that we may lie down.

(2.) Let us lie down with thoughts of death, and of that great change which at death we must pass under. The conclusion of every day should put us in mind of the conclusion of all our days; when our night comes, our long night, which will put a period to our work, and bring the honest labourer both to take his rest, and receive his penny. It is good for us to think frequently of dying, to think of it as often as we go to bed; it will help to mortify the corruptions of our own hearts, which are our daily burthens, to arm us against the temptations of the world, which are our daily snares; it will wean us from our daily comforts, and make us easy under our daily crosses and fatigues. It is good for us to think familiarly of dying, to think of it as our going to bed, that by thinking often of it, and thinking thus of it, we may get above the fear of it.

[1.] At death we shall retire, as as we do at bed-time; we shall go to be private for a while, till the public appearance at the great day; *Man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more;* till then *they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep,* Job. 14. 12. Now we go abroad to see and be seen, and to no higher purpose do some spend their day, spend their life; but when death comes, there is an end of both; we shall then see no more in this world, *I shall behold man no more,* (Isa. 38. 11.) we shall then be seen no more; *The eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more,* (Job. 7. 8.) we shall be hid in the grave, and cut off from all living. To die is to bid good night to all our friends, to put a period to our conversation with them; we bid them farewell, but, blessed be God, it is not an eternal farewell. We hope to meet them again in the morning of the resurrection, to part no more.

[2.] At death we shall put off the body, as we put off our clothes when we lie down. The soul is the man, the body is but the clothes; at death we shall be unclothed, the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, the garment of the body shall be laid aside; death strips us and sends us naked out of the world, as we came into it; strips the soul of all the disguises wherein it appeared before men, that it may appear naked and open before God. Our grave-clothes are night-clothes.

When we are weary and hot, our clothes are a burthen, and we are very willing to throw them off; are not easy till we are undressed; thus *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened:* but when death frees the soul from the load and incumbrance of the body,

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body, which hinders its repose in its spiritual satisfactions, how easy will it be? Let us think then of putting off the body at death with as much pleasure, as we do of putting off our clothes at night; be as loose to them, as we are to our clothes; and comfort ourselves with this thought, that though we are unclothed at death, if we be clothed with Christ and his grace, we shall not be found naked, but be clothed upon with immortality. We have new clothes a making, which shall be ready to put on next morning; a glorious body like Christ's, instead of a vile body like the beasts.

[3.] At death we shall lie down in the grave, as on our bed, shall lie down in the dust, Job. 20. 11. To those who die in sin, and impenitence, the grave is a dungeon, their iniquities which are upon their bones, and which lie down with them, make it so; but those who die in Christ, who die in faith, it is a bed, a bed of rest, where there is no tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day, as sometimes there are upon the easiest beds we have in this world; where there is no danger of being scared with dreams, and terrified with visions of the night; there is no being chastened with pain on that bed, or the multitude of the bones with strong pain. It is the privilege of those, who while they live walk in their uprightness, that when they die they enter into peace, and rest in their beds, Isa. 57. 2. Holy Job comforts himself with this, in the midst of his agonies, that he shall shortly make his bed in the darkness, and be easy there. It is a bed of roses, a bed of spices to all believers ever since he lay in it, who is the *Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Vallies.*

Say then of thy grave, as thou dost of thy bed at night, *There the weary are at rest;* with this further consolation, that thou shalt not only rest there, but rise thence shortly, abundantly refreshed; shalt be called up to meet the beloved of thy soul, and to be for ever with him; shalt rise to a day which will not renew thy cares, as every day on earth does, but secure to thee unmixed and everlasting joys. How comfortably may we lie down at night, if such thoughts as these lie down with us; and how comfortably may we lie down at death, if we have accustomed ourselves to such thoughts as these.

(3.) Let us lie down with penitent reflections upon the sins of the day past. Praising God and delighting ourselves in him is such pleasant work, and so much the work of angels, that methinks it is a pity that we should have any thing else to do; but the truth is, we make other work for ourselves by our own folly, that is not so pleasant, but absolutely needful, and that is, repentance. While we are at night solacing ourselves in God's goodness, we must intermix therewith the afflicting of ourselves for our own vileness; both must have their place in us, and they will very well agree together; for we must take our work before us.

[1.] We must be convinced of it, that we are still contracting guilt; we carry corrupt natures about with us, which are bitter roots that bear gall and wormwood, and all we say or do is embittered by them. *In many things we all offend,* insomuch *that there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sins not.* We are in the midst of a defiling world, and cannot keep ourselves perfectly unspotted from it. If we say we have no sin, or that we have past a day and have not sinned, we deceive ourselves; for if we know the truth by ourselves, we shall see cause to cry, *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse us from our secret faults;* faults which we ourselves are not aware of. We ought to aim at a sinless perfection, with as strict a watchfulness as if we could attain it: but, after all, must acknowledge, that we come short of it; that we have not yet attained, neither are already perfect: We find it by constant sad experience, for it is certain that we do enough every day to bring us upon our knees at night.

[2.] We must examine our consciences, that we may find out our particular transgressions of the day past. Let us every night search and try our ways, our thoughts, words, and actions, compare them with the rule of the word, examine our faces in that glass, that we may see our spots, and may be particular in the acknowledgment of them. It will be good for us to ask, "What have we done this day?" What have we done amiss?" What duty have we neglected? What false step have we taken? How have we carried it in our callings, in our converse? Have we done the duties of our particular relations, and accommodated ourselves to the will of God in every event of providence. By doing this frequently, we shall grow in our acquaintance with ourselves, than which nothing will contribute more to our soul's prosperity.

[3.] We must renew our repentance, for whatever we find has been amiss in us, or has been said or done amiss by us. We must be sorry for it, and sadly lament it, and take shame to ourselves for it, and give glory to God by making confession. If any thing appear to have been wrong more than ordinary, that must be particularly bewailed; and in general, we must be mortified for our sins of daily infirmity, which we ought not to think slightly of, because they are returning daily, but rather be the more ashamed of them, and of that fountain within, which casts out these waters.

It is good to be speedy in renewing our repentance, before the heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Delays are dangerous; green wounds may soon be cured, if taken in time, but if they are corrupt, as the Psalmist complains, (Ps. 38. 5.) it is our fault and folly, and the cure will be difficult. Though through the weakness of the flesh we fall into sin daily, if we get up again by renewed repentance at night, we are not, nor ought we to think ourselves utterly cast down. The sin that humbles us, shall not ruin us.

[4.] We must make a fresh application of the blood of Christ to our souls for the remission of our sins, and the gracious acceptance of our repentance. We must not think that we have need of Christ only at our first conversion to God; no, we have daily need of him, as our advocate with the Father, and, therefore, as such he always appears in the presence of God for us, and attends continually to this very thing. Even our sins of daily infirmity would be our ruin, if he had not made

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made satisfaction for them, and did not still make intercession for us. He who is washed, still needs to wash his feet, from the filth he contracts in every step; and blessed be God, there is a fountain opened for us to wash in, and it is always open.

[5.] We must apply ourselves to the throne of grace for peace and pardon. Those who repent must pray, That the thought of their heart may be forgiven them, Acts 8. 22. And it is good to be particular in our prayers for the pardon of sin; that as Hannah said concerning Samuel, *For this child I prayed;* so we may be able to say, "For the forgiveness of this I prayed." However, the Publican's prayer in general, is a very proper one for each of us to lie down with, *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

(4.) Let us lie down with humble supplications for the mercies of the night. Prayer is as necessary in the evening, as it was in the morning, for we have the same need of the divine favour and care, to make the evening out-goings to rejoice, that we had to beautify those of the morning.

[1.] We must pray, that our outward man may be under the care of God's holy angels, who are the ministers of his providence. God has promised, that he will give his angels charge concerning those who make the most High their refuge, and that they shall pitch their tents round about them and deliver them; and what he has promised we may and must pray for; not as if God needed the service of the angels, or as if he did himself quit all the care of his people, and turn it over to them: but it appears by abundance of Scripture proofs, that they are employed about the people of God, whom he takes under his special protection, though they are not seen, both for the honour of God, by whom they are charged, and for the honour of the saints, with whom they are charged. It was the glory of Solomon's bed, that threescore valiant men were about it, of the valiant of Israel, all holding swords, because of fear in the night, Cant. 3. 7, 8. But much more honourably and comfortably are all true believers attended, for though they lie ever so meanly, they have hosts of angels surrounding their beds, and by the ministration of good spirits are preserved from malignant spirits. But God will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel; Christ himself must pray the Father, and he will send to his relief legions of angels, Mat. 26. 53. Much more reason have we to ask, that it may be given us.

[2.] We must pray, that our inward man may be under the influences of his holy Spirit, who is the Author and Fountain of his grace. As public ordinances are opportunities in which the Spirit works upon the hearts of men, and, therefore, when we attend on them, we must pray for the Spirit's operations; so are private retirements; and, therefore, we must put up the same prayer, when we enter upon them. We find that in slumbering upon the bed, God opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction, Job 33. 15, 16. And with this David's experience concurs. He found that God visited him in the night, and tried him, and so discovered him to himself, Ps. 17. 3. And that God gave him counsel, and his reins instructed him in the night-season, and so he discovered himself to him, Ps. 16. 7. He found that was a proper season for remembering God, and meditating upon him; and in order to our due improvement of this proper season for conversing with God in solitude, we need the powerful and benign influences of the blessed Spirit, which, therefore, when we lie down we should earnestly pray for, and humbly put ourselves under, and submit ourselves to. How God's grace may work upon us, when we are asleep we know not; the soul will act in a state of separation from the body, and how far it does act independent on the body, when the bodily senses are all locked up, we cannot say, but are sure, that the Spirit of the Lord is not bound; we have reason to pray, not only that our minds may not be either disturbed or polluted by evil dreams, in which for aught we know evil spirits sometimes have a hand, but may be instructed and quieted by good dreams, which Plutarch reckons among the evidences of increase and proficiency in virtue, and on which the good spirit has an influence. I have heard of a good man, that used to pray at night for good dreams.

II. When we lay us down, our care and endeavour must be to lay us down in peace. It is promised to Abraham that he should go to his grave in peace, (Gen. 15. 15.) and this promise is sure to all his spiritual seed, for *The end of the upright man is peace;* Josiah dies in peace, though he is killed in a battle; now as an earnest of this let us every night lie down in peace. It is threatened to the wicked, that they shall lie down in sorrow, Isa. 50. 11. It is promised to the righteous, that they shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid, Lev. 26. 6. Job 11. 19. Let us then enter into this rest, this blessed Sabbatism, and take care that we come not short of it.

1. Let us lie down in peace with God; for without this there can be no peace at all; *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked,* whom God is at war with. A state of sin is a state of enmity against God; they who continue in that state are under the wrath and curse of God, and cannot lie down in peace; what have they to do with peace? Hasten therefore (Sinner) hasten to make thy peace with God in Jesus Christ, by repentance and faith; take hold on his strength, that thou mayest make peace with him; and thou shalt make peace, for fury is not in him. Conditions of peace are offered, consent to them; close with him who is our peace; take Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms. Defer not to do this; dare not to sleep in that condition, in which thou darest not die. *Escape for thy life, look not behind thee.* Acquaint now thyself with him, now presently, and be at peace, and thereby this good shall come unto thee, thou shalt lie down in peace.

Sin is ever and anon making mischief between God and our souls, provoking God against us, alienating us from God, we, therefore, need to be every night making peace, reconciling ourselves to him and to his holy will, by the agency of his Spirit upon us, and begging of him to be reconciled to us, through the intercession of his Son

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Son for us; that there may be no distance, no strangeness between us and God, no interposing cloud to hinder his mercies from coming down upon us, or our prayers from coming up unto him. *Being justified by faith*, we have this *peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*, and then we may not only lie down in peace; but we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Let this be our first care, that God have no quarrel with us, nor we with him.

2. Let us lie down in peace with all men; we are concerned to go to sleep, as well as to die in charity. Those who converse much with the world can scarcely pass a day but something or other happens that is provoking, some affront is given them, some injury done them, at least they think so; when they retire at night and reflect upon it, they are apt to magnify the offence, and while they are musing on it the fire burns, their resentments rise, and they begin to say, *I will do so to him as he has done to me*, Pro. 24. 29. Then is the time of ripening the passion into a rooted malice, and meditating revenge; then, therefore, let wisdom and grace be set on work, to extinguish this fire from Hell before it get head, then let this root of bitterness be killed and plucked up; and let the mind be disposed to forgive the injury, and to think well of, and wish well to him that did it. If others incline to quarrel with us, yet let us resolve not to quarrel with them. Let us resolve that whatever the affront or injury was, it shall neither disquiet our spirits nor make us to fret, which Peninnah aimed at in provoking Hannah, (1 Sam. 1. 6.) nor sour or imbitter our spirits, or make us peevish and spiteful: but that we still love ourselves, and love our neighbours as ourselves, and therefore not by harbouring malice, do any wrong to ourselves or our neighbour. And we shall find it much easier in itself, and much more pleasant in the reflection to forgive twenty injuries than to avenge one.

That it should be our particular care at night to reconcile ourselves to those who have been injurious to us, is intimated in that charge, (Eph. 4. 26.) *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* If your passion has not cooled before, let it be abated by the cool of the evening, and quite disappear with the setting sun. You are then to go to bed, and if you lie down with these unmortified passions boiling in your breasts, your soul is among lions, you lie down in a bed of thorns, in a nest of scorpions. Nay, some have observed from what follows immediately, *Neither give place to the Devil*, (v. 27.) that those who go to bed in malice have the Devil for their bedfellow. We cannot lie down at peace with God, unless we be at peace with men; nor in faith pray to be forgiven, unless we forgive. Let us, therefore, study the things that make for peace, for the peace of our own spirits, by living, as much as in us lies, peaceably with all men. I am for peace, yea, though they are for war.

3. Let us lie down in peace with ourselves, with our own minds, with a sweet composure of spirit and enjoyment of ourselves; *Return unto thy rest, O my soul*, and be easy; let nothing disturb my soul, my darling.

But when may we lie down in peace; at night?

(1.) If we have by the grace of God in some measure done the work of the day, and filled it up with duty, we may then lie down in peace at night. If we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that *in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God*, we have this day *had our conversation in the world*, that we have done some good in our places, something that will turn to a good account; if our hearts do not reproach us with a *Diem perdidi*, alas! *I have lost a day;* or with that which is worse, the spending of that time in the service of sin, which should have been spent in the service of God; but if, on the contrary, we have abode with God, have been in his fear, and waited on him all the day long, we may then lie down in peace, for God says, *Well done, good and faithful servant;* and the sleep of the labouring man, of the labouring christian, is sweet, is very sweet, when he can say, as I am a day's journey nearer my end, so I am a day's work fitter for it. Nothing will make our bedchambers pleasant, and our beds easy, like the witness of the Spirit of God with our spirits, that we are going forward for heaven; and a conscience kept void of offence, which will be not only a continual feast, but a continual rest.

(2.) If we have by faith and patience, and submission to the divine will reconciled ourselves to all the events of the day, so as to be uneasy at nothing that God has done, we may then lie down in peace at night. Whatever has fallen out cross to us, it shall not fret us, but we will kiss the rod, take up the cross, and say, "All is well that God does." Thus we must in our patience keep possession of our own souls, and not suffer any affliction to put us out of the possession of them. We have met with disappointments in husbandry perhaps, in trade, at sea, debtors prove insolvent, creditors prove severe, but this and the other proceed from the Lord, there is a Providence in it, every creature is what God makes it to be, and therefore I am dumb, I open not my mouth: that which pleases God ought not to displease me.

(3.) If we have renewed our repentance for sin, and made a fresh application of the blood of Christ to our souls for the purifying of our consciences, we may then lay us down in peace. Nothing can break in upon our peace but sin, that is it which troubles the camp; if that be taken away there shall no evil befal us. The inhabitant, though he be far from well, yet shall not say I am sick, shall not complain of sickness, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity, Isa. 33. 24. The pardon of sin has enough in it to balance all our griefs, and therefore to silence all our complaints; a man sick of the palsy has yet reason to be easy, nay, and to be of good cheer, if Christ says to him, *Thy sins are forgiven thee;* and *I am thy salvation.*

(4.) If we have put ourselves under the divine protection for the ensuing night, we may then lay us down in peace. If by faith and prayer, we have run into the name of the Lord as our strong tower, have fled to take shelter under the shadow of his wings, and made the Lord our refuge and habitation, we may then speak peace to ourselves, for God in his word speaks peace to us.

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us. If David has an eye to the Cherubim, between which God is said to dwell, when he says, (Ps. 57. 1.) *In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge*; yet, certainly, he has an eye to the similitude which Christ makes use of, of a hen gathering her chickens under her wings, when he says, (Ps. 91. 4.) *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust*; and the chickens under the wings of the hen are not only safe, but warm and pleased.

(5.) If we have cast all our cares for the day following upon God, we may then lay us down in peace. Taking thought for the morrow is the great hinderance of our peace in the night; let us but learn to live without disquieting care, and to refer the issue of all events to that God who may and can do what he will, and will do what is best for those that love and fear him; *Father, thy will be done,* and then we make ourselves easy. Our Saviour presses this very much upon his disciples, not to perplex themselves with thoughts what they shall eat and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, because their Heavenly Father knows that they have need of these things, and will see that they be supplied. Let us, therefore, ease ourselves of this burthen, by casting it on him who careth for us; what need he care and we care too?

III. Having laid ourselves down in peace, we must compose ourselves to sleep. *I will lay me down and sleep.* The love of sleep for sleeping sake is the character of the sluggard, but as it is nature's physic for the recruiting of its weary powers, it is to be looked upon as a mercy equal to that of our food, and in its season to be received with thankfulness.

And with such thoughts as these we may go to sleep.

1. What poor bodies are these we carry about with us, that call for rest and relief so often, that are so soon tired, even with doing nothing, or next to nothing? It is an honour to man above the beasts, *Os Homini sublime dedit—that he is made so erect.* It was part of the serpent's curse, *On thy belly shalt thou go*; yet we have little reason to boast of this honour, when we observe how little a while we can stand upright, and how soon we are burthened with our honour, and are forced to lie down. The powers of the soul, and the senses of the body, are our honour, but it is mortifying to consider, how after a few hours use they are all locked up under a total disability of acting, and it is necessary they should be so. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,* or the *strong man in his strength,* since they both lie for a fourth part of their time utterly bereft of strength and wisdom, and on a level with the weak and foolish.

2. What a sad thing is it to be under the necessity of losing so much precious time as we do in sleep? That we should lie so many hours out of every four and twenty, in no capacity at all of serving God or our neighbour, of doing any work of piety or charity? Those who consider how short our time is, and what a great deal of work we have to do, and how fast the day of account hastens on, cannot but grudge to spend so much time in sleep, cannot but wish to spend as little as may be in it; cannot but be quickened by it to redeem time, when they are awake, and cannot but long to be there where there shall be no need of sleep; but they shall be as the angels of God, and never rest day or night from the blessed work of praising God.

3. What a good master do we serve, that allows us time for sleep, and furnishes us with conveniences for it, and makes it refreshing and reviving to us! By this it appears, the Lord is for the body, and it is a good reason why we should present our bodies to him as living sacrifices, and glorify him with them. Nay, sleep is spoken of as given by promise to the saints, (Ps. 127. 2.) *So he giveth his beloved sleep.* The godly man has the enjoyment of that in a quiet resignation to God, which the worldly man labours in vain for, in the eager pursuit of the world. What a difference is there between the sleep of a sinner who is not sensible of his being within a step of Hell, and the sleep of a saint that has good hopes, through grace, of his being within a step of Heaven; that is the sleep God gives to his beloved.

4. How piteous is the case of those from whose eyes sleep departs, through pain of body, or anguish of mind, and to whom wearisome nights are appointed? who, when they lie down, say, *When shall we arise?* And who are thus made a terror to themselves. It was said, that of all the inhuman tortures used by those whom the French King employed to force his protestant subjects to renounce their religion, none prevailed more than keeping them by violence long waking. When we find how earnestly nature craves sleep, and how much it is refreshed by it, we should think with compassion of those, who upon any account want that and other comforts which we enjoy, and pray for them.

5. How ungrateful we have been to the God of our mercies, in suffering sleep, which is so great a support and comfort to us, to be our hindrance in that which is good. As when it has been the gratification of our sloth and laziness, when it has kept us from our hour of prayer in the morning, and disfitted us for our hour of prayer at night; or when we have slept unseasonably in the worship of God; as Eutychus, when Paul was preaching; and the disciples, when Christ was in his agony at prayer. How justly might we be deprived of the comfort of sleep, and upbraided with this as the provoking cause of it? *What! could ye not watch with me one hour?* Those who would sleep, and cannot, must think how often they should have kept awake, and would not.

6. We have now one day less to live than we had in the morning: the thread of time is winding off apace, its sands are running down, and as time goes, eternity comes; it is hastening on; our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; which passes and repasses in an instant: and what do we of the work of time? What forwardness are we in to give up our account? O that we could always go to sleep with death upon our thoughts, how would it quicken us to improve time! It would make our sleep not the less desirable, but it would make our death much the less formidable.

7. To thy Glory, O God, I now go to sleep; whether we eat or drink, yea, or sleep, for that is included in,

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in, whatever we do, we must do it to the glory of God. Why do I go to sleep now, but that my body may be fit to serve my soul, and able for a while to keep pace with it in the service of God to-morrow? Thus common actions, by being directed toward our great end, are done after a godly sort, and abound to our account: and thus the advantages we have by them are sanctified to us; *To the pure all things are pure;* and *whether we wake or sleep, we live together with Christ,* 1 Thess. 5 10.

8. To thy grace, O God, and to the word of thy grace I now commend myself. It is good to fall asleep with a fresh surrender of our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, to God: now, *Return* to God as *thy rest, O my soul; for he has dealt bountifully with thee;* thus we should commit the keeping of our souls to him, falling asleep, as David did, (Ps. 31. 5.) with, *Into thy hands I commit my spirit;* and as Stephen did, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* Sleep does not only resemble death, but is sometimes an inlet to it; many go to sleep and never wake, but sleep the sleep of death; which is a good reason why we should go to sleep with dying thoughts, and put ourselves under the protection of a living God, and then sudden death will be no surprise to us.

9. O that when I awake I may be still with God! that the parenthesis of sleep, though long, may not break off the thread of my communion with God, but that as soon as I awake I may resume it! O that when I wake in the night I may have my mind turned to good thoughts! may remember God upon my bed, who then is at my right hand, and to whom the darkness and the light are both alike; and that I may sweetly meditate upon him in the night watches; that thus even that time may be redeemed, and improved to the best advantage, which otherwise is in danger not only of being lost in vain thoughts, but mispent in ill ones! O that when I awake in the morning, my first thoughts may be of God, that with them my heart may be seasoned for all day!

10. O that I may enter into a better rest than that which I am now entering upon! The Apostle speaks of a rest, which we that have believed do enter into, even in this world, as well as of a rest which in the other world remains for the people of God, Heb. 4. 3, 9. Believers rest from sin and the world, they rest in Christ, and in God through Christ; they enjoy a satisfaction in the covenant of grace, and their interest in that covenant; *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell.* They enter into this ark, and there are not only safe but easy. Now, O that I might enjoy this rest while I live, and when I die might enter into something more than rest, even the joy of my Lord, a fulness of joy!

IV. We must do all this in a believing dependence upon God and his power, providence and grace. Therefore I *lay me down in peace,* and compose myself to sleep, because thou, Lord, keepest me, and assurest me that thou dost so; *Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety.* David takes notice of God's compassing his path, and his lying down, as his observer, Ps. 139. 3. He sees his eye upon him when he is retired into his bed-chamber, and none else sees him; when he is in the dark, and none else can see him. Here he takes notice of him, compassing his lying down as his preserver; and sees his hand about him to protect him from evil, and keep him safe; feels his hand under him to support him, and to make him easy.

1. It is by the power of God's providence that we are kept safe in the night, and on that providence we must depend continually. It is he that preserveth man and beast, (Ps. 36. 6.) that upholds all things by the word of his power. That death, which by sin entered into the world, would soon lay all waste, if God did not shelter his creatures from its arrows, which are continually flying about, we cannot but see ourselves exposed to in the night. Our bodies carry about with them the seeds of all diseases; Death is always working in us; a little thing would stop the circulation either of the blood or the breath, and then we are gone; either never awake, or awake under the arrests of death. Men by sin are exposed to one another; many have been murdered in their beds, and many burned in their beds. And our greatest danger of all is from the malice of evil spirits that go about seeking to devour.

We are very unable to help ourselves, and our friends unable to help us; we are not aware of the particulars of our danger, nor can we foresee which way it will arise; and, therefore, know not where to stand upon our guard; or if we did, we know not how. When Saul was asleep, he lost his spear and his cruise of water, and might as easily have lost his head, as Sisera did when he was asleep by the hand of a woman. What poor helpless creatures are we, and how easily are we overcome when sleep has overcome us? Our friends are asleep too, and cannot help us. An illness may seize us in the night, which, if they be called up and come to us, they cannot help us against; the most skilful and tender are *Physicians of no value.*

It is therefore God's providence that protects us night after night, his care, his goodness. That was the hedge about Job, about him and his house, and all that he had round about, (Job. 1. 10.) a hedge that Satan himself could not break through, nor find a gap in, though he traversed it round. There is a special protection which God's people are taken under, they are hid in his pavillion, in the secret of his tabernacle, under the protection of his promise, (Ps. 27. 5.) they are his own, and dear to him, and he keeps them as the apple of his eye, Ps. 17. 8. He is round about them from henceforth and for ever, as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, Ps. 125. 2. He protects their habitations, as he did the tents of Israel in the wilderness; for he has promised to create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, *A pillar of cloud by day,* to shelter from heat; *and the shining of a flaming fire by night,* to *shelter from cold,* Isa. 4. 5. Thus he blesseth the habitation of the just, so that no real evil shall befal it, nor any plague come nigh it.

The care of the divine providence concerning us and our families we are to depend upon, so as to look upon

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no provision we make for our own safety sufficient, without the blessing of the divine providence upon it; *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* Be the house ever so well built, the doors and windows ever so well barred, the servants ever so careful, ever so watchful, it is all to no purpose, unless he that keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps, undertake for our safety; and if he be thy protector, *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh,* and *shalt know that thy tabernacle is in peace,* Job. 5. 22, 24.

2. It is by the power of God's grace that we are enabled to think ourselves safe, and on that grace we must continually depend. The fear of danger, though groundless, is as vexatious as if it were ever so just. And, therefore, to complete the mercy of being made to dwell safely, it is requisite that by the grace of God we be delivered from our fears, (Ps. 34. 4.) as well as from the things themselves that we were afraid of; that shadows may not be a terror to us, no more than substantial evils.

If by the grace of God we are enabled to keep conscience void of offence, and still to preserve our integrity; if iniquity be put far away, and no wickedness suffered to dwell in our tabernacles, then shall we lift up our faces without spot, we shall be stedfast, and shall not need to fear, (Job. 11. 14, 15.) for fear came in with sin, and goes out with it. *If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God,* and man too, and are made to dwell securely, for we are sure nothing can hurt us but sin; and whatever does harm us, sin is the sting of it; and, therefore, if sin be pardoned and prevented, we need not fear any trouble.

If by the grace of God we be enabled to live by faith, that faith which sets God alway before us, that faith which applies the promises to ourselves, and puts them in suit at the throne of grace, that faith which purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one, that faith which realizes unseen things, and is the substance and evidence of them: if we be actuated and governed by this grace we are made to dwell safely, and to bid defiance to death itself, and all its harbingers and terrors; *O Death, where is thy sting?* This faith will not only silence our fears, but will open our lips in holy triumphs, *If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Let us lie down in peace, and sleep, not in the strength of a natural resolution against fear, nor merely of rational arguments against it, though they are of good use, but in a dependence upon the grace of God to work faith in us, and to fulfil in us the work of faith. This is going to sleep like a christian under the shadow of God's wings, going to sleep in faith; and it will be to us a good earnest of dying in faith; for the same faith that will carry us cheerfully through the short death of sleep, will carry us through the long sleep of death.

The Application.

1. See how much it is our concern to carry our religion about with us wherever we go, and to have it always at our right hand; for at every turn we have occasion for it, lying down, rising up, going out, coming in; and those are christians indeed, who confine not their religion to the New Moons and the Sabbaths, but bring the influences of it into all the common actions and occurrences of human life. We must sit down at our tables, and rise from them, lie down in our beds and arise from them, with an eye to God's providence, and promise. Thus we must live a life of communion with God, even while our conversation is with the world.

And in order to this, it is necessary that we have a living principle in our hearts, a principle of grace, which, like a well of living water, may be continually springing up to life eternal, John 4. 14. It is necessary likewise that we have a watchful eye upon our hearts, and keep them with all diligence, that we set a strict guard upon their motions, and have our thoughts more at command than I fear most christians have. See what need we have of the constant supplies of divine grace, and of a union with Christ, that by faith we may partake of the root and fatness of the good olive continually.

2. See what a hidden life the life of good christians is, and how much it lies from under the eye and observation of the world. The most important part of their business lies between God and their own souls, in the frame of their spirits, and the workings of their hearts, in their retirements, which no eye sees but his, that is all eye. Justly are the saints called God's Hidden ones, and his secret is said to be with them, for they have meat to eat, and work to do which the world knows not of; and joys and griefs, and cares which a stranger does not intermeddle with. *Great is the mystery of godliness.*

And this is a good reason why we should look upon ourselves as incompetent judges one of another, because, we know not each other's hearts, nor are witnesses to their retirements. It is to be feared, there are many whose religion lies all in the outside, they make a fair shew in the flesh, and perhaps a great noise; and, yet, are strangers to this secret communion with God, in which consists so much of the power of godliness. And on the other hand it is to be hoped, there are many who do not distinguish themselves by any thing observable in their profession of religion, but pass through the world without being taken notice of, and yet converse much with God in solitude, and walk with him in the even constant tenour of a regular devotion and conversation. *The Kingdom of God comes not with observation.* Many merchants thrive by a secret trade, that make no bustle in the world. It is fit, therefore, that every man's judgment, should proceed from the Lord, who knows men's hearts and sees in secret.

3. See

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3. See what enemies they are to themselves, who continue under the power of a vain and carnal mind, and live without God in the world. Multitudes I fear there are, to whom all that has been said of secret communion with God is accounted as a strange thing, and they are ready to say of their ministers when they speak of it, *Do they not speak parables?* They lie down and rise up, go out and come in, in the constant pursuit either of worldly profits, or of sensual pleasures: but God is not in all their thoughts, not in any of them; they live upon him, and upon the gifts of his bounty from day to day, but they have no regard to him, never own their dependence on him, nor are in any care to secure his favour.

Those who live such a mere animal life as this, do not only put a great contempt upon God, but do a great deal of damage to themselves; they stand in their own light, and deprive themselves of the most valuable comforts that can be enjoyed on this side heaven. What peace can they have who are not at peace with God? what satisfaction can they take in their hopes, who build them not upon God the everlasting foundation? Or in their joys, who derive them not from him the fountain of life and living waters? O that at length they would be wise for themselves, and remember their Creator and Benefactor!

4. See what easy pleasant lives the people of God might live, if it were not their own faults. There are those who fear God and work righteousness, and are accepted of the Lord, but go drooping and disconsolate from day to day, are full of cares and fears and complaints, and make themselves always uneasy; and it is because they do not live that life of delight in God, and dependence on him, that they might and should live. God has effectually provided for their dwelling at ease, but they make not use of that provision he has laid up for them.

O that all who appear to be conscientious, and are afraid of sin, would appear to be cheerful, and afraid of nothing else; that all who call God Father, and are in care to please him, and keep themselves in his love, would learn to cast all their other care upon him, and commit their way to him as to a father. He shall chuse our inheritance for us, and knows what is best for us better than we do for ourselves. "Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me." It is what I have often said, and will abide by, "That a holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is the most pleasant comfortable life any body can live in this world."

5. See in this, what is the best preparation we can make for the changes, that may be before us in our present state; and that is, to keep up a constant acquaintance and communion with God, to converse with him daily, and keep up stated times for calling on him, that so when trouble comes, it may find the wheels of prayer a going. And then may we come to God with a humble boldness and comfort, and hope to speed when we are in affliction, if we have been no strangers to God at other times, but in our peace and prosperity had our eyes ever toward him.

Even when we arrive to the greatest degree of holy security and serenity, and lie down most in peace, yet, still, we must keep up an expectation of trouble in the flesh; our ease must be grounded not upon any stability in the creature, if it be, we put a cheat upon ourselves, and treasure up so much the greater vexation for ourselves. No, it must be built upon the faithfulness of God, which is unchangeable. Our master has told us, *In the world you shall have tribulation*, much tribulation, count upon it, it is only in me that you shall have peace. But if every day be to us, as it should be, a Sabbath of rest in God, and communion with him, nothing can come amiss to us any day, be it ever so cross.

6. See in this, what is the best preparation we can make for the unchangeable world, that is before us. We know God will bring us to death, and it is our great concern to get ready for it. It ought to be the business of every day, to prepare for our last day, and what can we do better for ourselves in the prospect of death, than by frequent retirements for communion with God, to get more loose from that world which at death we must leave, and better acquainted with that world which at death we must remove to. By going to our beds as to our graves, we shall make death familiar to us, and it will become as easy to us to close our eyes in peace and die, as it used to be to close our eyes in peace and sleep.

We hope God will bring us to heaven; and by keeping up daily communion with God, we grow more and more meet to partake of that inheritance; and have our conversation in heaven. It is certain, all that will go to heaven hereafter, begin their heaven now, and have their hearts there; if we thus enter into a spiritual rest every night, that will be a pledge of our blessed repose in the embraces of divine love, in that world wherein day and night come to an end, and we shall not rest day or night from praising him, who is and will be our eternal rest.

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Mr. FLATMAN'S HYMN for the Morning. Poems, p. 57.

AWAKE my soul! Awake mine eyes,
Awake my drowsy faculties;
Awake and see the new-born light,
Spring from the darksome womb of night.
Look up and see th' unwearied sun,
Already has his race begun;
The pretty lark is mounted high,
And sings her matins in the sky.
Arise my soul, and thou my voice,
In songs of praise early rejoice!
O Great Creator, Heavenly King!
Thy praises let me ever sing!
Thy power has made, thy goodness kept
This fenceless body while I slept;
Yet one day more hast given me,
From all the powers of darkness free.
O keep my heart from sin secure,
My life unblameable and pure;
That when the last of all my days is come,
Cheerful and fearless I may wait my doom.

His ANTHEM for the Evening, p. 58.

SLEEP, downy sleep! Come close mine eyes,
Tir'd with beholding vanities!
Sweet slumbers come and chase away
The toils and follies of the day.
On your soft bosom will I lie,
Forget the world, and learn to die.
O Israel's watchful Shepherd spread
Tents of angels round my bed.
Let not the spirits of the air,
While I slumber me ensnare;
But save thy suppliant free from harms,
Clasp'd in thine everlasting arms.
Clouds and darkness is thy throne,
Thy wonderful pavilion;
O dart from thence a shining ray,
And then my midnight shall be day:
Thus when the morn in crimson drest,
Breaks through the windows of the east,
My hymns of thankful praises shall arise,
Like incense or the morning sacrifice.

Mr. WATT'S Morning HYMN; Ps. 19. 5, 8. & 73. 24, 25. p. 63.

1 GOD of the morning, at whose voice
The cheerful sun makes haste to rise,
And like a giant doth rejoice,
To run his journey through the skies.

2 From the fair chambers of the east
The circuit of his race begins;
And without weariness or rest
Round the whole earth he flies and shines.

3 O like the sun may I fulfil
Th' appointed duties of the day,
With ready mind and active will
March on and keep my heavenly way!

[4 But I shall rove and lose the race,
If God my sun should disappear,
And leave me in this world's wild maze
To follow every wand'ring star.

5 Lord, thy commands are clean and pure,
Enlightning our beclouded eyes,
Thy threat'nings just, thy promise sure,
Thy gospel makes the simple wise.]

6 Give me thy counsels for my guide,
And then receive me to thy bliss;
All my desires and hopes beside
Are faint and cold, compar'd with this.

An Evening HYMN; Ps. 4. 8. & 3. 5, 6. & 143. 8.

1 THUS far the Lord has led me on,
Thus far his power prolongs my days;
And every evening shall make known
Some fresh memorial of his grace.

2 Much of my time has run to waste,
And I perhaps am near my home;
But he forgives my follies past,
He gives me strength for days to come.

3 I lay my body down to sleep,
Peace is the pillow for my head,
While well appointed angels keep
Their watchful stations round my bed.

4 In vain the sons of earth or hell
Tell me a thousand frightful things,
My God in safety makes me dwell
Beneath the shadow of his wings.

[5 Faith in his name forbids my fear:
O may thy presence ne'er depart!
And in the morning make me hear
The love and kindness of thy heart.

6 Thus when the night of death shall come,
My flesh shall rest beneath the ground,
And wait thy voice to rouse my tomb,
With sweet salvation in the sound.]

A SONG for Morning or Evening; Lam. 3. 23. Isa. 45. 7.

1 MY God, how endless is thy love?
Thy gifts are every evening new,
And morning mercies from above
Gently distil like early dew.

2 Thou spread'st the curtains of the night,
Great Guardian of my sleeping hours;
Thy sovereign word restores the light,
And quickens all my drowsy powers.

3 I yield my powers to thy command,
To thee I consecrate my days;
Perpetual blessings from thine hand
Demand perpetual songs of praise.

FOUR

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FOUR DISCOURSES

AGAINST

VICE AND PROFANENESS,

VIZ. AGAINST

I. DRUNKENNESS.
II. UNCLEANNESS.
III. SABBATH-BREAKING.
IV. PROFANE SPEAKING.

To the Reader.

WITHOUT doubt it is possible that a man may be no drunkard or adulterer, no swearer or sabbath-breaker, and yet be for ever ruined by his unmortified pride and passion, his worldliness and covetousness; his secret fraud and injustice, or his infidelity and close impiety. The Pharisee in the parable went to his house not justified, though he could say, *I am not as other men are;* yet so great a decay is there of religion, even in the christian world, and such a prevalency of sin, that it is easy to observe how far it goes toward the gaining a man a fair character among his neighbours, to be able to say of him, that he is free from these vices, as if it were a rare thing to find them that are so.

I hope the matter is not so bad: but it is too plain to be denied, that drunkenness and uncleanness, sabbath-breaking and profane speaking, the sins against which these four plain discourses are levelled, do still very much abound both in city and country, notwithstanding the good and wholesome laws of the land, made pursuant to the laws of God, for the suppressing of them; and both enforced by Her Majesty's Proclamation, solemnly read at certain times, in the chief places of concourse; and the pious endeavours in many parts of the kingdom, both of magistrates and of others also in their places, formed into societies for that purpose, to reform the manners of the age. Though their endeavours have not been altogether in vain, yet it is evident the disease is not conquered.

It would be a vanity to think, that such will be reclaimed and reformed by books, as will not be wrought upon by those more sensible methods of conviction: and yet our writing against these sins may be of some use, to give a check to those, who are entering into temptations to them, and who are therein checked by their own consciences likewise; with which, if we can but seasonably set in, they may be prevailed with to start back in time, before their hearts be hardened.

It may likewise be of use to those who fall under the censure of the law for any of these sins, and are thereby awakened to some degree of consideration, to make the punishment answer the end aimed at, which is nothing else but their reformation; and that would contribute too to the reformation of others. If the rod and reproof together might but give wisdom to the foolish and disobedient, as there would be more joy in heaven, so there would be more benefit on earth by the example of one sinner that repenteth, than of ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance.

And we may hope there are some, who, through the strength of temptation, and the weakness of resolution, are drawn away by these lusts, and enticed that yet are willing to be reasoned with, and to read and consider what is said to them; and may more probably be wrought upon by a book, which they may peruse over and over again, than by a sermon which they hear once; and may in this way, by the grace of God, be recovered out of the snare of the Devil, and become trophies of Christ's victory over him.

However, such endeavours as these to turn sinners from the error of their ways, though they may not have the desired success, will turn to us for a testimony, that we would have healed them, and they would not be healed. By this and other methods the watchmen give warning, and so deliver their own souls.

What more have we to do, but to be earnest with God in prayer night and day, that the wickedness of the wicked may at length come to an end, and the just be established by a more plentiful pouring out of the Spirit of grace upon us from on high, which would soon turn the wilderness into a fruitful land, and make even the desert to blossom as the rose.

And while we yet see the wicked walk on every side, it is expected from us, that our souls weep in secret for it, that we complain of it to God, that we sigh and cry for the abominations committed among us, and that by a regular and exemplary conversation, conformable to the gospel, we vindicate the honour of our holy religion, and approve ourselves God's faithful witnesses in the places where we live; then shall a mark be set upon us, and we shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, hid either in heaven or under heaven.

MAT. HENRY.

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A FRIENDLY

ADMONITION

TO

DRUNKARDS AND TIPLERS.

TO address ourselves to you (sinners) when you are actually overcome with wine or strong drink, is to cast pearls before swine, that will trample them under their feet, and perhaps will turn again and rend us. You are then as uncapable to hear reason, as you are to speak it: it was the prudence of Abigail that she would not reprove Nabal when he was drunk, 1 Sam. 25. 36. *They have smitten me,* then *shalt thou say, and I felt it not,* (Pro. 23. 35,) and then to what purpose wast thou smitten?

But I will take it for granted that you are sometimes sober, and allow yourselves liberty to think, and that Nebuchadnezzar's misery is not your chosen happiness, to be continually beasts from one year's end to another. I am willing to hope that sometimes your understanding returns to you; and at such a happy hour, when you are your own men, and masters of your own reason, I heartily wish this paper might fall into your hands, to be read with a serious and unprejudiced eye, and grace with it into your hearts to enable you to consider your ways, and to turn from the error of them.

And now at length, I beseech you, *shew yourselves men, O ye transgressors,* (Isa. 46. 8.) and let me bespeak one hour's application of mind, and a little impartial consideration, while one, who really wishes you well, attempts to recover you out of the snare you are led captive in. You are, perhaps, many a time thankful to your friends, who helped you when you were drunk, helped you to your houses, helped you to your beds, when you were not able to help yourselves: I beseech you then, count not one your enemy, who would persuade you to such a course of life, as that your own hands may be sufficient for you, and you may not again need their help upon any such occasion.

The transgressors to whom I address this paper, I shall chuse to describe in the express words of Scripture, hoping that such a description of them will be not only least exceptionable, but most effectual to discover them to themselves, and to their own consciences; and further I do not desire to discover them: *For I write not these things to shame you,* (unless it be to shame you out of your sin) *but as my beloved friends to warn you,* 1 Cor. 4. 14.

Those therefore that I am exhorting in God's name to repent and reform, are such as fall under some of the following characters.

1. Those who inordinately love drink, are hereby admonished. Solomon foretels the misery of him who loves pleasure, that he shall be a poor man, and particularly he who loves wine, Pro. 21. 17. To use wine or strong drink soberly and with a moderate delight as a good creature of God, made for the service and comfort of man is allowed us: and it is sanctified as other the good things of this life, by the word of God and prayer, and the pleasure more than doubled to a good man by thanksgiving: but to love wine and strong drink, to set the heart upon it, to let out the desire towards it, for the sake of the pleasure of drinking, and because it is a gratification of the sensual appetite; this is a corrupt and vicious habit, which leads to drunkenness, as it is usually contracted by it.

To drink wine for the stomach's sake is prescribed as a medicine, (1 Tim. 5. 23.) but then it is a little wine, for a little, a very little will serve the necessities, and regular desires of nature: but to eat or drink for drunkenness, that is, purely to please the palate, has a brand put upon it by the wise man, (Ecc. 10. 17.) where it is made the character of virtuous princes, that (notwithstanding the temptation of dainties and varieties they have about them) they eat in due season for strength and not for drunkenness.

It is the everlasting reproach of Israel in the wilderness, that when God gave them meat enough for their bodies, that did not content them, though it was bread from heaven: but they asked meat for their lusts, (Ps. 78. 18.) after the similitude of their transgression do those sin, who are not pleased with that which satisfies the just desires of nature, but they thirst after that which really puts a force upon nature.

This love of the pleasure of drinking, is commonly jested with as a "Spark in the Throat;" but such a spark it is as must be quenched by true repentance and mortification, or it will break out shortly into such a flame, as will burn to the lowest hell.

2. Those who err through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way, are hereby admonished. Such are complained of by the prophet, (Isa. 28. 7.) who though they do not drink so far as ordinarily to deprive themselves of the common exercise of reason, yet they debauch their own consciences with the love of pleasure; so that they are unable to make a right judgment of divine things, and especially of their own spiritual state and interest; so losing the exercise of their reason about that for the sake of which they had their reason given them.

Their case is greatly to be lamented, who, by associating with drunkards, and habituating themselves to loose practices inconsistent with the rules, and destructive to the seeds of divine life, come to imbibe loose principles concerning God and Christ, and the Scriptures, and their souls, and another world, and entertain rooted prejudices against serious godliness, and a holy life: thus the strong man armed gets and keeps possession of the heart, and it will be a miracle of free grace, if ever he be dispossessed.

It is sad to see how many form their notions of religion, and settle their rules of living by their free conversation, as they call it, over a glass of wine; and for instruction in the most weighty concerns of their souls they have recourse not to reading, study, prayer, or the serious advice of their grave and pious teachers; but to the banter of their club in the ale-house or tavern; by this they resolve to steer their course, and they take it for granted they are in the right.

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right. These are the oracles they consult; in these schools they chuse their education, and so they err through wine; and in the greatness of their folly wander endlessly.

3. Those who tarry long at the wine are also branded in the Scripture, Pro. 23. 30. Those who waste a great many of their precious hours thus idly and unprofitably, so as at the best to serve none of the purposes of the rational, much less of the divine life: those I mean, who spend the best part of every day in piping, and sipping, and chatting over the glass, as if they had nothing else to do in this world, but to please as brutish an appetite of the mere animal life as any it has: they divide their time, perhaps even their sabbath time, between the bed and the bottle, and make tipling the constant business of a worthless useless life. They do not stand in the market place, but they set in a worse place all the day idle.

These are such as we call sots; the most insignificant animals under the sun, the unprofitable burthens of the earth, under which it groans: of whom we may truly say, it had been as good for the world if it had never known them; and they themselves will say shortly, when they come under the fearful doom of the wicked and slothful servant, that it had been better, a thousand times better if they had never been born; for the time thus spent, thus mispent, will perhaps occasion melancholy reflections upon a death-bed: it will, however, pass very ill in the account, in the judgment of the great day.

4. Those who follow strong drink are under a woe, (Isa. 5. 11.) *Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink:* and as another scripture expresses it, *They fill themselves with strong drink*, Isa. 56. 12. These are deliberate drunkards who are continually seeking opportunities to make themselves drunk; who follow it as their trade, and are in it as in their element. The desire of excessive drinking will draw them at any time, into any place, among any company though ever so sordid and so much below them; it will give them a diversion from the prosecution of any business, though ever so urgent. They are as solicitous in their inquiry "Where are the best Liquors;" as the most industrious tradesman is in inquiring "Where are the best goods, and the best bargains:" when they awake out of a drunken fit, it is to seek it yet again, Pro. 23. 35.

5. Those who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, are likewise under a woe, Isa. 5. 22. There are those who glory in it as a mighty perfection, that they are able to bear a great deal of strong liquor without sinking under it; and boast of it as an heroic atchievement, that they have made shift to keep their seats, and to keep their feet, when they have laid so many dead drunk under the table: probably such as these were those drunkards of Ephraim, who wore the crown of pride, the garlands they won by those sort of victories, Isa. 28. 1. But it is there threatened, (v. 3.) That those drunkards of Ephraim, with their crown of pride, shall be trodden under foot. Be astonished, O Heavens, at this! and wonder, O Earth! That ever any should arrive to such a pitch of impudence in sin, as thus to glory in their shame, and value themselves upon that which is rather the commendation of a brewer's horse, than of a man, to be able to carry a great deal of liquor. But the day is coming, when those who are so well able to bear the cup of drunkenness, will find themselves too weak to bear the cup of trembling.

6. Those who are easily and commonly brought to *drink themselves drunk*, as the expression is, (1 Kin. 16. 9. and ch. 20. 16.) fall under this reproof: those, I mean, who though they know their own weakness, the weakness of their heads, and their inability to bear drink, together with the weakness of their hearts, and their inability to resist temptations to this sin, yet are ordinarily drawn into such company as proves a snare to them, and are soon brought to take more than does them good; the effect whereof is, that their reason is disturbed, their tongues stammer, their feet stumble, and they reel to and fro, and are at their wits end. They become like the fool, whom Solomon describes, (Ecc. 10. 3.) who *when he walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he says to every one* he meets, *that he is a fool.* Those certainly drink to excess, who by drinking lose the government of themselves, and disable their own bodies and minds for their respective offices.

They who are but once surprised into this excess, as Noah was; have reason to lament their own unwariness, and to double their guard for the future: but they, who are again and again overcome by it have no cloak for their sin; wine is such a mocker, that if it thus deceive us once, it is its part, it may be its fault, but if twice it is our own, wholly our own.

7. Those who make others drink and be drunk, though they themselves may escape being so, are under a woe, (Hab. 2. 15.) *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, and makes him drunken also.* Those, who contrive by urging healths, or other the arts of drunkenness to force this trade, must doubtless be accountable for all the sin they decoy others into, and the blood of those souls and bodies, which perish thereby, will be required at their hands. Those especially incur guilt, who, not only make a jest of drawing an unguarded soul now and then into a particular act of drunkenness, but, lay plots to debauch those who were soberly educated and inclined, and to engage them in the course and way of this sin; and triumph in their success herein as glorious victories, boasting how often they have thus quenched the glowing sparks of virtue, and crushed its hopeful seeds. These have arrived at the highest pitch of this wickedness; they are factors for hell, and betray such a malice against God and souls, and such a zeal for the propagating of sin, as is the very constitution of Satan himself.

Having thus described the disease, in the several symptoms and degrees of it, we must next attempt the cure: and that which makes the attempt more difficult, and yet more necessary is, that the disease is epidemical; the contagion is spread through the nation, and multitudes

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multitudes are tainted with it. It is not here and there one that is thus deprived of his reason, and become distracted at times; if so, hospitals might be built in which to keep them up, and endeavour their relief: but the iniquity abounds in every place. If the honour of temperance were to be carried by the major vote, we have reason to fear that the sober would be out polled. Whether the former days were in this respect any whit better than these, I know not; but these are certainly very bad, and the Prophet's complaint may too justly be revived, (Isa. 28. 8.) *All tables are full of vomit and filthiness, there is no place clean.*

Now as when the pestilence rages in a city, whilst care is taken by the government to confine the infected, that they appear not abroad to spread the infection, it is likewise incumbent upon physicians, to prescribe and publish the best methods they can think of both of prevention and cure: so, when this brutish vice of drunkenness is grown so very common as it is, it is high time to take the same course with it. It is the duty of magistrates with their power, to restrain and suppress it, that it appear not barefaced. Their sword ought to be a terror to these evil doers; for without doubt a common drunkard is a common nuisance, which the conservators of the public peace ought to take cognizance of. It is also requisite that ministers in their places, as spiritual physicians, should direct people what course to take, and how to manage themselves, that they, who are yet sound, may be preserved from the infection, and they who are sick, who most need the physician, may be recovered.

I must alter the title of this paper, if I should here address myself to the sober, to give them rules for the preserving of their sobriety; let the fear of God be kept up in the heart; let the flesh be crucified with all its corrupt affections and lusts; let not the dread and abhorrence of this sin, be lessened by the frequent sight of those who indulge themselves in it: but let drunkards as vile persons, be contemned in their eyes, (Ps. 15. 4.) and let their company be avoided, as much as is possible: let temperance be a constant pleasure to them, and let them value themselves by it as their honour and reputation, and let its rules be religiously and inviolably observed, and no sensual appetite gratified, but let the body be kept under, and brought into subjection to religion and right reason; and then, I hope, by the Grace of God, daily prayed for, and duly improved, he that is sober will be sober still, and will still hold fast his integrity.

But my business at present lies with those who are infected, and already captivated to the power of this lust; whether they be known and open drunkards, who declare their sin as Sodom, and seek not to hide it, or whether they be more close and secret tiplers who roll it under their tongues as a sweet morsel; O that ye would, both the one and the other, suffer a word of exhortation, and let me beg of you with all earnestness and seriousness, if you have any regard to the eternal God that made you, or to the blessed Jesus that bought you, or to your own precious and immortal souls, that you will break off this sinful course of life you lead; cease to do this evil, and learn to do well. Fain I would persuade those who have been drunk, to be drunk no more; to forsake the foolish and live, and to go in the way of understanding. Though the disease be inveterate and very threatening, yet I would not doubt but by the grace of God, a cure might be effected, if the diseased were but willing to be made whole.

These sinners must be ranked under two heads, who must be differently dealt with, according as their case differs.

I. There are some drunkards, who justify themselves in the sin, and so go on in it, under the protection of a debauched conscience; and these must be addressed to by way of conviction.

II. There are others who condemn themselves for it, but not knowing how to disentangle themselves from it, they go on in it, notwithstanding the checks of an accusing conscience; and these must be addressed to by way of counsel and advice.

I. Let me begin with those who wallow in the mire of this sin, and think there is no harm in it; who insist upon their own justification in it, and plead for Baal: they are retained of counsel for this sin, and they confess the fact, that they are often in drink, yet they deny the fault, and with the adulterous woman, wipe their mouth and say, they have done no wickedness, Pro. 30. 20. They have, if not satisfied, yet silenced their own consciences, with the corrupt and foolish reasonings of that flesh and blood, which they make their delight and their counsellors. They are ready to ask, why should not the natural appetite, which we brought into the world with us, be indulged and gratified? And how can the time and estate be better spent than in the service of it? And to shew that they can quote Scripture as well as Satan, (Mat. 4. 6.) they will tell you that the fruit of the vine was created to make glad the heart, and in vain was it created, if it be not used for that purpose: you shall not persuade them that that is unlawful (how express soever the divine law is against it) which seems so natural.

They plead also the benefit and advantage of it: for their parts, they know no way to ease the cares of this life; and take off the fears of death, but to drown them in good liquor. "What!" (say they) "a man is never merry till he is half drunk; never enjoys himself till he has thus raised himself." And, besides, they take it for granted that there can be no good fellowship with their friends, no free or pleasant conversation, but in the tavern or ale-house, and must either seek it there, or be perpetually melancholy, and never enjoy one another: they cannot, that is, they will not believe that such a pleasant entertainment, and diversion as this should have any evil in it: what if they be drunk, they hope it is no treason; it is past off with a jest, and made a laughing matter the next day among their companions.

But will you give me leave to ask you, (you that thus palliate the matter) what if your drinking to excess, and your tipling should not prove such an innocent

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innocent harmless thing, as you would make yourselves believe it is? What if all these fig-leaves you sew together, prove too thin and too narrow to cover your shame? Your consciences, which you have so often baffled and brow-beaten, now, perhaps, begin to let you alone, and give you no disturbance: you, therefore, with a great deal of security and carelessness walk in the way of your own heart, and in the sight of your eyes, and allow yourselves all the looses of a vain and carnal conversation: but what if for all these things God should bring you into judgment? Ecc. 11. 9. What will you do in the day of visitation, when you shall be called to account for all your drunken frolics and excesses? Can you think that these pleas you insist on will stand you in any stead at God's bar, or bring you off in the judgment of the great day? No, they will all be over-ruled and rejected as frivolous, and you yourselves will be ashamed of your confidence. You now say, that you shall have peace, though you go on to add drunkenness to thirst; you think God will not be so severe upon you as we are, and at the worst you shall fare as well as the most of your neighbours, and if you go to Hell, God help a great many! But what if this self-flattery prove a self-deceit? What if your making light of the sin makes it really the heavier? What if you come at last within reach of that fearful threatening against the sinner, who thus promises himself impunity in the way of drunkenness? (Deut. 29. 19, 20.) *The Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man.* Is it not better for you to be undeceived in time, than to have this mistake discovered, when it is too late to rectify it? Come therefore and let us reason together: you plead that drinking is natural, it is so; but drinking to excess is certainly unnatural.) You plead it is pleasant and profitable, but the plea is false, there is no pleasure nor profit in it.

You ask what harm is there in being drunk? What hurt does it do to any body? But will you give me leave to ask you a few questions? and I will appeal to the impartial and unbiassed judgment of your own consciences for an answer to them.

1. Is it no harm to transgress the law of the great God, the God that made you and will judge you? The very law of nature forbids this sin; the heathen condemned it, and cried out shame on it, though it is not expressly forbidden in the law of Moses (only the use of all wine and strong drink is prohibited to the priests when they went in to minister, (Lev. 10. 9.) and to the Nazarites, (Num. 6. 3.) and christians are spiritual Priests, and gospel Nazarites) yet it is frequently condemned by the prophets, and many a woe denounced againt it, as in the places before quoted. And in the New Testament, which is more immediately our rule, we have many express laws against it. Luke 21. 34. *Take heed lest your heart be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;* and again, (Rom. 13. 13.) *Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness;* and again, (Eph. 5. 18.) *Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit;* and again, (1 Thes. 5. 7, 8.) *They that be drunk, are drunk in the night, but let us who are of the day be sober.* Are these the commands of God or are they not? If they be, are they to be quarrelled with, and jested with, or are they to be obeyed? Are they repealed or antiquated, or are they not still in as full force, power, and virtue as ever? Were these sacred laws enacted for the restraining and mortifying of our lusts, and can we think that they should be relaxed and dispensed with in favour of our lusts? No, as long as the carnal mind is enmity to the just and holy God, the holiness and justice of God will be enmity to the carnal mind.

You argue that drunkenness must needs be lawful, because it is grateful to the flesh, and you cannot think that God should be so hard upon you, as to bind you out from that which you have so strong an appetite to; as if God were altogether such a one as yourselves, and as much a friend to the ease and pleasure of the body as you are: thus the sensual lives of Epicures are justified, by the atheistical doctrine of Epicurus: but stay awhile and you shall see this refuge of lies swept away, and shall know whose word shall stand, God's or your's, (Jer. 44. 28.) *Fools make a mock at sin;* but be not deceived, *God is not mocked.* How light soever you now make of the divine law, and the injunctions of it, you will find to your cost that if it shall not command you, it will condemn you; if it shall not rule you, it will ruin you; for God will magnify his law and make it honourable, though you vilify it and make it contemptible.

2. Is it no harm to disturb the exercise of your own reason, and to break in upon that? Reason is the crown and glory of the human nature, by the noble powers and faculties of which you are distinguished from, and dignified above the inferior creatures: this is that which teaches you more than the beasts of the earth, and makes you wiser than the fowls of heaven. This is God's image upon the human soul; and is it no harm to deface that Image? It is this spirit of a man, that is the candle of the Lord; and is it no harm to extinguish this candle, or at least for the present to put it into a dark lanthorn? The inspiration of the Almighty has given us understanding; and will you throw away that gift as not worth your keeping? Is it no harm thus to profane your crown by casting it to the ground, and to undervalue the honour God has put upon you, by putting yourselves upon a level with the beasts?

If, indeed, you have but little value for the sacred ties and honours of religion; yet, is reason become of so small account with you, that you can tamely resign that too, and prostitute it to the tyranny and arbitrary government of a brutish appetite? Hast thou no concern, no jealousy for the liberty and property of thine own soul; but shall it be contentedly and without any struggle, or regret sacrificed to a base and imperious lust? Wilt thou sell such a birthright as that which has so many privileges annexed to it, like profane Esau, for a mess of pottage? Is thy own soul, that precious soul of thine, which is capable of such noble

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services and enjoyments, so little worth in thine esteem, that thou art so easily persuaded to put thyself out of the possession of it.

By excess of drink the understanding is clouded, that sun in the little world is for the time eclipsed; it has no government of the thoughts, they are all in confusion, and a perfect tumult; no command of the passions, they are in an uproar, and are carried headlong; no command of the tongue, it utters perverse things, (Pro. 23. 33.) and the whole soul is for the present incapacitated to perform its offices, *all its foundations are out of course.* This is thy case (man) when thou art drunk; thy wisdom is departed from thee, and folly ascends the throne in thy soul: and is there no harm in this? If a man wound, or maim, or lame his body, or any way disable it for its services, he is justly accounted either a mad man, or a bad man; and is he neither the one nor the other, who does worse than this to his own soul, his nobler and better part? Is not he the worst of robbers, who deprives himself of the use of his reason, and says to that seer, "See not;" who puts out his own eyes, that Sampson like he may grind in Satan's prison. Consider (man) *if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?* We pity those who are either born idiots, or become mad by disease; yet drunkards who make themselves little better than idiots and mad, think all the world should envy them their liberty and pleasures; it is such a liberty as is the worst of slavery, such a pleasure as will be bitterness in the end?

Wicked men are often in scripture compared to brute beasts, and particularly to swine, who wallow in the mire; (2 Pet. 2. 22.) but of all sinners none have more of the resemblance than drunkards have. They say of any other brute creature, that if once it has been intoxicated with any liquor, it will never be brought to drink of that liquor again; only the swine will again and again be drunk with the same liquor: and a thousand pities it is that ever the same should be said of a man, who has so much more to lose by being drunk, than a beast has; and is endowed with so much better powers for the correcting of the appetite than the beasts are. Man being in honour, understands not, abides not, but thus becomes like the beasts that perish. The Lord pity these poor sinners, and shew them their folly, that they may pity themselves

I confess I have often wondered that any, who think themselves in reputation for wisdom and honour, should yield themselves willing captives to this vice, which does so much degrade and diminish a man, and make him mean and despicable. If he that is drunk is in his own imagination as great as a king; yet he is in the eyes of all wise and sober men, as contemptible as a brute, and in some respects more so: and his conceit of himself does but make him so much the more ridiculous.

A man may sweep the streets and rake the kennel, and yet have the honour of being a man, while his reason remains with him: but he who voluntarily drinks himself out of his reason, has resigned his crown, and is so much more vile than a beast, that he becomes one by his own act, and still retains the shape and name of a man. It is an excellent distich of Mr. Herbert's, among other weighty sayings against this sin, in his Church-Porch.

The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
All worldly right, save what he hath by beast.

For this reason the ancient Lacedæmonions, if any man happened to be drunk in their streets, (and they thought none but scoundrels would be so) they brought their children out to look at him; not to divert them and make them merry; but that seeing the foolish carriage, and hearing the foolish talk of a drunken man, they might conceive a loathing of that detestable sin, and might be afraid of ever making such fools of themselves. And verily it is strange by what charms any rational man can be drawn to drunkenness, who has ever seen and observed the motions of a drunken man.

3. Is it no harm to abuse the gifts of God's bounty to you? If God has created wine to refresh the spirits of men, and has allowed them the sober and moderate use of it, as far as is for their real good; will you by using it intemperately, pervert the design of the donor, and make that the food and fuel of your lusts, which he gave for the support and comfort of your lives? What is this but fighting against God with his own weapons? It is alienating the inheritance of the Lord to his enemies, and suffering the strong man armed to divide his spoils; it is a traitorous assigning over of the Prince's grants to the rebels.

Surely (sinner) thou dost not know, at least thou dost not consider, that God by his providence gives wine and strong drink, and gives them thee: that he makes the earth to yield her increase, and gives thee thy share of it, a large share it may be; and shall this be sacrificed to Baal, to a dunghill God? doubtless they do so whose God is their belly, Hos. 2. 8. And *is this of thy whoredoms a small matter?* that thou hast taken God's gifts, and used them to his dishonour, and hast made a calf of these spoils of the Egyptians, which ought in gratitude to have been consecrated to the service of the tabernacle? Justly may God by some judgment or other recover his corn and his wine, for the property is not altered by thine alienation. It aggravated the barbarous idolatry, of the bigotted and besotted Jews in sacrificing their children to Moloch, that they were God's children whom they had born unto him, Ezek. 16. 20. It likewise aggravates thy sin, that what God gave thee to serve him with, thou servest the Devil, and a base lust with.

Know then that thou art but a steward of these things, and thou must very shortly give account of thy stewardship, when thou must be no longer steward. And if this be not wasting thy Lord's goods, I know not what is: thy account, therefore, unless it be first balanced by repentance and faith, will be given up with grief and not with joy. Strong drink should be given to him who through emptiness is ready to perish, that so it may

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may help to save a life, not to him who is so full already, that he is ready to vomit, so to destroy a life; wine should be given, not to them who are of a merry heart, who have more need of a curb to their mirth than a spur, but to them that are of a heavy heart, to revive their drooping spirits: thus Solomon's mother taught him, Pro. 31. 6. Those, therefore, who make that the support of corruption, which was intended for the refreshment of nature, pervert that which is right; and must be accountable for the injury: to what purpose is this waste?

Know also that this abuse of the creatures, is that which makes the whole creation groan, being burthened because of its subjection to vanity, by this means, Rom. 8. 20, 21, 22. But when it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, Woe be to that man by whom the offence came. As the stone cries out of the wall, against him who builds his house by iniquity, (Hab. 2. 11.) so the corn and the wine cry against those who make them the instruments of unrighteousness to God's dishonour.

4. Is it no harm to endanger the health and life of your own bodies? Let us reason with you from a topic that is very sensible, and try what impression that will make. The Lord is for the body, and he would have you to be for it too in a regular way: but while you indulge its brutish appetites, you prejudice its true interest, and by advancing it to the power of a master, you really abuse it worse than a slave.

Consider then how many are the dangers you are imminently exposed to, when you are drunk, and incapable of self-preservation, your souls are continually in your hands; but never more so, than when the liquor is in your heads. That foolish proverb, which passes current, as an answer to this argument, that drunken people catch no harm, is convicted of falshood by frequent instances to the contrary. How often do we hear of those to whom being in drink, a fall down stairs, or off a house, or into a shallow water, has been fatal, and (which is a dreadful thought) has sent them drunk out of the world, under the black and heavy charge of being self-murderers? And not only so, but has hastened them to the judgment immediately after death, without giving them time to cry *Lord have mercy upon me?* So great a death do drunkards often die, a sudden death, a violent death, a death in their sin, and a death to which they themselves are highly accessary. And shall this consideration sway nothing with you? Do the perils of the wars and the seas keep you upon dry ground, and in a land of peace, and shall not the perils of drunkenness prevail to keep you sober? Dare you put your lives in your hand for the service of sin, and at the same time put yourselves out of God's protection? To say you have often been drunk, and yet never got any hurt, and therefore you will venture still, is such a contempt of the patience and forbearance of God, as will certainly treasure up wrath, against the day of wrath, except you repent.

But besides this danger which you run your own bodies into by this sin, consider further the real wrong and prejudice that is done to them by every act of drunkenness. It is a sin that does violence to nature, and overcharges the heart; drunkenness is a present sickness, a present distemper and disorder; you will own you take more than does you good, and when it is so much more, how can it choose but to do you hurt? And why must those bodies of yours, which are so fearfully and wonderfully made, which were made to be instruments of righteousness, and temples of the Holy Ghost be thus basely abused? Why must those vessels, which should be possessed in sanctification and honour, be thus unsanctified and dishonoured? That curious structure made a sink and a swine-sty? Shall that which has been washed in the waters of baptism, and so dedicated to the service of the sanctuary, thus wallow in the mire of sin, and be alienated to the slavery of Satan? Shall *the shield of the mighty be thus vilely cast away and prostituted, as though it had not been anointed with oil?* 2 Sam. 1. 21.

Art thou not told what will be in the end hereof? If the sorrow of the world slays its thousands; this mirth of the world, running into these excesses, slays its ten thousands. And art thou so much in love with woe, (man) so fond of sorrow and redness of eyes, and wounds without cause, so well pleased with all the instances of a dying life, and a lingering death; that thou wilt sell thy soul and all thy happiness in the other world, to purchase all these miseries and calamities in this world?

You who drive a trade of drunkenness, if I thought you were capable of looking a little way before you, I would desire you to foresee, for without a spirit of prophecy, it is easy to foretell the threatening and fatal diseases, which by every debauch you are preparing matter for. Are there not a great many instances, and those melancholy ones daily before your eyes, of persons who have drunk themselves into dropsies, consumptions, and other diseases, which have soon carried them off in the midst of their days, and have sent many a green and flourishing head, in the flower of youth, unpitied to the grave? And is the honour of being a martyr to Bacchus, or at least a faithful confessor to his shrine so valuable, so desirable, that you are willing to be at the expence of your all, to purchase it? Those are unwise, unthinking prodigals indeed, who can sell their health and strength so shamefully cheap; and they have indeed made their belly their God, their supreme God, who have prevailed with themselves, not only to let out their blood as the worshippers of Baal, or to burn their children, as the worshippers of Moloch, but voluntarily to sacrifice their own lives at its altar; and by its resolute persisting in these paths of death, even to bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of that altar. There needs no faith, nor is there much occasion to appeal to reason; sense itself, one would think, were enough to make this argument cogent: for surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.

I intreat you therefore for the sake of your own bo-

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dies, which you pretend to be indulgent of, that you will break off this destructive course of life. Have you no regard to their ease, and health, and safety, and honour, and life? Will you disorder, and defile, and destroy your ownselves, after we have so often cried unto you with a loud voice, as St. Paul to the jailor, when he had his sword at his own breast, *Do yourselves no harm?* Be not your own murderers. Why, (man) there is death in the cup, there is poison in the glass, of which thou drinkest immoderately; thou dost not think how fatal the consequences of thy drunken surfeits may prove: but I desire thee to consider this one thing, while thou canst not but have (if conscience be awake) a most uncomfortable prospect of another world, it is certain thou hast no reason to hasten thy departure out of this world.

5. Is it no harm to waste and mispend precious time? If we would but seriously consider for what great and excellent purposes time is appointed us and continued to us, we should reckon that an enemy to us which robs us of it, and alienates it from the intentions for which it was designed us. Nothing does this more than tipling; nor are there any who are worse husbands of their time than those who tarry long at the wine. Therefore when the Apostle had minded us to *redeem the time*, (Eph. 5. 16.) he presently adds, (v. 18.) *and be not drunk.*

Time is a talent that must shortly be accounted for; a price put into the hand to get wisdom; but what account will they give of it who spend, not only hours, but days and nights in this folly? They sit sotting in the ale-house or tavern day after day, because they know not how otherwise to pass away their time. Pass away thy time (man)! why, thou wouldest see thy time pass away fast enough, if thou wert but sensible what work thou hast to do, which is yet undone, and which, if it be never done, thou art undone for ever; and thou wouldest rather contrive how to recover the time that is past away, by a close and vigorous application to the great business of life, than how to lavish away the few remaining minutes, in that which is opposite and destructive to thy great and true interests.

Believe it (sirs) you have an eternal God to serve, an immortal soul to save, an everlasting state to provide for, and it is no time to trifle. So much of the stock of life, the quick stock is spent, and so little of the work of life done, that you must not think of spare hours; you have none to spare for the service of sin, who have already lost so many that should have been spent in the service of God. Yet a little while is this light with you, and you know not what you do, while you waste it in the *works of darkness.*

Judge within yourselves: do not you think that the time which you spend in drinking and tipling, might be much better spent in reading the word of God, and meditating upon it, and in prayer and acts of devotion in their season? But you leave no room for these, or next none; and one of the proper times for them, which is the evening of the day, is the time you ordinarily spend in this service of the flesh. Or if your untoward hearts would snuff at the religious exercises that are drawn out to any length, and say, *Behold what a weariness is it!* Yet might not you better spend your time in reading and profitable conversation with wise and sober people, for the cultivating and improving yourselves in useful knowledge? Have you not a calling to attend, a family to take care of, children to educate? And do not these press urgently for the time you idle away? Or if not these, might not your time be better spent, in doing good to your neighbours, and serving your generation some way or other, according to the will of God? You might find work enough to do, if you had but a heart to it, which would be fruit abounding to your comfort in the day of reckoning; while the unprofitable talk, and idle words spent over your cups, will come against you, when they must all be accounted for in the day of judgment.

Thou sayest, that they are but vain words, that it is better to spend thy time thus than spend it as many do, in doing mischief to their neighbours, and creating trouble and vexation to all about them: you thank God you do nobody any hurt: but others spending their time worse, will be far from justifying or excusing you in spending it ill, while there are so many ways of spending it well, and much better than you do: may you be allowed to bury your talents, because others waste theirs?

Let those therefore who tarry long at the wine, and sit at it, as they say, consider how in the mean time their souls are neglected, and become like the *Field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding;* their families are neglected, and they leave them as the ostrich leaves her eggs in the earth, forgetting that the foot may crush them; they are hardened against their young ones, as though they were not theirs, because they are deprived of wisdom, Job 39. 14, &c. The duties of their callings are neglected, and the duties of God's worship in their closets and families neglected too, and, in short, they live in the world to no good purpose at all; the good which they should do, they do it not; the business they were made for, they mind it not, the time that should be spent in serving God and doing good, is thrown away upon the flesh and the lust thereof.

Think how bitter the reflection upon this will be when you come to die, if your consciences be not seared: then you will wish you had those hours again which you wasted in unprofitable talk, and, perhaps, will cry in vain (as one did) "Call back time, call back time." A thousand worlds for an inch of time, to be spent in making your peace with God, and sure work for your souls. What would damned sinners in hell give for a few of those minutes in a state of probation, which you are now so lavish of? You may now, if you be wise, redeem time, but you cannot then recal it.

6. Is it no harm to misemploy your estates, and the gain of your callings, and to take the most effectual course to bring yourselves and yours to want and beggary? Perhaps you have much to spend, and can gratify this sensual appetite, without doing any considerable damage to your estate: but then will you consider that your estates are not your own to be spent as you please; no, you are but stewards of them, and are accountable

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to God for them. If you thus waste them, you waste your Lord's goods, and pervert the design of giving them to you; your families which you ought to provide for, according to your rank, are robbed; the poor are defrauded, for the more you spend upon your own lusts, the less you have to give for the supply of their wants: the commonwealth is injured, for that which should be expended for the encouragement of honest labour, which would enrich the nation, is wasted in the support of idleness and luxury, which impoverish the nation.

But there are many that have but little to spend, and that little shall be spent in the ale-house, so that at last they spend their all there. Solomon's observation is confirmed by daily experience, that he *that loves pleasure shall be a poor man*, (Pro. 21. 17.) *and that the drunkard shall come to poverty*, Pro. 23. 21. Have we not seen many a fair patrimony sacrificed to this brutish lust? Many a portion we have known spent, many a house and field sold, and many a good estate mortgaged and made away, to maintain an idle drunken sot in his excess of riot. Many a gentleman we have heard of, and many a farmer, and many a tradesman, who have been reduced to rags and beggary, brought to a morsel of bread, and perhaps lodged at last in a prison, and it was drunkenness that brought them to it. *One sinner destroys much good*, Ecc. 9. 18. And is there no harm in all this? No sin? No shame?

How amazing is the power, which the God of this world has over the children of disobedience! The Lord that bought them, cannot persuade them to expose themselves to a little loss, hardship, and reproach in his service, though they shall be abundantly recompensed for it another day: but Satan, their sworn enemy, can prevail with them for the serving of him and of his lusts, to ruin themselves in both worlds; so wretchedly are they led captive by him at his will.

But think how very dismal, and insupportable those calamities will be, which you thus bring upon yourselves, by your own sin and folly. The Devil's poor are the most miserable, and yet the least commiserated of any poor whatsoever. What wilt thou have to comfort thyself with, when thou art brought into straits by thine own wickedness? What wilt thou do in such a day of visitation? When the remembrance of what thou hast mis-spent, will grate upon thee; when thy lusts will continue craving, and thou wilt not have that plenty of fuel for them, which thou hast had? But especially when divine consolations, the only support of an afflicted state shall be denied thee? *Awake ye Drunkards, and weep and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth*, Joel 1. 5.

7. Is it no harm to unfit yourselves for the duties of God's worship, and to put yourselves out of a capacity to perform them? Dare you go to bed at night without solemn prayer? Dare you sleep from under God's protection, and can you see yourselves under that protection, if you do not by prayer commit yourselves to it? Can you expect the mercies of the night, when you have not penitently asked pardon for the sins of the day, nor given God thanks for the favours you have received? And can this be done, when your hearts are overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and you scarcely know where you are, or what you say? Dare you venture to speak to God, when you are not able to speak sense to a man like yourselves?

When the evening has been spent in the ale-house or tavern, and in immoderate drinking there; the evening worship, not only in the family, but in secret, will be either wholly omitted, or miserably performed, so that it were better let alone. Either there will be no evening sacrifice at all, or (which is worse) it will be the sacrifice of fools, the torn, and the lame, and the sick, and an affront to God rather than a service of him. Pretend not to address your God, when you are in such a condition, that it would be rudeness to address your governor.

8. Is it no harm to lay yourselves open to Satan's temptations, and to make yourselves an easy prey to them? By this sin you expose yourselves to many other sins, and disable yourselves to discern or resist the most dangerous assaults of Satan. Is mocking a sin? Is rage a sin? Behold *wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging*, Pro. 20. 1. The drunkard's bench is commonly the seat of the scornful; and David was the song of the drunkards. Is strife and contention a sin? Are wounds given without cause a sin? these are the practices of them who tarry long at the wine, Pro. 23. 29, 30. Drunken frays, and those sometimes ending in barbarous murders, are the common products of that, which, yet, will be called good fellowship. When reason is sunk and drowned, rage and passion will ride admiral; and when men have drunk themselves out of the possession of their own souls, no wonder if the Devil, (who is too watchful an enemy to lose any advantages against us) soon get possession of them, and often times cast them into the fire and into the water. Are chambering and wantonness sins? These are the companions of rioting and drunkenness, Rom. 13. 13.

What mischief may not that man do, who neither knows nor cares what he does, neither fears God nor regards man, nor has any conduct or government of himself? Yet this inability will be no excuse for the sin that you are thus betrayed into, because it is a self-created inability. Be not deceived; a man's offence will never be his defence, nor will one sin serve for a cloak to another. He who sins when he is drunk, must repent when he is sober or do worse.

You who think that it is but a little sin to be drunk, yet, dread it because it may be the inlet of great sins: I knew one who was effectually reclaimed from this sin of drunkenness, by being once in danger of killing a man when he was drunk, the horror of which, when he came to himself, made such an impression upon him, as proved a happy occasion of his conversion; I wish others would in like manner consider it and be wise.

9. Is it no harm to make yourselves obnoxious to God's wrath and curse in the other world? You have fair warning given you, and are cautioned to take heed of deceiving yourselves with a fancy to the contrary, *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God*; if God be true they shall not, for so it is written, (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.) and

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and thy case is miserable, when it is come to this dilemma, that either God must be false, or thou must be damned; if heaven be not thy portion, hell will, unless thou repent and reform in time.

Assure yourselves (sinners) heaven is no place for beasts and self-made fools: has God need of madmen? The word of God has said it, and all the world cannot unsay it; *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*, die eternally, (Rom. 8. 13.) *thine end is destruction*, if thy *God be thy belly*, Phil. 3. 19. Nothing that defiles shall enter into the New Jerusalem: no, Hell is the proper receptacle of unclean spirits.

When you are serious, (if ever you can persuade yourselves to be so,) heaven and hell will not be looked upon as jesting matters: for a few years, certainly, will, nay, a few hours possibly may demonstrate the reality of those invisible things, which now you make so light of. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door.*

Now lay all this together, and then tell me whether drunkenness be indeed an innocent diversion, a harmless entertainment, or at worst but a venial sin, which will be pardoned of course though it be still persisted in? No, I hope by this time the thing appears to you in other colours, and you will grant that those, who make a mock at this sin, are like the madman who casteth firebrands, arrows and death, and yet says, "Am not I in sport?"

II. We are in the next place to apply ourselves to those who are convinced in some measure, that their drunkenness is their sin, and a dangerous one, at least their own consciences sometimes tell them so; but they know not how to leave it off, it is become so habitual to them that they are perfectly captivated and overcome by it.

Is this thy case, sinner? Wouldest thou then be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God? God in his infinite mercy deliver thee! And O that I could say something to pluck thee as a brand out of this burning! This paper comes to call upon thee to repent, and amend thy ways and doings, which, certainly, are not right. But who can call loud enough to awaken drunkards? Their sin takes away their heart, it blinds their understandings, perverts their judgments, and bribes their consciences, so that they cannot weigh things in an even balance; *they drink and forget the Law*, Pro. 31. 5. Strike them and they are not sick, beat them and they feel it not, Pro. 23. 35. And is it possible to convince and reclaim such? We cannot do it. But if God himself will take the work into his own hands, and by his grace do wonderfully, who knows what good may be effected? To him, therefore, we commit the success of this endeavour, and will try to put you into the right method of cure.

If then you be willing to be cleansed from this pollution, you will thankfully take the following directions, not as the commands of a taskmaster who would insult over you, but as the prescriptions of a faithful physician who consults your good.

1. Indulge not an excuse for this sin. There is no sin so sinful, so shameful, but the wicked wit of sinners has found out some fig-leaves or other to cover it with; and if you are fond of the fig-leaves, it is a sign that you are in love with the sin, and it is your own iniquity; while the word of God says so much to aggravate it, you confront that, and put a cheat upon your own souls, if you are industrious to extenuate it.

Custom will not excuse you in it; neither your own custom, nor the custom of the place you live in; there can be no prescription pleaded for a thing in itself evil. If this has been thy way, and thy manner from thy youth up, thou hast the more reason to be humbled and ashamed: but know, that a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. To say, "I have long used myself to this course of life, and therefore I must be excused, if I go on in it;" is to say in effect, "I have long been walking in the way that leads to hell, and therefore I will go on to the end of it." The longer you have persisted in this sin, the more reason there is why the time past of your life should suffice that you have thus wrought the will of the Gentiles, walking in excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, 1 Pet. 4. 3, 4. Custom in sin (I know) is a great bar to conversion, and renders it extremely difficult: but it is such a bar as must be broken, or you are undone.

Nor will it excuse you that you are drawn in by your wicked companions: it is your fault to chuse such for your companions, who have fellowship with sin, and those for your friends, who are enemies to your souls. But how bad soever your companions are, you are then tempted, when you are *drawn aside of your own lust and enticed*, Jam. 1. 14. If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it: and thy partners in sin shall be thy partners in ruin: *Bind them in bundles to burn them.*

Your calling will not excuse you, whatever it is; that is not a calling for a christian, which will not be followed without sin, or unavoidable and invincible temptation: and, therefore, if thou canst not otherwise leave thy sin, leave thy calling, and chuse another more safe and innocent: it cannot be dearer to thee than a right eye or a right hand, which must be plucked out and cut off, if it become sin to thee. But are there not some of the same calling who preserve their sobriety and will be witnesses against thee? If thy calling be laborious and require more refreshment, and diversion than others, wilt thou therefore, disfit thyself for it, by overcharging thy heart?

Never go about to palliate this sin; say not, it is but being a little merry, it is but being somewhat too free in keeping company, it hurts no body, and therefore what needs so much ado about it? This is agreeing with your corruptions against your convictions, and taking part with the house of Saul, against the house of David. But by thus diminishing our sins we deceive ourselves; for God will not stand to our definitions and distinctions: we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth.

2. Persuade yourselves to consider; if you would but be subject to the great and fundamental law of consideration, I cannot think that you would ever rebel against the royal law of temperance and sobriety, which

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which effectually secure both the prerogative of the prince in thy soul, that is, thy reason, and the liberty of the subject, that is, thine inferior faculties.

Consider what thou art; a rational creature, do not dethrone thy reason; a noble creature, do not stain thine honour; thou art an embodied spirit, let not the interests of the spirit, by which thou art a kin to the upper world, be crushed and ruined by the tyranny of the body, which is of the earth earthly.

Consider who made thee; the eternal God gave thee that noble and excellent being, and did he give it thee to be thus abused? Is this to answer the ends of thy creation, and to do that which thou camest into the world for? Is this to serve and honour thy Creator who made thee for himself, to shew forth his praise? Thou canst not think it is.

Consider whom thou servest by this sensual course of life thou livest; the devil is the master thou obeyest: he it is who puts the cup of drunkenness into thy hand, and bids thee drink it, and laughs at thee when thou art overcome by it; and wilt thou please the devil thy worst enemy rather than God the best friend?

Consider that thou art a christian, a baptised christian; and by these evil practices of thine, thou reproachest that worthy name by which thou art called, and forfeitest all the honours and privileges of thy christianity. What! A christian and yet a tipler! A sot! Called a brother, and yet a drunkard! 1 Cor. 5. 11. What an absurdity is this? Dost thou partake of the *Cup of the Lord*, and yet partake of the *Cup of Devils?* Canst thou think to compound light and darkness, or to maintain a fellowship both with Christ and Belial? It cannot be; if thou treat thy christianity thus disdainfully, thou dost in effect renounce it, and shalt be for ever abandoned by it. It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, *it is not for Kings to drink wine*, Pro. 31. 4. So, it is not for christians: it is not for the professors of that holy religion, to make themselves slaves to a base lust; it is not for them who have tasted the wine of God's consolations, and hope to drink it new in the kingdom of the Father, to put their mouths out of taste to it, by the sordid pleasures of drunkenness.

Consider how near death and eternity are, how uncertain the time of thy continuance here below is, and how certain thy removal very shortly to an unchangeable world is: and what if death should surprise thee the next time that thou art drunk, as it did Amnon when his heart was merry with wine? Darest thou go to judgment in such a condition? *Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong? when the righteous God shall come to deal with thee?* Thou sayest, *Soul, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry:* but what if God should say to thee, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*, Luke 12. 19, 20.

Couldest thou but see with an eye of faith, as Belshazzar did with an eye of sense, in the midst of his drunken frolics, the handwriting upon the wall determining thy fatal doom; surely it would frighten thee from this vicious course, and make the pretended pleasures of it sapless and insipid to thee. And believe it, those mystical characters upon Belshazzar's wall are more applicable to thee than thou art aware, (Dan. 5. 25.) *Mene, Tekel, Peres*, may be rendered *Death, Judgment, Hell;* the two first are very easy, *Mene, numbered*, for thy days upon earth will very shortly be *numbered, and finished; Tekel, weighed*, after death we must be weighed in the balance of God's judgment, and drunkards, I am sure will be found too light. And the third is not much forced, *Peres, divided*, for damned sinners are cut asunder, (Mat. 24. 51.) their kingdom is for ever separated from them; and if there be an allusion to the Persians, they are to be looked upon as the executioners of the doom, and hell is the execution of the sentence of the great day: angels both good and bad employed as executioners. Now consider this ye that forget God.

3. Humble yourselves greatly before God for your former excesses. While after a debauch or drunken fit, which your consciences reproach you for the sin and folly of, you can make all whole again, with a cold *Lord have mercy upon me*, and can forgive yourselves, before you have any good reason to think that God has forgiven you, no wonder if you easily return to the sin again; and, therefore, deep sorrow is made necessary in repentance, as a means to embitter the sin, and so to prevent a relapse.

Be convinced of the evil of this sin, apply it to your own guilt, and charge it home upon your conscience, in the heinous nature of it, and all its aggravating circumstances, which make it exceeding sinful: be pricked to the heart at the remembrance of it, and say, *So foolish have I been and ignorant, yea, I have been as a beast*, and worse, *before thee*, Ps. 73. 22. *Surely I am more brutish than any man*, Pro. 30. 2. What a fool have I been to hazard the life of my soul, for the gratifying of the lusts of my flesh! And for the pleasing of a brutish appetite, to unchristian and unman myself, and so to pawn and forfeit all I have and all I hope for, that is valuable and honourable! For these things I have reason to weep, and let mine eye, mine eye run down with tears day and night. As a sword in my bones is the remembrance of my folly herein, and the just reproaches of a guilty wounded conscience: if God be not merciful to me in Christ, I am undone for ever, this iniquity will be my ruin.

They who have conceived such a horror as this of the sin, and of the fatal consequences of it, and have felt the pain and smart of it in their souls, will not be easily decoyed into it again. *The burnt child dreads the fire.*

4. Pray earnestly to God for his grace. The divine power can cure the most obstinate and inveterate disease, and can conquer and change the most depraved and vitious habits. You find by sad experience that you cannot keep nor govern yourselves; commit yourselves therefore by prayer to the protection and government of that grace, which alone is sufficient for you.

Pray for grace to enable you to discern, resist, and vanquish all temptations to this sin, that you may never be surprised into it by the suddenness of the temptation, nor overcome by the strength of it; you pray every

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every day that you may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil. If this be the sin that most easily besets you, level your prayers against it particularly, "Lord lead me not into this temptation, but deliver me from this evil."

Pray for grace likewise, effectual grace, to mortify and subdue all inward inclinations to this sin, and to work in you a holy aversion and antipathy to it; pray that the axe may be laid to the root of bitterness, and that, not only, these polluted streams may be closed up, but the corrupt fountain dried up. Nothing is too hard for the grace of God to do, nor shall that grace be denied to those who in sincerity seek it, with a resolution to submit to it.

5. Take up a firm and stedfast resolution, in the strength of divine grace, against this sin, and all appearances of it, and approaches to it. Will you be persuaded to resolve this day, that you will never be drunk again, never sit to drink unseasonably, nor ever drink immoderately; that you will never by drinking distemper your bodies, or disturb your minds, or unfit yourselves for the service of God: that you will never keep improper hours, nor be in the ale-house or tavern when you should be about business, or worshipping God with your families; and that you will never suffer your free conversation with your friends, to indispose you for, or divert you from your communion with your God.

Be peremptory and at a point in these resolutions; and let not a secret inclination either to the drink, or to the company make your resolutions weak or wavering: but as the people said in general with an air of resolution, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord,* Josh. 24. 21. So do you say in particular, "Nay, but I will be sober;" I am resolved by the grace of God I will. Do not resolve as you say children do, that you will never be drunk again, till the next time: *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked.*

You would take up an invincible resolution, grounded upon an antipathy against the cup, if you knew there were poison in it; and would drink with a great deal of caution, if you were sure that you should be hanged if you were drunk; and will you not be as solicitous, not to exceed, when you are told that the drunkard's *feet go down to death,* eternal death, and *his steps take hold on hell.*

Let your resolution be very solemn, and contrive all the ways you can to make it strong and binding, and to remind conscience of it, that these bonds may never be broken asunder, nor these cords cast from you. And it will be your wisdom to renew this resolution, with a fresh dependence on divine grace, when you see yourselves entering into any particular temptation.

6. Industriously avoid the place and company, that ensnare you. If you would have no fellowship with the sin, you must have no unnecessary fellowship with those who practise it, but keep at a distance from them, that you may keep out of harm's way. Enter not into the path of the wicked, lest you be drawn to walk in that path; *avoid it* therefore, *pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away,* Pro. 4. 14, 15.

You may think the company good innocent company, pleasant, and diverting, and obliging to you; but be it what it will, it is no company for you if you cannot keep sober in it. Think not that your easiness, and good nature, and complaisance to your friends, will excuse your continuing in that society, which you find ordinarily draws you to sin; or that your engagement to the company can weaken your obligations to your God. Art thou linked with a drunken club, know *that thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, and do this now, my son, deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter,* Pro. 6. 2, 3, 5.

Go to thy companions, and tell them thou findest it impossible to preserve thy virtue in their company, and that therefore thou art resolved to take leave of them. Tell them that thou canst not look upon those as thy friends who entice thee to sin, and that thou wouldest rather lose their society and good will, than lose thy God and thy soul. Be deaf to their allurements, and be above their reproaches; say as David, (Ps. 119. 115.) *Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God,* and I cannot keep in with you, and keep in with God too.

7. Look not upon the wine when it is red. This is a scripture caution, Pro. 23. 31. Take heed of the beginnings of this sin, and do not entertain a pleasant thought of it. Crush the first risings of the irregular appetite toward wine and strong drink, and when you find you begin to love them, then try whether you have learned the first lesson in the school of Christ, which is to deny yourselves.

Watch against all advances toward this sin, let the experience you have had of your own weakness make you very cautious and jealous over yourselves. Be afraid of every thing that borders upon drunkenness, and leads toward it insensibly. He that will always venture as far as he may, will sometimes ere he is aware be drawn further.

When the wine gives its colour in the cup, and moves itself aright; be blind and deaf to all its smiles and charms, remembering what follows there; that at the *last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?*

8. Abhor all those drunken ceremonies, which force this cursed trade; such as drinking healths by measure, with an obligation upon the company to keep the round in pledging them. What a brutish senseless thing is it for men to offer violence to nature, and covet to make beasts, not only of themselves but of one another; what pleasure, what profit, what honour can there be in this? Surely nothing but sin for sin's sake.

The law of the Persians will shame and condemn the practice of many who are called christians; for in the court of a Prince, an arbitrary Prince, yet the *drinking was according to the law, none did compel, for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house,* Esth. 1. 8. Let all who wish well to sobriety do what they can in their places, to put these arts of propagating vice, out of countenance and to run them down.

9. If

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9. If you find you cannot govern yourselves, engage some friend or relation to govern you. If, after the most vigorous resistances and resolutions you have made, you still find yourselves baffled and foiled, think it not a disparagement to you to call in help, and pray the aid of your neighbours. You would do so if your house were on fire, and will you not do so when your souls are so?

Fix upon some discreet and serious friends; some such you may find, who heartily wish well to the prosperity of your souls, and would gladly contribute their best assistance to it. Beg of them to watch over you, to have an eye to you, and to warn you when you are entering into this temptation. Desire them, when there is occasion, to limit your drinking, and to controul your expences, and put it in their power to do so. Intreat them to fetch you from your drunken companions, though it be to your shame, rather than leave you with them, which will be to your ruin. When you are in your right mind, bespeak those about you, that they give you no more drink than they see does you good, though you call for it, and assure them, that though they may have your drunken reproach, yet, they shall have your sober thanks for so doing, and when you come to yourselves make your words good.

Say not that it is below you thus to put yourselves under government, as if you were infants or idiots; for to be drunk is much more below you, and thereby you render yourselves more mean than either infants or idiots.

Lastly, See that there be a living principle of true grace in your hearts, and that will effectually fortify you against all temptations to this sin. Let but wisdom, heavenly wisdom enter into thine heart. Let it have the innermost and uppermost place there, and it will keep thee from this way of the evil man. Pro. 2. 10, 12. The law of God in Christ written in the heart, and the love of God in Christ shed abroad there, would arm you against this temptation, and quench all its fiery darts.

When the apostle had cautioned us not to walk in rioting and drunkenness, (Rom. 13. 13.) to make that caution effectual, he adds, *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, v. 14. Submit to the grace of Christ, conform to the law of Christ, follow the example of Christ, and thus make good your baptismal covenant, by which you did in profession put on Christ, and then you will be well principled and well guarded against all these temptations. Study the cross of Christ, the riches of his love, and the design of his gospel, and then surely being called by his name, you will not dare so directly to contradict the designs of his gospel, nor so ungratefully to spurn at the bowels of his love, and spit in the face of it.

And in another place we find when the apostle had warned us not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess, he immediately subjoins, *But be filled with the Spirit*, (Eph. 5. 18.) plainly intimating, that the best defence against drunkenness, is to lay our souls under the sanctifying operations of the blessed Spirit of grace, and to fill ourselves with spiritual things. This is the sovereign remedy for the cure of this disease, and the most powerful antidote for the prevention of it, (Gal. 5. 16) *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.* An experimental taste of the spiritual pleasures of serious godliness, and a believing foretaste of the eternal pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore, would enable us to look upon all sensual pleasures and delights with a holy loathing and disdain.

And now (sinners) is the point yet gained, or is it not? What issue have we brought it to at last? What shall be the result of this debate, and what the conclusion of the whole matter?

Are there any of these sinners in Sion, who through grace are now at length become willing, that religion and reason should reform them and rule them? Are there any who now, at least in this their day, will begin to understand the things that belong to their peace, and to be wise for themselves? Are there any who are weary of the toil and shame of an intemperate life, and are resolved to try the true and noble delights of a sober religious conversation? *The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thought of the heart, and establish their way before him.*

But to those who after all hate to be reformed, I must conclude with this word, and God by his grace make it an awakening word! If all the fair warnings given you shall still be slighted, if you will set at naught all our counsel, and will none of our reproof; but say you shall have peace, though you go on to add drunkenness to thirst, know this, that when the cup of the Lord's wrath poured out without mixture shall be put into your hands, and shall be to you a cup of trembling, everlasting trembling; this will greatly aggravate your condemnation, that your blood will be upon your own heads, your watchmen, by giving you warning, having delivered their souls.

A WORD OF ADVICE

TO THE

WANTON AND UNCLEAN.

OF all gross sinners, none lie more hid from the eye of the world, and yet none more open to their own consciences, than those we are now dealing with, and endeavouring the reformation of. For though the eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, and he is very solicitous to draw a veil over his lewdness, yet the works of the flesh are manifest, that is, manifestly bad, and such as the sinner's own heart cannot but disallow: though they are works of darkness, yet they cannot avoid the discovery of that light, that *candle of the Lord.*

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The Apostle tells us, that the works of the flesh which are thus manifest, are these; *Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness*, (Gal. 5. 19.) in short, all seventh-commandment sins, which are not to be named among christians but with the greatest abhorrence and detestation. Nor are they to be treated of, but with purity and caution, and a strict and careful watch over our own hearts, lest sin should take occasion by the commandment: they are as thorns which cannot be taken with hands; but the man who shall touch them, in order to the removal of them, must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear, 2 Sam. 23. 6, 7.

And it were to be wished that there were no need to name them, no need to discourse of them; it is a kennel which one cannot take any delight to rake in: but while this iniquity abounds, as it does in all places, while so much of it comes to light, and we have reason to fear there is much more that lies concealed, it must be named; Jerusalem must be made to know her abomination, and the filthiness that is in her skirts (as the Prophet speaks) must be witnessed against, as one of the crying sins of the land, and one of the damning sins of sinners.

The prophet Ezekiel little thought, till God shewed him in a vision, the great abominations which the house of Israel committed, (Ezek. 8. 6.) and afterwards he shewed him greater, and yet greater abominations, v. 13. 15. I wish it were not so as to this abomination in our own land, which the day will declare, when God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. We desire not to know these depths of Satan: we are willingly ignorant of them; but we earnestly desire that those who are fallen into those depths, and are sinking to the lowest hell, may by the grace of God be effectually recovered, that their everlasting ruin may be prevented in time.

To you then who call yourselves the sons and daughters of pleasure, but whom the word of God calls *Children of Disobedience*, and *Children of Wrath*, who live in the fire of lust, and wallow in the filth of whoredom and fornication, even to you is the word of this exhortation sent in God's name, with a kind and sincere design if possible to lift you up out of this mire, and to snatch you as brands out of the burning. Assure yourselves nothing is intended but your good. This paper comes not to inform against you, or to expose you to shame or punishment; but to persuade you to turn from your evil way, that you may live and not die, that you may have everlasting life, and may not be hurt by the second death.

And O that I could now choose out proper words wherewith to reason with you; and that words of truth might, by the Grace of God, be made words of power? I draw the bow at a venture, not having an eye to any particular person, but God can direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, so that it may pierce the heart of the sinner to his humiliation, and the heart of the sin to its mortification, for the word of God is quick and powerful: God by his Spirit make this word so!

Let me tell you then, who are the sinners to whom this discourse is now addressed.

1. You that make a constant practice of this sin, and give yourselves over to laciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, must be put in the front of this black regiment of unclean spirits, which we are now charging, in the name of the Captain of our salvation, who came into the world to conquer and cast out unclean spirits.

If this paper should ever come into the guilty and polluted hands of any of those wretched creatures who have abandoned themselves to a life of whoredoms, who are the Devil's sworn slaves and votaries, and who, as factors for hell, and avowed enemies to God and virtue, drive a trade of debauching others and making themselves vile: those, I mean, who keep houses of uncleanness, those nests of wickedness, or who live in those houses, or who frequent them, or acquaint themselves with them: let such know and consider, that Sodom's doom will infallibly be the lot of all those who thus tread in Sodom's steps, unless they speedily repent and reform: *Fire and brimstone and a horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.*

That is a miserable calling which lust only lives by, and which soul and body will certainly be ruined by. That is a miserable service wherein the Devil is the master, sin's drudgery is the work, and hell-fire the wages, for *the end of those things is death.* Such houses and their inhabitants and maintainers, are the scandals of a christian nation, the pests of the towns and countries where they are, the slaughter-houses of precious souls, the rendezvous of the vilest of creatures, and the more frightful habitations of devils, holds of foul spirits, and cages of unclean and hateful birds, than Babylon the great will be when it is fallen, Rev. 18. 2. Solomon tells us that such houses are the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death, Pro. 7. 27.

And therefore as it is the duty of those who have power over them, vigorously to suppress such houses, in which the strong man armed keeps his palace; and the duty of those who have power in them to alter the property of them, and to put away iniquity, this abominable iniquity far from their tabernacles; so it is the wisdom of every one, with the greatest dread, caution, and resolution imaginable, to avoid such houses, to shun them as they would a house infected with the plague, and not to come nigh the door of them, or enter into any familiarity with them, upon any colour or pretence whatsoever. It is Solomon's advice, (Pro. 5. 8.) *Remove thy way far from her;* he having observed that that unwary young man, who was drawn into the ruining snares of the adulteress, was caught passing through the street near her corner, at an unseasonable time, Pro. 7. 8, 9.

Under this head we must also rank those who though they do not thus declare their sin as Sodom, yet by their cursed arts of deceiving under the disguise of love and honour, diversion and entertainment, keep up and carry on a more secret, less suspected trade of debauchery and uncleanness. Who (as they are described by the Apostle, 2 Pet. 2. 14.) *Have eyes full of adultery, and that*

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that cannot cease from sin, from this sin, *beguiling unstable souls* by their wiles, and decoying them gradually, and by steps which seem harmless, into the fatal snare. These are they who are continually projecting and making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it, out of the road of common prostitutes, and among those who have yet preserved some degrees of innocency and reputation; and the wickedness of these is so much greater than the former, as the methods they take, and the snares they lay by plays, dances, and other recreations, have a more fatal tendency to the corruption of those, "who" (as one of the proclamations against vice and immorality expresses it) "have been soberly educated, and whose inclinations would lead them to the exercise of virtue and piety, did they not daily find such frequent and repeated instances of dissolute living." Let such know that the sin is never the less sinful for its being carried on with wit and intrigue, and all the plot and management that the playhouse instructs them in; but it is rather so much the worse, as it speaks the more design and deliberation in the tempters, and the more danger to the tempted. The more there is of subtlety in any wickedness, the more there is of Satan in it.

Nor is their guilt and danger much less, who though they traverse not the ranges of an unbounded lust, yet, keep up a cursed league with some one particular person, with whom they live in adultery or fornication directly contrary to the law of God, or in contempt of his ordinance, and yet flattering themselves with a fancy, that this is of their abominations a small matter. And is it indeed a small matter for the gratifying of a base lust to live in disobedience to the divine precept, and in defiance of the divine wrath and threatenings? This is a covenant with death which must be broken, and an agreement with hell which must be disannulled, or it will certainly bind over to that judgment which whoremongers and adulterers must expect.

2. You who at any time yield to this temptation, and in any instance suffer yourselves to be overcome by it, must next look upon yourselves as concerned in this call to repentance. I speak to those, who, though they are not arrived to that height of wickedness, nor have so far seared their consciences, as to make a common practice of this wickedness, yet have such favourable thoughts of this sin and these sinners, as to be drawn into their snare without any great resistance or reluctance, thinking it, though a sin, yet a very excusable one, and, which, they can easily pardon both to themselves and others. When a fair opportunity offers itself that they can admit the sin, and yet avoid the shame, they can promise themselves to pass off the guilt with a "Lord have mercy upon me," or, "God forgive me," and a little regret, when the pleasure is over, they think will atone for the crime, and all will be well.

Such as these have need to be told that every particular act of this sin is exceeding sinful, that it is highly provoking to God Almighty, contrary to, and destructive of the spiritual and divine life in the soul, and that it puts the eternal happiness very much to a present doubt, and a future hazard. You flatter yourselves that you will commit it but once, and will repent of that: but, how can you be sure that it will be truly repented of, when it is but peradventure whether God will give you repentance to recover yourselves out of this snare? The grace of repentance is promised by those who sincerely pray for it, but it is forfeited by those who boldly presume upon it, and venture to sin in expectation of it: and how can you be sure that you will not relapse into the same sin another time, when, by yielding to one temptation you strengthen the next, give the Devil hold of you, and provoke the Holy Spirit to withdraw from you? What Solomon says of strife is true of this sin, *The beginning of it is like the letting forth of water;* therefore it is wisdom to leave it off before it be meddled with, that is, never to begin it.

3. You who perhaps keep yourselves from the gross acts of adultery and fornication, but allow yourselves in other instances of lewdness and lasciviousness, must be numbered among those to whom this word of advice and warning is sent. You bless yourselves in your own way, and thank God with the Pharisee, that you are not adulterers, when at the same time unclean lusts reign in your hearts, are indulged and harboured, lodged and welcomed there. Have you never read of committing adultery in the heart? And is not that heart chargeable therewith which burns continually in an inordinate affection and evil concupiscence? Are not those heart-adulterers who give up themselves to vile affections, and make filthy thoughts and imaginations, unchaste reflections and desires, the constant entertainments and disports of a lewd and vicious fancy.

Those are to be reckoned among the wanton and unclean out of whose mouth filthy communication daily comes, produced by the unclean lusts that reign in their own hearts, and designed to provoke the like in the hearts of others, whose stinking breath plainly manifests that their inwards, their very vitals, are corrupted. No subject is so grateful to them, so pleasing as this, nor any discourse so agreeable as that which is offensive to chaste ears. These are unclean, their speech betrays them. No song, no story, no jest entertains them so as a lewd one does, nor can they laugh at any thing with so much pleasure as that which they ought to blush at. These plainly shew that the unclean spirit is upon the throne in their souls; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Those also must be numbered with the unclean, whose wanton carriage, lascivious dalliances, are upon all occasions their delight, and the fuel that feeds the fire of lust in their hearts, (I should call it the fire of hell) and keeps it burning.

Now these are the sinners we would endeavour to reform, and reduce into subjection to the sacred laws of chastity and modesty; and we should hope, by the grace of God to do them some good, if they would but be persuaded to hear reason, and not desperately to resolve against a change of their way. When you are called (as you are at this time in God's name) to return and repent, I beseech you be willing to take it into your consideration, and do not say, as they did who hated to be reformed, (Jer. 18. 12.) *There is no hope, no, for we will walk after our own devices.* Admit

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Admit a parley then; enter into a treaty, and let us see whether we cannot propose such inducements as shall overcome you, and prevail with you to surrender to the Lord Jesus (your Lord and our's) that heart which has long been garrisoned against him by the unclean spirit.

Shall I ask thee seriously, Wouldest thou not be helped? Wouldest thou not be healed? Wouldest thou not be made whole? Wouldest thou not be made clean? Wouldest thou not have this Devil, this unclean Devil dispossessed, which often times casts thee into the fire of sin, and often into the water of sorrow for it? Tell me, wouldest thou not exchange the filthy sordid pleasures of a carnal sensual life, for the pure, rational, and divine pleasures of a spiritual heavenly life?

If you be indeed in this good mind, will you be convinced of the great evil of this sin? And will you be put into a way to break off from it? These are the two things I shall endeavour in this address to you, and I am willing to hope the attempt shall not be altogether in vain: the Lord chuse out words for me wherewith to reason with you!

I. I shall endeavour to convince you of the evil of this sin of uncleanness. Till the mistakes of the judgment are rectified, the errors of the life will never be reformed. Here, therefore, we must begin: and God by his grace begin here! The carnal mind suggests to you the pleasures of it, tells you that *stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant*, Pro. 9. 17. That this pleasure is present and certain, but that the hurt of it is future and doubtful: but that you may not be cheated into your own ruin by this fallacy, I shall not question but to make it out to you, that the hurt of it is not at all doubtful but of unquestionable certainty, nor only future, but so much present, that, if you will weigh things in an even balance, you will find the evil of it to be infinitely greater than the good of it, and that therefore our exhortations to virtue should have your ears and hearts, and that your ears should be deaf, and your hearts shut against all temptations to this vice.

This will appear, if you consider both the malignity and guilt there is in this sin, and the misery and wrath that follows after it. They who chuse and wear the garment spotted with the flesh, must thus be saved with fear, and plucked with a shriek out of the very fire, Jude 23. If you have any dread either of sin or its punishment, you will acknowledge the evil of wantonness and uncleanness.

1. Consider the malignity and guilt there is in it. It is a sin, an exceeding sinful sin; one of those that are as scarlet and crimson, an abominable thing which the Lord hates.

There is no sin so heinous, so odious, but a resolved custom in it will do much towards the reconciling of the judgment to it, so that either it is thought no sin at all, or but a little one, an excusable trick of youth: and, thus, if it be not justified, yet it is palliated and excused, and a thousand arts used to shift off the conviction of it. And verily the case is bad, and extremely dangerous, when conscience, which should be of counsel for the government to detect and prosecute the sin, is so debauched and vitiated that it is retained on the other side, and becomes an advocate for the sin. *If this light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?* If the judgment be bribed, the judge is so, and the sentence will be accordingly.

Let me, therefore, beg of you to favour the case with an impartial trial; be willing to hear what we have to say upon the principles of revelation and right reason, to prove uncleanness to be a sin, and a very great sin; and if we prove in the general that it is a sin, we desire you will do us and yourselves the justice to acknowledge that your uncleanness, and the lasciviousness you allow yourselves in is a sin, a daring and dangerous transgression of the divine law, that it is so to be accounted now, and must so be accounted for shortly, whatever you have imagined to the contrary.

Let us then carefully consider the intrinsic evil that there is in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, and in the indulgence of these fleshly lusts.

(1.) It is contrary to God, and to his purity and holiness, and, therefore, it is sin, both in its root and in all its branches.

God who governs the world is a Spirit; you impeach the equity of his dominion, if you, who consist of flesh and spirit, give the pre-eminence to the flesh, and be governed by that; for the spirit ought to rule, and the body to be in subjection.

God is a Holy Spirit; his holiness is his glory; it becomes his house and servants for ever to be holy; you contradict the design of the divine revelation of God's holiness, if you wallow in uncleanness. The more spiritual you are, the more conformable you are to God, but the carnal mind is enmity against him, Rom. 8. 7. Nor is any thing more directly opposite to that divine nature which the saints, through grace, partake of, than the corruption that is in the world through lust, 2 Pet. 1. 4. The laws made for the restraint of these fleshly lusts are ratified with this reason, *For I the Lord am holy*, Lev. 19. 2. and 20. 7, 26. For no sin more defaces the image of God's holiness upon the soul, than uncleanness, nor renders it more odious in the eyes of the pure and holy God.

When Joseph was tempted to this sin he called it great wickedness, because it was a sin against God, Gen. 39. 9. When David had been surprised into this sin, he laid the emphasis of his confession upon this, *Against thee, thee only have I sinned*, Ps. 51. 4. As the prodigal son also, when he was returned from his harlots, thus aggravated his folly, *I have sinned against heaven, and before thee*, Luke 15. 18.

And is this nothing with you? Have you no regard to the God who made you, and maintains you, and will judge you? Is it nothing to you to be in a state of enmity against him, and war with him? With what satisfaction can you walk contrary to him whose nature and will are the eternal original, and rule of good and right? Are you his creatures, and dare you be his enemies? Have you a necessary dependence upon him, and yet dare you persist in an avowed rebellion against him? Consider this ye that forget God.

(2.) It thwarts the design of the Gospel of Christ. You

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You are christians, you profess that holy religion which the Lord Jesus came into the world to institute and establish; you are baptized into the profession of it, and by your baptism you are bound to obey the laws of it, and to answer the intentions of it. The gospel of Christ is a remedial law, and you hope to have remedy by it. It is a charter of privileges, and you hope to be privileged by it; but how can you expect either remedy or privilege by it, if you will not observe its precepts, nor come up to its conditions? The gospel will never save you, if it shall not rule you.

The design of Christ's coming into the world was to purify a people to himself, Tit. 2. 14. The design of his gospel is to cleanse us from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. He has established a religion, which, as far as it has the ascendant, brings all carnal lusts and appetites to be subject to the dictates of right reason sanctified by the grace of God. Christ suffered in the flesh, that we might die to the flesh, 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Now uncleanness, as far as that is yielded to, contradicts this design, and supports the works of darkness, and consequently the powers of darkness, in opposition to the interests of the kingdom of light. For, *what communion hath light with darkness?*

We are not dealing with professed pagans, nor with the worshippers of Baal-Peor, who learned of the Gods they adored, to be vile and unclean; no, the religion you profess gives us some hold of you; for it is a pure religion and undefiled: you are called by the name of the Holy Jesus, that great pattern of mortification and purity. You are enlisted under the banner of the cross, and profess to believe in Christ, and him crucified, and to be planted together in the likeness of his death; but while you live in uncleanness you espouse the opposite cause, you are the devils, soldiers, and fight under his banner, with his weapons, for his interest.

Now Christ and Belial are contrary the one to the other; in God's name, therefore, I charge you, either to forsake your uncleanness, or (at your peril) to renounce your Christianity. *Aut Nomen, aut Mores muta—Either change your name, or reform your manners:* either be what you seem to be, or seem not to be what you are not.

(3.) It grieves the Blessed Spirit of God, and always resists the Holy Ghost. As it contradicts the designs of him that was sent by the Father to save us, so it fights against the intentions of him that was sent by the Son to sanctify us, and to carry on his undertaking for us. It forfeits all his comforts, and counterworks his operations.

The fleshly lusts of the old world provoked God to say, "His Spirit should not always strive with them;" Gen. 6. 3. For his motions are quenched by the motions of the flesh. When the Apostle cautions us (Eph. 4. 30.) not to grieve the Spirit of God, he tells us, (v. 29.) what grieves him; nothing more than corrupt and filthy communication. That pure and holy Dove will not dwell in a cage of unclean and filthy birds.

Now, if the Spirit of the Lord depart from you, as he did from Saul, if he withdraw his influences and operations from you, you are undone. If he let you alone you are in the suburbs of hell already, abandoned of God, past conviction, past help, past hope, given up to a reprobate mind, and vile affections; and this you have reason to fear will be the consequence of your persisting in that which is a constant grief to him. What reason have you to expect the continuance of the Spirit's powers if you yield to the power of the carnal mind, and side with the unclean spirit against him? What have you to do with spiritual comforts, who prefer sensual pleasures before them? If you thus sin against the Spirit, take heed lest you sin away the Spirit.

(4.) It is a great abuse of your own bodies. He who commits fornication, or any other act of uncleanness, sins against his own body, 1 Cor. 6. 18. If self-murder be therefore justly condemned as the worst of murders, because it is against our own bodies, shall not uncleanness for the same reason be an abomination to us? No man, no man in his wits, ever yet hated his own flesh, so as to destroy it, yet multitudes hate it so as to defile it.

Those who indulge the pleasures of their bodies forget the honour of them; and the honour of the body we should be as careful to support and maintain, as to nourish and cherish the life of it. Some people insist more upon honour than upon life itself. This makes seventh-commandment sins their own punishment, and sometimes the punishment of other sins too, that by them sinners dishonour their own bodies, Rom. 1. 24. It is as good an argument against adultery as it is against murder, that in the image of God made he man, Gen. 9. 6. Wilt thou deface the image of God, and quite destroy the poor remains of it? Wilt thou pervert the intention of him that made thy body so fearfully and wonderfully, and formed it for himself to shew forth his praise, the doing of which will be indeed thine own praise.

Man, woman, insist upon thine honour, and preserve it by maintaining thy virtue. Argue thus with thyself, shall that noble structure which was erected for a palace be converted into a swine-stye? That curious frame which was designed to be the tabernacle of the human spirit, and the temple of the Divine Spirit, shall that become the habitation of unclean spirits? What a base and sordid thing is it to make these bodies *members of a harlot*, which were designed to be *the members of Christ*, as the Apostle argues, (1 Cor. 6. 15.) to make them instruments of unrighteousness to the dishonour of God, which he made to be instruments of righteousness to his praise, Rom. 6. 13. The body is for the Lord, for his service, for his glory, and therefore ought not to be for fornication, 1 Cor. 6. 13.

If you have any sense of honour, surely you will not do so vile a thing as to prostitute that body to the slavery of a base lust which was framed and fitted for the service of God. If you should escape reproach among men for the sin, yet surely you cannot reflect upon yourselves without shame and blushing; and self-reproaches are of all other the most uneasy. Chastity is called

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called *sanctification and honour*, (1 Thess. 4. 4.) for every thing that is unchaste is a profanation both of your holiness and of your honour. You were made but a little lower than the angels, make not yourselves a great deal lower than the brutes.

(5.) It unfits you for communion with God both here and hereafter. You were made for him that made you, to serve, glorify, and enjoy him; and this is the greatest happiness you are capable of; but by indulging these filthy lusts, you render yourselves utterly uncapable either to do any thing for God, or to have any thing to do with him; you quench all the sparks of love to him, and utterly extinguish that holy fire; you root up all the seeds of grace, and kill them with these weeds.

Whoredom takes away the heart, (Hos. 4. 11.) takes it away from God who has the right to it, and should have the possession of it, and puts it into the hand of his enemy and our's. It takes the heart away from Christ the Redeemer of souls, and gives it to Satan the destroyer of souls; it alienates the affections from every thing that is heavenly and divine, and causes them to cleave to the earth, and to embrace dunghills. It fills the mind with vile and wicked thoughts in holy duties, which render them an abomination to the Lord; for thus polluted bread is offered on his altars. This we find a convinced adulterer, reproaching himself for as sensibly as for any thing, (Pro. 5. 14.) *I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly*,

These unclean lusts are the corruption of all the faculties of the soul. They are the blindness of the understanding, the debauchery of the conscience, the alienation of the soul from its felicity, and the obstruction of all its intercourse with heaven. For what communion has light with darkness, the father of lights with the works of darkness? What fellowship can there be between the holy God, and an unclean and filthy heart? 2 Cor. 6. 14.

(6.) It is a sin not only against God and yourselves, but against your neighbour also. The seventh commandment is therefore one of the laws of the second table; and the Apostle makes it the first of those commandments which are comprehended in this saying, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, Rom. 13. 9.

Consider this, sinner; if thou thyself be under the sacred ties and bonds of marriage, every act of uncleanness is downright perjury, it is a violation of the covenant of thy God, and a breach of the marriage vow; it is a great injury to thy yoke-fellow, whose thou art by solemn contract, who ought to be dearer to thee than any other person whatsoever, and to whom thou hast promised to be faithful. Darest thou deal treacherously with her who is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant? Mal. 2. 14. Or with him who is the guide of thy youth, and that ought to be to thee for a covering of the eyes? Pro. 2. 17. and Gen. 20. 16. Is the marrige covenant nothing with thee? Is it nothing to thee that thou art guilty of the greatest injustice that can be to one whom thou oughtest to be not only just but kind to? And to do a wrong which thou canst never by any restitution make amends for? Though thy injured yoke-fellow may perhaps know nothing of the injury done, yet the righteous God knows it, and will certainly avenge it.

If thou thyself be single, but the person with whom thou committest lewdness is in the married state, thou contractest the same guilt, by being injurious to the yoke-fellow of another. A crime of so heinous a nature, that besides the prohibition of it in the letter of the seventh commandment, the very desire of this forbidden fruit is expressly restrained by the tenth commandment, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.*

Yet this is not all; the greatest injury of all is done to the precious soul of that person who is thy partner in the sin, and whom thou either courtest, or consentest to. Know, sinner, that thou perishest not alone in thy iniquity; but as if it were a light thing for thee to defile and destroy thine own soul, thou art accessary to the pollution and ruin of another soul, a precious soul, more worth than all the world. If thou be the tempter, thy guilt is double, thou art not only a sinner, but a satan, a child of the devil, (Acts 13. 10.) an agent and factor for him, who, not content to be himself a wicked one, goes about continually, seeking to make the children of men wicked like himself. Verily, they are of their father the devil, who thus do his lusts, they bear his image, and they are in his interests, John 8. 44. And if thou only consent to the temptation, yet besides thine own guilt, thou sharest in the sin of those to whom thou consentest, strengthening their hands, and hardening their hearts in their wicked way. Hearken to this ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship ye pretend to each other is really the greatest enmity that can be? You hurt, you wrong, you ruin one another's souls. O what a stinging reflection will this be hereafter! How many precious souls are you accessary to the murder of? Except a miracle of mercy give you and them repentance, you will die in your iniquity, but their blood will be required at your hands.

God by his grace make these words convincing! Nothing less than almighty grace can make them so, but that can do wondrously.

2. Besides the malignity and guilt that there is in this sin, consider also the mischief and misery that follow after it. If calling it sin will not frighten you from it, we will call it death, and try what that will do; and we do not either in the one, or in the other, miscall it. It is one of those things for which the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience, Col. 3. 5, 6. And woe to these, ten thousand woes to those upon whom the wrath of God alights and lies!

Let us take a distinct view of some of the dismal, and perhaps fatal consequences of this sin.

(1.) Uncleanness wastes the body. He that commits fornication sins against his own body, not only by putting a dishonour upon it, and prostituting it to a base and scandalous service, but by contributing to the consumption and destruction of it. If you have any regard to your own bodies (the pleasing of the vicious appetites of which is the utmost the tempter can pretend

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pretend to) you will surely avoid that sin which threatens so much mischief to them. Shall the fundamental law of self-preservation have no command over you, nor influence upon you?

Have you no dread of those pains and loathsome sicknesses which are commonly the products of these abominations? The righteous God, by a disease not known in the world till these later ages, has stigmatized very many who have given themselves over to uncleanness, and has set them forth as monuments of his justice; in them the scripture has been fulfilled, that *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*, if men will not. Multitudes have been made to mourn at the last, (though I doubt very few have been brought to repentance by it) when their flesh and their body have been consumed, and they have rotted above ground, Pro. 5. 11.

The bones of many an old fornicator are full of the sins of his youth, which will *lie down with him in the dust*, as Zophar speaks, Job 20. 11. Yea, and many in the midst of their days, become the Devil's martyrs, and after they have long been racked and tortured with grievous pains, end a miserable life in a more miserable death, and fall unpitied sacrifices to their own lusts. The word of God has said it, and all the world cannot unsay it, *He that defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy*, 1 Cor. 3. 17.

(2.) It wars against the soul, the better, the immortal part of the man. Fleshly lusts, though they appear in the soft and charming guise of courtiers, yet really they are warriors, they are enemies, they are in arms against us; they are rebels, enemies in our own bosoms, and therefore, the more dangerous; the Apostle tells us, (1 Pet. 2. 11.) they *war against the soul*, they lay siege to it, batter it, and threaten the ruin of it.

How many precious souls have been undone by these enemies! they disturb the peace of the soul, and make it subject to continual frights and alarms, which fill it with secret terrors night and day. They waste the wealth of the soul, as soldiers that make havoc of all that is good for any thing in the countries they ravage and plunder. They obstruct the administration of all government in the soul; reason loses its dominion and conduct; conscience loses all its power and influence, it is not heard, it is not heeded; these base lusts put all into tumult and disorder.

And is thy soul, that precious soul of thine, nothing to thee? Darest thou thus neglect it, thus expose it, thus suffer it to be wasted and over-run by the enemy? Dost thou not know that thou must very shortly give an account of it to him that made it, and made thee the keeper of it? And an uncomfortable account thou wilt give, if thou thus resign it to Satan, and yield it as his easy prey. The serpent could not beguile thee but by thy own fault.

(3.) It is reproachful to the name. An incurable wound and dishonour is got by it, Pro. 6. 33. Though there may be other sins as provoking to God, and as mischievous to the soul, yet there is none so scandalous among men as this is. *It is a shame even to speak of these things*, Eph. 5. 12.

And is this nothing to you? Have you no value for a good name, nor any care to preserve an interest in the esteem of wise and sober people? Can you contentedly be looked upon as slaves and willing captives to a sordid lust, and to lie under a stain and brand of perpetual infamy and disgrace? Is it nothing to you what people think or say of you, when they speak evil of you truly, and your own consciences know a great deal more, and worse that they say? Is it nothing to you for good people to be ashamed of you, as fit only for the society of those who are altogether such as yourselves? Is it nothing for you to bring such a blot upon your reputation as will stick to it when you are dead and gone.

Or if your own names be of such small account with you, yet have you no regard to the name of Christ, that worthy name by which you are called? If you have made, and still make a personal profession of relation to Christ, and call yourselves by the name of Jacob, the scandal of your sin goes further than your own names, it is a reproach to God himself, and to the Lord Jesus. The name of God and his doctrine is blasphemed through you. What shall pagans and mahometans, atheists and deists make of christianity, if those who profess that holy religion, act worse than heathens? What will they say of Christ and his gospel, if those, who, by their baptism, profess to follow Christ, and believe his Gospel, live impure unholy lives, contrary to the sacred character of both? Surely then the old reproach of our Master will be again renewed, *This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them*, and you who have occasioned it will bear this iniquity. The Apostle in God's name directs us, *If any man that is called a brother*, called a christian, *be a fornicator*, with such a one we must *not so much as eat*, that we may testify the utmost abhorrence and detestation of those who thus name the name of Christ, and yet allow themselves in this iniquity, 1 Cor. 5. 11.

(4.) It is ruining to the estate. The prodigal son who spent his living on Harlots at last was reduced to husks, and became fellow-commoner with the swine. Many a one has been brought to a morsel of bread by means of a whorish woman, in our days, as well as in Solomon's, Pro. 6. 26. Almost every place and every year can produce fresh instances of the wastefulness and expensiveness of these fleshly lusts. Many have so outspent themselves and their patrimony in these lewd and dissolute courses, that they have worn out the latter end of their days in miserable poverty, and perhaps, ended them at last in a prison. So that if a careless world would take warning, others also might see and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

As there is a direct tendency in the sin itself to the impoverishing of men, for it spends that upon the devil which should be spent upon the man; so it provokes the righteous God to entail a curse upon the house and family, which will undoubtedly sink and ruin it. Holy Job says concerning this sin, and he seems to speak the sense of the patriarchal age, that it was a

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henious crime, and an iniquity proper to be punished by the judges, as it was under the law of Moses. But if they out of a contempt of other people's guilt, or consciousness of their own, should leave the sin unpunished, yet God would take the work into his own hands, and it should be a *Fire consuming to destruction, which would eat out all the increase,* Job 31. 11, 12.

(5.) It is dreadful to the conscience, if ever it be awake. Know this (sinner) that though now thou makest a light matter of this sin, and thy conscience altogether holds its peace concerning it, yet if ever God open thine eyes to see the error of thy ways, and set thy sins in order before thee, thy uncleanness will appear above all the rest exceeding sinful, and the remembrance of it will bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder: Solomon himself in the reflection found it more bitter than death, (Ecc. 7. 26.) and more terrible; and so wilt thou if God have mercy in store for thee, and set home the conviction of it upon thy soul, making thee to know thine abominations, and to see them in their own colours and consequences.

O the horror and amazement thou wilt then be filled with! Then the sin which thou madest a sport of will sit heavy: though the iniquity was sweet in thy mouth, and rolled under thy tongue as a pleasant morsel, it will then be as the gall of asps, and the reflection upon it will perhaps make thee a terror to thyself, and to all about thee: how canst thou be otherwise, if the terrors of the Almighty set themselves in array against thee? Thou wilt then loathe thyself, and abhor thyself, and call thyself fool a thousand times, for venturing upon counterfeit and transient pleasures, which thou seest and feelest attended with real and remaining pains.

Think (sinner) when thou art tempted to this sin, think seriously what will come of it: the best that can come of it is that thou wilt repent of it, and this thou presumest upon: but dost thou know what it is to repent? That it is to be filled with grief and shame, and fear, to see thyself under the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, and upon the brink of hell, and to be under all the terrors that may be supposed to arise from hence. And is repentance a thing to be bought so dear? Or, *What fruit will you then have of these things whereof you are now ashamed?*

(6.) It is damning to eternity, if it be not repented of in time. It is a sin which shuts the sinner out of heaven. The scripture speaks expressly, more than once, that *they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 21. Nothing that defiles must enter into the New Jerusalem, that holy city. Heaven indeed would be no heaven to these impure polluted souls; nor will the holy God take those to be near him and with him for ever, who chose to set themselves at such a distance from him, and engaged themselves in opposition to him here.

And if thy sin shut thee out of heaven, I need not tell thee where it will shut thee up; but the word of God tells thee, that the abominable, and particularly the whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burns eternally with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, Rev. 21. 8. The filthy Sodomites, who gave themselves over to fornication, suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, and are set forth for an example to all who should afterwards in like manner live ungodly, Jude 7. There is a special reservation of this kind of sinners to the judgment of the great day, because, commonly, they escape punishment from men; for when all sinners are bound over to that judgment, it is added, *Chiefly they that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness,* 2 Pet. 2. 9, 10.

Let no man deceive you with vain words, as if God would not be so severe with sinners as his word says he will; is he not a God of truth, faithful to his threatenings as well as to his promises? Is he not a righteous Governor, the God to whom vengeance belongs? And canst thou think that he will suffer his law to be violated, and the authority of it ridiculed, his gospel to be slighted, and the grace of it trampled upon, and never reckon for all these indignities done him? No, sinner, thou art mistaken if thou think him altogether such an one as thyself.

Say not then, "I shall have peace though I go on," for that is to contradict God, who has said, *There is no peace to the wicked:* neither say thou, "I will repent of it hereafter, though I go on in it for a while;" for that is to contradict thyself, since the same reason that there is for thy repenting hereafter holds for thy repenting now. Do not then by a daring presumption run thyself upon an endless despair.

Now, consider this ye that forget God, consider it seriously, and be persuaded to break off this wicked course of life you lead.

Consider that an unclean conversation is a certain sign and evidence of a graceless heart; it manifests the prevalency and predominance of the corrupt nature, and that the unclean spirit is upon the throne. And if thou live and die graceless, thou art undone for ever.

Consider also that it is a very dangerous thing to sin against the warnings and checks of conscience. Few go on in this sin without disturbance sometimes from their own consciences, which say, *O do not this abominable thing which the Lord hates:* take heed of baffling your own consciences, and of rushing as Balaam upon this sword's point, lest you provoke God to sear your consciences, and to give you up to your own hearts lusts, and so to seal you unto condemnation. When men deal with their consciences as the Sodomites dealt with Lot, press hard upon them, and will not allow them to be reprovers and judges, (Gen. 19. 9.) Sodom's plagues are not far off; *Fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest.*

Consider also that an outward profession of religion is so far from excusing, that really it aggravates these abominations; it now aggravates the guilt of the sin, and will shortly aggravate the ruin of the sinner. *Be sure your sin will find you out,* though perhaps your neighbours do not.

II. If

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II. If you be in some measure convinced of the evil of this sin, I would now put you in a way to break off from it; and God by his grace put you into the right way! Perhaps, by this time, some of these sinners, these sinners against their own souls, may be so sick of their disease as to be glad of a physician, and desirous of a cure. You that are enslaved to these filthy lusts, and under the power of them, that labour in these fires, like Israel in Egypt, do you not sigh, as they did, by reason of the bondage? Are you not weary of serving divers lusts and pleasures, those unreasonable task-masters, and suffering at the same time the frequent lashes of an accusing conscience, that just avenger under God? Are you never brought to wish that you were disentangled out of the snare you are in, and that you could live a virtuous and a religious life, as you see some do who have the comfort and honour of so doing? Do you never blush to think of the abominable lusts you are under the dominion of? Nor ever tremble to think of the bottomless pit you are upon the brink of?

Know (sinner) that the God of heaven thinks the time long that thou continuest in thine uncleanness. See how he expostulates with filthy sinners, (Jer. 13. 27.) *Wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?* And dost not thou think it long enough? May not *the time past suffice* that thou hast *walked in lasciviousness*? 1 Pet. 4. 3. Is thy conscience seared? Is thy heart quite hardened? Are darts, God's darts counted as stubble before thee, and canst thou, with the Leviathan, laugh at the shaking of this spear? Job 41. 29. Shall no considerations influence thee? Shall neither reason nor religion sway with thee? If they may be calmly and impartially heard, I dare say thou wouldest be prevailed with to break off this vile and wicked course of life, and wouldest thankfully submit to the method of cure, though the operations necessary to the cure may be difficult and displeasing to flesh and blood.

Would you then be cleansed from this leprosy, this noisome and dangerous disease? Observe these directions.

1. Heartily repent of all the uncleanness you have been guilty of, and be deeply humbled for it before the Lord this day. Rest not in a bare disgust and dislike of the sin, as if that would amount to repentance: Ammon hated Tamar, when he had satisfied his brutish lust, and, yet, was far from being a true penitent; no, it is necessary that you experience in your own souls a very great and deep sorrow for the sin, and that you reflect upon it with the highest regret and remorse imaginable.

Think of the affront that you have offered to the holy God, the guilt and stain you have brought upon your own souls; think of the folly and filthiness of it. Think what you have lost and forfeited by it, the favour of God, the grace of Christ, and the joys of heaven: think what you have deserved and exposed yourselves to by it, temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments. Think of these things till you are pricked to the heart, and in bitterness for the sin, as one that is in bitterness for a first-born; and contract such an habitual indignation against the sin, and yourselves because of it, that you may be pained upon every remembrance of it, and may even loathe yourselves because of it.

They that can easily forgive themselves upon a slight and superficial repentance, and flatter themselves with a conceit that God has thereupon forgiven them, will easily be brought to yield to the next temptation: it is therefore necessary that you take pains with your own hearts, to work upon them the powerful influence of those considerations which are proper to open springs of godly sorrow there, and to keep them ever flowing.

After David had been but once guilty of uncleanness, he went mourning from day to day for it. The sin was ever before him, Ps. 51. 3. The remembrance of it broke his bones, (v. 8.) and was to him as a heavy burthen, too heavy even for him to bear, Ps. 38. 4, 5, 6. Solomon confesses that he had found it more bitter than death, and calls it not a trick of youth, or an excusable slip of human frailty, but the *wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness*, Ecc. 7. 25, 26. Imitate these great penitents. Lay a load upon yourselves, and lie in the dust before God in penitential tears. Let the sin be a terror to you in the reflection upon what is past, and then it will not appear such a pleasure to you as formerly, in the next temptation. Thus the quarrel with it must begin, with true remorse and godly sorrow for our former folly, and then it is to be hoped the quarrel will be irreconcileable.

Perhaps it will help to melt and break the hard and stony heart, if you humbly confess your guilt, not only to God but to your minister, or to some christian friend, especially if the offence has been made public, and has proved a scandal: the Scripture prescribes this method of cure, (Jam. 5. 16.) *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.* That you may effectually humble yourselves, it will be of use for you to shame yourselves; you have not been ashamed to sin, be not ashamed to repent, for next to the credit of an innocent is that of a penitent. Do then as the convicted leper under the law, Lev. 13. 45. Put thyself into his place and posture, and cry with sorrow and self-loathing, *Unclean, Unclean.*

2. Take up a full resolution by the grace of God, now to break off this vicious course of life, and never to return to it again. Faint purposes will not serve for the disentangling of you from the strong cords of this iniquity; they will but deceive you and betray you to the tempter: wishing is but trifling: it is not enough to say "I hope I shall never be guilty of this sin again, surely I shall never again be such a fool as I have been;" but you must say, "In the strength of God I am firmly resolved I never will." If these fleshly lusts be indeed your enemies, as certainly they are dangerous enemies, you must carry on a war against them with vigour. Feeble efforts will never repel the strong assaults of this temptation: you must be stedfastly resolved against it. Say not, "If I make a resolution I doubt I shall break it," that is to yield to Satan: but "I will

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"I will make a resolution, and I trust in God I shall never break it;" this is to resist the Devil, and if we do this faithfully, he will flee from us.

There have been instances of those who, by the assistance of divine grace, have conquered and subdued habits that were extremely vicious, and have been wonderfully changed in the temper of their spirits, and the course of their lives, and the same grace that wrought mightily in them shall be sufficient for you, if you pray for it, improve it, and do not rebel against it. Argue the case with yourselves, reason with your own hearts upon it, and let the result be a settled resolution to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, that you may perfect holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

What can hinder but that you should speedily come up to a firm resolution in this matter? Swear this to the Lord, and vow it to the mighty God of Jacob, that you will never, never more have fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness; that you will never return again to this folly. Bind your souls with a solemn bond to this purpose, bind them fast, for they are apt to fly off. Let every christian in this sense vow chastity, and call God to witness that you are sincere in it.

3. Let the fear of God rule in your hearts. You believe there is a God, you dare not deny it, you dare not question it; and do you not know that this God sees you, and is acquainted with all your ways; that he will judge you and call you to an account for all your works? Do you not know that his eye is always upon you, and that all the hidden works of darkness are open before him?

Be persuaded, therefore, to set the Lord always before you; and dare not to do that in his sight and presence, which you would not dare to do in the sight and presence of a worm of the earth like yourselves. When none else sees, take heed, God sees.

A living principle of grace in your hearts will purify and cleanse them, and then the streams will not be thus muddy and polluted. Cast salt, the salt of grace into these springs, and then the waters will be healed. Make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good. Stand in awe of God's unspotted purity, his tremendous majesty, and his strict and unerring justice; and say, How dare I live such a life as this in a constant contempt of God's authority, and rebellion against his justice? "How dare I provoke a God of Almighty power to jealousy? Am I stronger than he?" None cast off modesty till they have cast off the fear of God, and are resolved to live without him. If you have the fear of God before your eyes, you will say as Joseph did, whenever you are assaulted by any temptations of this kind, *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

4. Stand upon your guard, against the first appearance of this evil, and all approaches towards it. Take heed of every thing that leads to uncleanness, that looks like it, or looks towards it. If you would be innocent from the great transgression, allow not yourselves in lesser transgressions of this kind. The unwary fly often fools away her life by playing about the candle. Those sports and dalliances which seem harmless may introduce the greatest mischiefs, as the little thief thrust in at the window opens the door to the great ones. *Nemo repente fit turpissimus—Men arrive not at first to the highest pitch of this wickedness,* but gradually, and by indulgences less criminal, come to the vilest enormities; the way of this sin is down hill, a man cannot easily stop himself; one unclean thought, word or action, draws on another, strengthens the corruptions by gratifying them, weakens the convictions by baffling them, and so the unthinking sinner goes from bad to worse: so like to the letting forth of water is the beginning of this sin, therefore if you love your souls, meddle not with it.

Dread a snake under the green grass, and take heed where you tread. Fear this enemy and come not within his borders. Watch that you enter not into this temptation, for it will be no easy matter to make a retreat. Do as holy Job did, make a covenant with your eyes (the common inlets of this sin) that you may not admit, much less entertain, any wanton and unchaste desires, Job 31. 1. If you would not be burnt do not take fire into your bosom, nor go upon hot coals, it is Solomon's comparison, Pro. 6. 27, 28. Crush this cockatrice in the egg, lest the fruit of it be a fiery flying serpent. Pluck up this root of bitterness as soon as it puts forth, lest it spring up and trouble you, and thereby you and many more be defiled, Heb. 12. 15.

5. Be quick and peremptory in your resistance of temptations to this sin. Stand not to parley with them, nor ever listen to terms of surrender. Eve was half betrayed when she entered into discourse with the serpent, and was willing to hear what he had to say.

Arguments enough there are against this sin, and very convincing, cogent ones; your sober thoughts have many a time represented them to you in their evidence and demonstration: be satisfied then, and look upon the case to be so plain that there needs not a dispute upon it: there are no probabilities, nothing but fallacies on the side of the temptation: and, yet, such is the weakness, deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of your own hearts, that you may be imposed upon ere you are aware, if you admit of a debate concerning it, and recommit the resolves you have made.

Therefore, whenever you are solicited to this sin, startle at the thought of it, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation imaginable. Say as Peter, (Acts 10. 14.) *Not so, for nothing unclean hath come into my mouth.* Say as David in another case, (1 Chro. 11. 19.) *My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing!* Say as our Saviour has taught us to say, when the tempter assaults us, *Get thee hence, Satan,* Mat. 4. 10. The Lord rebuke this unclean spirit, so that it may not be suffered to speak, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke it. Let the very temptation be to you as a thorn in the flesh, a pain and a terror, and not a pleasure. You who have fallen into this sin have found by sad experience how dangerous it is to venture too far: therefore, dread the thoughts of reasoning with indifference,

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indifference, concerning that, which, being confessedly most unreasonable, must be gainsaid with a severe resolution. As he who will dispute whether there be a God or no, must be hissed at in the schools, and not argued with, so must he who will question whether he should keep the law of God, in so plain a case, or break it.

6. Keep at a distance from the tempter. If there be any particular person that you are in special danger of being ensnared by, avoid that person as you would avoid one that you were in danger of being infected by with the plague, though otherwise dear to you.

The wise man's advice, or rather the wise God's command is, *Remove thy way far from the house*, (Pro. 5. 8.) much more far from the man, the woman, who, under the colour of love and friendship, would allure you with the Devil's baits, into the Devil's nets. This seems to be in part intended in that command which our Saviour has given us, to cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye which offends us, Mat. 5. 29, 30. and again, Mat. 18. 8, 9. Though the person be dear to us, and could be as ill spared as a right eye, or a right hand, yet resolve upon a separation. This was Joseph's wisdom that he would not be alone in the house with his mistress, when he perceived her vile designs, Gen. 39. 10, 11. When we thrust ourselves into temptation, we put ourselves out of God's protection, for he has promised to keep us in all our ways, and not otherwise. Presume not too near the danger in the strength of your own resolutions, that hitherto you will go and no farther, lest you be found tempting the Devil to tempt you, and so become your own betrayers. If you would be kept from harm, keep out of harm's way.

This caution must go further than the particular person you are in danger of being ensnared by; you must carefully avoid the places of temptation to this sin. As the plays have many of them in this degenerate age been plainly designed to teach the arts of debauchery, and not only to palliate this wickedness as a jest, but to recommend it as the accomplishment of a finished gentleman, so the play-houses have been the rendezvous of these sinners, where the plays have been indeed acted. There those are mustered and disciplined, who having in their baptism renounced "the pomps and vanities of this world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh," and listed themselves under the banner of the cross, now in effect disclaim their baptism, return to those pomps and vanities (by which were originally meant the plays) and embrace these fleshly lusts, and engage themselves to fight manfully against virtue and religion, and all that is sacred, and to continue the Devil's faithful servants and soldiers to their lives end. And are these persons fit for you to associate with? Are these places fit for you to be found in? No, if thou love thy soul, if thou wouldest preserve thy purity, peace and honour, come not nigh the door of that house; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.

7. Think much of death and hell. Sinners of this kind must be saved with fear, that is, they must be frightened out of their sin, pulled out of the fire with a friendly violence. We must not, we dare not prophesy smooth things to you, we prophesy deceit if we do. O that these sinners in Sion were afraid! O that fearfulness might surprise them! Let your hearts meditate terror, the terrors of the Lord, which from the word of God we desire to set before you, not to frighten you out of your wits, but to frighten you out of your sins. And it is better to be saved with fear, than that you should be damned yourselves without fear.

Death is the king of terrors, O that it might appear so terrible to you as to cool the courage you take in a sinful way! Sirs, you are dying creatures, your days upon earth are to be but few: and, perhaps, you are shortening the days of your life, and hastening the day of your death by this lewd and vicious course of life you live. But O what a dismal change will death make when it comes! A dismal change, when the charming eyes (as they now call them) which give the wanton glances, shall sink and fall, and be closed up: when the countenance that is now proud of its skin-deep beauty shall gather blackness, and become ghastly; when the body that is now pampered and indulged, and such provision made for it, shall become a loathsome carcase. O let the thoughts of the pains and agonies of a death-bed, and the darkness and terror of a bed in the grave, be an effectual damp and check to all the forbidden pleasures of the bed of uncleanness! It would be thought unaccountably absurd, and would be imputed to a very high degree of hardness and scaredness, if a malefactor condemned to die, and the warrant signed for his execution to-morrow, should so far forget the dreadful pomp of it, as to spend the night in wanton sport and revelling, in mirth and laughter. And are you sure that you shall live till to-morrow? *This night*, perhaps, your *soul may be required of you*. And O what a terror will death be if it surprise you while you go on in this sinful way!

But this is not all; after death will be the judgment, a strict and particular judgment, into which God will bring every secret thing; and after judgment, the fire of hell will certainly be the portion of all those who live and die in this sin: if God be true it will. Our Saviour thunders hell and damnation against this sin, and you may assure yourselves he is in earnest: he has told us that if we do not mortify these corrupt dispositions, our *whole body shall be cast into hell*, Mat. 5. 29, 30.

Lay your ears by faith to the gates of hell, and hear the doleful shrieks and out-cries of multitudes who lived as securely in this sin as you do, and said they should have peace though they went on, and are now paying dear for all their brutish pleasures, in an eternity of easeless and remediless torments. The prophet speaks of it as a very sad change, which approaching judgments in this world would make with the daughters of Sion, when there should be *instead of a girdle a rent*, and *instead of well set hair, baldness*, Isa. 3. 24.

But much more dreadful and amazing will the change be, when, instead of the cup of fornication, wherewith these besotted sinners are now intoxicated, the

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righteous God, who has said he will judge whoremongers and adulterers, shall put into their hands a cup of fury, a cup of trembling, a cup of fire and brimstone. Instead of music and songs of mirth, there shall be *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*. Instead of a bed of down shall be a bed of flames. Instead of the amorous society of them that wear soft cloathing, there shall be the company of devils and damned spirits. Let a holy fear of this be a damp to all carnal mirth, and an effectual check to all forbidden pleasures. *Who among you can dwell with devouring fire, who can inhabit everlasting burnings?*

8. Lift up your hearts in prayer to God for strength and grace to enable you to mortify fleshly lusts, and to resist every temptation to this sin. Prayer is a principal part of that armour of God which we are to put on, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. It is that which girds on all the rest, and fetches in that Spirit from on high which alone makes our armour impenetrable, and us invulnerable, Eph. 6. 18.

Let it be your daily prayer to Almighty God, that he would lead you out of this temptation which assaults you so frequently, so vigorously, that he would deliver you from this evil, this sin which most easily besets you. Pray against your own iniquity, which has so often, and so long had dominion over you. O pray earnestly that the power of divine grace may be greatly magnified and glorified in the suppressing and extirpating those vicious habits, which have hitherto seemed inveterate and obstinate to the methods of grace. Go and complain to Christ for thyself, as some did for their relations when he was here on earth, *Have mercy on me, thou Son of David,* my soul is *grievously vexed with an unclean spirit;* Lord, dispossess him, cast him out. *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting;* add fasting therefore to thy prayers, and thou shalt not seek in vain.

Whenever you find yourselves entering into this temptation, *Watch and pray.* Lift up your hearts to God in such an ejaculation as that of Nehemiah in another case, *Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands;* strengthen them for this conflict, that I may come off a conqueror. Some of the ancients thought that the thorn in the flesh which St. Paul complained of was a violent temptation to uncleanness, *a messenger of Satan* (for so all such temptations are) which buffeted him; and it was so far from pleasing him that it pained him, and was as a sword in his bones. But by prayer, instant and importunate prayer, he prevailed for grace sufficient, 2 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9. And if we come in faith on the same errand, we need not fear but we shall speed as he did.

9. Bring the body into subjection by abstinence and labour. Luxury and idleness are often the unhappy incentives and causes of this sin. Sodom was made a very sink of uncleanness by fulness of bread (not plenty, but the abuse of plenty) and abundance of idleness, Ezek. 16. 49. What Solomon says of a servant is true of the body; *He that delicately brings it up from a child, shall have it become his son,* nay his master, his taskmaster *at the length,* Pro. 29. 21. They that do not deny themselves in other things will find it the more difficult to deny themselves in this.

Corporal austerities and mortifications, though merit is not to be placed in them, nor will they of themselves, without the grace of God, gain us a victory; yet they are excellent means to subdue lust, and to bring the body into a good temper, that it may be more manageable by religion and right reason. If you cannot drive out this enemy by storm, try to starve him out, by denying yourselves the use even of those lawful things which through the infirmity of the flesh may prove a snare to you. Pamper not the body with varieties and dainties, lest it grow wanton, but use yourselves to deny yourselves so shall it become easy to you.

Live not in sloth; for when you have nothing to do, the Devil will quickly find you something to do. Standing waters gather filth, while running streams keep pure, Be always employing yourselves in some good business, and then perhaps you will find it as effectual an answer to a temptation, to say "I have no leisure," as to say "I have no leave." Love not the bed of idleness, lest it turn into the bed of lust.

10. Do not keep the Devil's counsel. This treason is in effect quashed when it is discovered, and the devices of it will be brought to nought, if they be but brought to light, for it is an evil that hates the light and seeks the shade as much as any other. Does this sin then most easily beset you? Is it violent and importunate in its assaults? If you have a friend who is fit to make a confident of, it may do well to open your case to such a friend who will deal faithfully with you, and will help you by prayer and suitable advice, and it may be, speak some word in season.

It may be of use to shame yourselves out of the danger of being overcome, by confessing your weakness, and obliging yourselves to confess your wickedness, if, in any instance, you should be overcome. You had better shame yourselves to a faithful friend that will pity you and help you, than let the sin get head, and not only shame you in this world before men who will insult over you, but fill your face with everlasting shame and contempt.

If you think these methods of cure too difficult, and call these directions "Hard sayings which cannot be borne," you have reason to fear that you are not yet thoroughly convinced of the danger of your disease, nor truly desirous to be made whole. If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing for the cure of a bodily sickness, wouldest thou not have done it? how much more when for thy spiritual cure he only says to thee, *Wash and be clean?*

And now (sinner) must I close this paper and leave thee as I found thee? Will he that is filthy resolve to be filthy still? And will he that is unclean be unclean still? God forbid: shall neither the terrors of the Lord startle thee and awaken thee out of thy security in this sinful way? Nor his goodness win upon thee to lead thee to repentance? Wilt thou make thy condition desperate by adhering to that desperate resolve, *There is no hope, no, for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go,* Jer. 2. 25. Is religion a jest, and reason a sham, and the arguments fetched from the word of God, and the sober sense of all mankind but rant and banter?

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banter? Shall all that has been said be turned off with a flout, and converted into sport and ridicule? Yet know that thine unbelief cannot make the wrath and curse of God of none effect. Though thou lovest to slumber, yet thy damnation slumbers not.

If, after all, thou dost indeed prefer the gratification of a base lust before the favour of God, and the pleasures of wisdom's ways; if thou dost indeed chuse the puddle water of sensual delights rather than the pure water of life, and the wine of divine consolations; if thou wilt rather expose thyself to all the just reproaches of thine own conscience now, and to all the miseries of the damned for ever, than submit thyself to the restraint and conduct of virtue and religion; know then, that *God also will chuse thy delusions*, and they will be thine eternal destruction: *So shall thy doom be, thou thyself hast decided it.*

A SERIOUS

ADDRESS

TO THOSE WHO

PROFANE THE LORD's DAY.

THOSE I reckon guilty of profaning the Lord's Day, and to them in the name of God direct this paper, who neglect the appointed work of that day, and who violate the prescribed rest of that day.

1. It is a profanation of the Lord's Day, and a breach of the law of it, to neglect and omit the proper duty and business of that day, which is the immediate service and worship of our God. If we leave undone that which on this day ought to be done, we are transgressors, for omissions are sins, and must come into judgment.

That the eternal God is to be solemnly and religiously adored by the children of men, and that we are all bound by acts of piety and devotion, to give unto him the glory due unto his name, and pay our homage to him, none will question who really believe that there is a God; who is a being infinitely perfect and blessed, and the fountain of all being and blessedness, our Creator, Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, on whom we have a necessary and constant dependance, and to whom we lie under the highest obligations imaginable. Never did reasonable creatures speak more unreasonably, than they did who said, *What is the Almighty that we should serve him?* Job. 21. 15.

Something of this work ought to be done every day; no day must pass without some solemn acts of religious worship, both morning and evening; when we address ourselves to the work of the day, and when we compose ourselves to the rest of the night, we ought actually to acknowledge God both by our prayers and praises, as our Protector, Guide, and Benefactor. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work*; and is this no part of our work? Is it not the most needful and excellent work we have to do? Those who live without daily worship live without God in the world. As God allows us time for works of necessity and mercy out of his day; so we ought to allow time for works of piety and devotion out of our days, else we are not only undutiful, but very ungrateful.

But besides the morning and evening sacrifice, which the duty of every day requires, the wisdom of God for the preserving and securing of divine worship in the world, has instituted and appointed a particular time for the special solemnities of it, which is one day in seven. The body of a seventh day, that is the working hours of it, are by this institution appointed to be spent in the acts of religion and devotion, as the other days of the week are intended for secular business, and the works of our particular calling.

Now this instrumental part of religion (give me leave to call it so) though it be not equally necessary with the essentials of it, the love of God, and faith in Christ, yet it is undoubtedly necessary, both as a duty in obedience to the divine law, which requires us thus to consecrate a seventh day to the services of religion; and as a means of keeping up communion with God in holy ordinances, and preparing ourselves by his grace, for the vision and fruition of him. It is so necessary, that revealed religion, and with it all religion would in all probability have been lost and forgotten long ere this, if it had not been kept up by the observation of sabbaths.

Now forasmuch as it is the work of the Lord's Day to worship God, not only in public solemn assemblies, which we ought conscientiously to attend upon both the former and the latter part of the day, but in secret and in our families, morning, evening, and at noon, those do, certainly, profane the day, who do not spend the best part of it, and much more those who scarce spend any part of it in pious exercises. Either not attending on them at all, or with such a constant and allowed carelessness and indifference, as discovers a great contempt of the God they pretend to honour.

Those profane this sacred day, who waste the precious hours of its morning in sleep and sloth, and proud and needless dressing, and the rest of the day in idle chat and perfect santering, as if sabbath time hung upon their hands, and they knew not what to do with it, nor how to idle it away, and pass it off fast enough, till they have that which is their heart's desire, *When will the sabbath be gone?*

Such as these, how innocent soever they may think themselves,

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themselves, are to be counted sabbath-breakers, who instead of keeping the sabbath day lose it, and throw it away, and wilfully suffer it to run waste; and instead of sanctifying it, and advancing it above other times, vilify it and make it the most idle, insignificant, and unprofitable day of the week; for the days that are spent in worldly business serve to some purpose; but this that should be spent in the business of religion, being trifled away, and the work of it undone, serves to no purpose.

2. It is a profanation of the Lord's Day, to violate and break in upon the holy rest of that day, and to do that from which we are bound up, and restrained by the law of the day, in order to our more close application, to that which is the work of the day. On that day we are to rest both from those worldly employments of our particular callings, which on other days are our duty, and the work of the day, and from those sports and recreations which on other days are lawful, as the entertainment of our spare hours, and the preparatives for our busy ones, from both we are to rest on the Lord's Day; for certainly carnal pleasure is as great an enemy to spiritual joy as the sorrow of the world is, and sport is as inconsistent with the sabbath rest as labour is.

Rest from worldly business on the sabbath day, was under the Old Testament more primarily required as a duty, and a great stress laid upon it, according to the nature of that dispensation; to all the purposes of this rest we are not now so strictly tied up as the Jews then were: but it is still secondarily requisite as a means, in order to the due performance of the work of the day, and so far it is a duty.

Then when the more solemn worship of God was appropriated to one place, where the ark was, the place which God chose to put his name there, which the people were appointed generally to attend but thrice a year, the rest of those, who were at a distance, was required and accepted as a tacit joining with the temple service on the sabbath day; by a strict cessation from other work, they testified an implicit concurrence in that work. But now under the gospel we are not so confined to one place as they then were, it is God's will that men pray every where, and that in every place the spiritual incense be offered; we have now larger opportunities and better helps for doing the work, and enjoying the comforts of that day than they then had: and therefore, now the bare rest from worldly labour is not in itself so much a sanctification of the sabbath as it was then; yet we cannot think ourselves less obliged than they were to rest from worldly employments and recreation, as far as that rest will contribute to our attendance on the work of the day, with more solemnity, and with greater freedom, and closeness of application, and without distinction.

Those, therefore, undoubtedly profane the Lord's Day, who absent themselves from the public worship of God, either the former or the latter part of the day, that they may underhand follow their callings, settle their accounts, drive bargains, push on journies, make visits, or the like, unless when the occasion is urgent, and mercy comes to take place of sacrifice.

Yet, not they only are guilty of the breach of the sabbath rest, who spend that part of the day, which we call "church time," in worldly employments and recreations; but they also who spend the time before, between, and after public worship, so as either to intrench upon that full scope of time, that they ought to take on that day, for their secret and family worship, and to abridge themselves of that, or so as to unfit themselves and put themselves out of frame for holy duties, or obstruct their profiting by them, do violate the sabbath rest. Works of necessity (which yet ought not to be a self-created necessity) we are allowed time for, the body must be fed, and clothed, and rested, that it may be fit to serve the soul in the service of God on this day. But no more of the time than is convenient, for these must be alienated from the business of the day, if it be, we break in upon the appointed rest.

Those who go to their shops, and exercise their trades openly or secretly on the Lord's Day, thereby shew that they mind the world more than God, and that they are more solicitous for the meat that perishes, than for that which endures to eternal life; and those who go to the ale-house, or follow their sports, and divert themselves or others with idle walking and talking, shew that they mind the flesh more than God, and that they are wholly taken up with the mere animal life, and wretchedly estranged from the principles, powers, and pleasures of the spiritual and divine life.

If any pretend that they can perform the work of the Lord's Day well enough, though they do not observe the rest of the day, they suppose themselves wiser than God, who has instituted the sabbath rest in order to the better and more solemn management of the sabbath work, both public and private.

We find now who are chargeable with the sin of prophaning the Lord's Day; let the conscience of every one that is guilty herein deal faithfully with him in the reading of this, and say, *Thou art the man:* thou art the man, the woman that makest the Day of the Lord, either a day of idleness, or a day of worldly business, and dost not spend it in the service of God and communion with him. Either thou dost not diligently attend the public worship in its season, or but one part of the day, or without any just cause stayest at home, or walkest abroad when thou shouldest be in the holy convocation: or, if thou go to church for fashion sake, thou thinkest when that service is over thou hast no more to do, and dost not spend the remaining part of the day as thou oughtest, in prayer, reading, meditation, and other religious exercises alone and with thy family. God's time, which is devoted to him, and should be employed for him, thou givest to the world, and thy worldly business, or (which is perhaps more common) to the body, and to the ease and pleasure of it, and to the entertainments of a vain and foolish conversation.

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Art thou verily guilty in those or any of these things? This paper comes with an humble request to thee, that thou wouldest consider thy ways and amend them.

This is one of those sins which the public attempts for the reformation of manners at this day are levelled against, at least in some instances of it: and justly, for the profanation of God's sabbaths, which he is very jealous for the honour of, is a sin, that brings judgments upon a land, perhaps as soon as any other. It is a sin that *kindles fires in the gates of Jerusalem,* (Jer. 17. 27.) a sin that *brings yet more wrath upon Israel,* Neh. 13. 17, 18. And, therefore, all who wish well to the public peace, and those, especially, who are entrusted with the preservation of it, are concerned in interest as well as duty, to take care of the due sanctification of the sabbath, as far as it falls within their cognizance, so that whatever guilt of this kind particular persons may contract, it may not become national.

Now in our dealing with this sin, as we have this advantage that we are not struggling with the violent impetus of a particular lust, appetite, or passion, which is commonly deaf to reason and expostulation, so, on the other hand, we labour under this difficulty; that they who are guilty of this sin, are commonly more ready to insist upon their own justification, than any other sort of sinners. It is a way that seems right, and they who walk in it say, *They have done no wickedness*; and not only so, but they are forward to censure and condemn those who allow not themselves the same latitude, as needlessly and superstitiously precise.

I should transgress the designed limits of this paper, if I should enter into the dispute concerning the perpetual obligation of the fourth commandment, which (as to the substance of it, the keeping of one day in seven holy to God) is I hope no dispute with us, since we are all agreed to pray to God to *have mercy upon us,* and *incline our hearts to keep this law.*

I shall therefore only in a few lines (that I may hasten to what I principally intend) endeavour to make out the divine appointment of the christian sabbath, as a day of holy rest in order to holy work, by these three steps.

(1.) It appears by the light of nature, that there must be some such day observed. If God is to be worshipped by us solemnly and in comfort, there must be some fixed and stated times for the doing of it, the designation of which is necessary both to preserve the thing itself, and to put a solemnity upon it.

The Gentiles had days set apart to the honour of their gods, which they spent accordingly in rest from worldly labour, and by the solemnities of their religion, looking upon those as peculiar days, distinguished from and dignified above other days. Does not even nature teach men thus to own God the Lord of time, and to constitute opportunities for the public solemn worship of him? Now if all people will thus walk in the name of their god, should not we walk in like manner, in the name of the Lord our God? Mic. 4. 5.

(2.) It appears by the Old Testament, that one day in seven should be thus religiously observed. It is plain that a sabbath was instituted from the beginning, it was a positive institution in paradise as marriage was; the former necessary to the preserving of the church and sacred fellowship, as the latter to the support of families and human fellowship, Gen. 2. 2, 3. When the scripture says expressly there, *that God rested on the seventh day,* and that *he blessed and sanctified it because he so rested;* we wrest the scripture, if we suppose it recorded there as a thing done long after. By this management the plainest evidence of scripture may be turned off and evaded: to suppose that sabbaths were not kept in the patriarchal age, because no mention is made of them in the history of that age is absurd; since we have a record of the institution of the sbbath in the beginning, and an account of the religious observation of a sabbath, before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, viz. when the manna was given, Exod. 16. 23, 26. As at the first planting of religion in the world, so now at the revival of it out of its ruins in Egypt, one of the first things taken care of is the sabbath, and it is spoken of not as a new institution, but as an old law, which, when Moses had notified the day to them, (they having lost their reckoning in Egypt) they are sharply rebuked for the violation of, v. 28. *How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?*

The first word of the fourth commandment *Remember the sabbath day,* plainly shews that it was the revival of an old commandment, which had been forgotten, viz. That one day in seven should be sanctified to God: it is the solemn declaration of an ancient institution and is of perpetual obligation, that the seventh-day, not the seventh from the creation, which in the revolution of so many ages, we cannot be infallibly certain of, but the seventh-day, after six days worldly labour, is the *Sabbath of the Lord our God,* and is so to be sanctified. And though God rested the seventh-day from the creation; yet in the fourth commandment it is not said he blessed the seventh-day, but he blessed the sabbath-day, or a sabbath-day (in that proportion of time) and sanctified it: and this part of the blessing of Abraham's seed comes upon the Gentiles through faith.

Very much stress was laid in the times of the Old Testament, upon the observation of the sabbath, more than on any institution purely ceremonial: and the Old Testament prophecies, that point at gospel times, make it part of the description of converted strangers, that they make conscience of keeping the sabbath, from polluting it, Isa. 56. 6.

(3.) It appears by the New Testament, that the first day of the week should be observed and sanctified as a christian-sabbath. It is evident to any who read the New Testament without prejudice,

[1.] That a weekly sabbath is to be religiously observed in the christian church. We not only find

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no repeal of the fourth commandment, in the New Testament, nor any reason for the repeal of it; but on the contrary we find it expounded by our Saviour, and vindicated from the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, as in other things they were profanely loose, so in this they were superstitiously strict. Several occasions Christ took to shew that works of necessity and mercy are no violations of the sabbath rest; as Luke 13. 14. Joh. 5. 18. 9. 14. and especially Mat. 12. 1, &c. Had the law of the fourth commandment been to expire presently, our Saviour would not have been so careful to explain it; but it is plain he designed to settle a point, which would afterwards be of use to his church, and to teach us, that our christian-sabbath, though, it is under the direction of the fourth commandment, yet, it is not under the arbitrary injunctions of the jewish elders.

Our Saviour has likewise told us, that the sabbath was made for men, and not for the Jews only; and that he himself was *Lord of the Sabbath-Day*, that is, that it should be in a special manner his day, and devoted to him. He likewise supposed the continuance of a sabbath, to be so religiously observed by his disciples, at the very time of the destruction of Jerusalem, which put a final period to all the peculiarities of the Jewish Œconomy, that he bids them pray that their then flight might not be in the winter, nor on the sabbath-day, Mat. 24. 20. And the Apostle, (Heb. 4. 9.) plainly speaks of a sabbath, or day of rest, which believers have now under the gospel, like that day of rest which God instituted, when he had finished the work of creation.

[2.] It is likewise evident, that the day which the christian church has in all ages observed and does still, which is commonly reckoned the first day of the week, is the day which it is the will of Christ we should observe as our christian sabbath. It is certain that the Apostles were authorized and appointed to teach the churches of Christ, those things pertaining to the kingdom of God, wherein he had instructed them; the Spirit was poured out upon them to enable them rightly and duly to execute their commission, so as to answer all the great ends of it. Now it is plain that the Apostles and first christians did religiously observe the first day of the week, as the day of their solemn assemblies for divine worship, (Acts 20. 7. 1 Cor. 16, 1, 2.) and that with a regard to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This they called, *The Lord's Day*, (Rev. 1. 10.) as a day that answers all the intentions of a weekly sabbath; as such it has been received and observed by the churches of Christ. *It is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it*, Ps. 118. 24.

What there was in the Old Testament sabbath, which was typical, has had and will have its accomplishment in the spiritual and eternal rest of true believers: but that which was the main scope of the fourth commandment, that the seventh day after six days labour, should be kept holy to God, remains still in full force. But now under the New Testament, a greater stress is laid upon the holy work of the day, than upon the holy rest, and upon the rest, only in order to the work and worship, and the ends of it. When the church was in its infancy and childhood, it was dealt with accordingly, a bodily rest was then mainly insisted on, as the sanctification of the sabbath, which was so called because it was a day of rest, for so Sabbath signifies. But now under the gospel the church is grown up to full age, and, therefore, now more notice is taken of the business to which the day is devoted; viz. Joy in God, (Ps. 118. 24.) Communion with Christ, (Joh. 20. 19, 26.) and with the Spirit, (Rev. 1. 10.) and with our fellow christians, Acts 20. 7. And as to the rest, this general rule is to be observed, that nothing be done to derogate from the solemnity and honour of the day, and to lay it common with other days, nor any thing to divert us from, or distract us in any part of the work of the day. Yet, still it is not improper to call it the christian sabbath, because it is a day of rest from the world, and rest in God.

Having thus endeavoured to set this matter in a true and convincing light, I come now to reason the case a little with the consciences of those who make light of the Lord's Day. Those I mean who spend it, or any part of it in idleness, sport, tipling, or secular business, and turn their backs upon the public worship of God in religious assemblies; or, if not that, yet, either wholly neglect, or very carelessly and superficially perform their secret and family worship. And O that I could offer something now, which by the grace of God might help to convince and awaken such!

I will take it for granted (sirs) that you have not abandoned religion, that you are not desirous to disengage yourselves from its sacred bonds, nor willing to disclaim its joys and hopes: you are not arrived to that desperate resolution of living without God in the world: no, it is not come to that with you. You have not renounced the christian faith, nor abjured your baptismal covenant, nor by searing your consciences, as with a hot iron, marked them for the Devil and Hell: what I shall say, will have little influence upon those who are of such a character as this: But *to you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men*, not to such incarnate Devils: I speak to those, who, I hope, have some sense of religion, and of whose consciences God has still some hold.

Give me leave therefore to recommend to your serious consideration, the two great intentions and designs of the Lord's Day, which are (as far as lies in you) defeated and frustrated by your profanation of it, and your constant neglect of the duties of it.

The Lord's Day was appointed to be kept holy and religiously observed.

I. For the glory and honour of God;

II. For the good and happiness of man, so that all those who profane the Lord's Day, do a great dishonour to God to whom it is dedicated, and no less an injury to themselves, for whose benefit and comfort it was intended.

I. In profaning the Lord's Day you sin against heaven, and put a daring affront upon the divine authority and grace. Here let me speak boldly, let me speak warmly

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warmly as an advocate for God; I beseech you consider seriously what I have to say, and give me your patient hearing, while I reason with you.

You are baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and it is your honour and privilege that you are so; you say you adhere to it, and you would not for all the world be unbaptized, nor renounce your Christian name. Suffer me then a little to expostulate with you upon the acknowledged principles of your baptism, which, I think, you are not true to, while you continue to profane the Lord's Day as you do.

1. Have you no regard to the Eternal God, even the Father, that made you and all the world? The sabbath was first ordained to be celebrated by the reasonable creatures in this lower world (for in the upper world they keep an everlasting sabbath) to the honour of the great Creator, as a standing memorial of the finishing of the work of creation; that in the observance of it we may give him praise, for the wonders we see in all the creatures, and may give him thanks for the favours and comforts we receive by them. This is specified in the fourth commandment, as the ground of that ancient institution, which bore date before the entrance of sin into the world.

The Author and Spring of all the movements of time justly claims to be the Lord of time, and he has wisely appointed one day in seven to be consecrated to him, as an acknowledgment that he is so, and that our times are both from his hand, and in his hand. And dare you sacrilegiously rob him of this tribute, and demand to have even this also, as well as the rest of the days of the week, at your own disposal, to be given away to the world and the flesh?

Consider (sirs) you are God's creatures, and the work of his hands; you are his reasonable creatures, the priests of the visible creation, the collectors of his praises, to gather them in from the inferior creatures, which do all praise him objectively, and to pay them in by actual adorations. For this noble purpose you were endued with noble powers, those of reason; you were taught more than the beasts of the earth, and were made wiser than the fowls of heaven. All the supports and comforts of your lives, are likewise the creatures of God's power, and the gifts of his providence; so that you are bound both in duty and gratitude to serve and praise him. And dare you then prostitute that time to the world and the flesh, which is consecrated to the honour of your great Lord, the author of your beings, the protector of your lives, and the giver of all your comforts? you do thus in effect say to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, like those impudent sinners, Job 21. 14. And *do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish creatures and unwise?* O faithless creatures and unjust!

In your idle walks on the Lord's Day, and the diversion you take abroad, while you find your own pleasure in them, I wonder how you can look either to the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the ornaments of either, and not be ashamed to think that when they observe their time of serving you, and contributing to your comfort, in the proper season of the day, the proper season of the year, according to the law of their Creator, you do not observe your time of serving God, and contributing to his praise, according to the law given you, but are playing abroad when you should be praying at home. The sun does the work of the day in its day, but you do not. The stork in the heavens knows her appointed time, and comes in her season to wait upon you; but you observe not the time God has appointed for your approaches to him. To say, can we not meditate, and praise our Creator, like Isaac, in the fields as well as in our closets, is no good reply to this reproof, unless your own hearts can witness for you, that indeed you do so, which I fear they cannot; for your walks are plainly chosen, to befriend your diversion by society, not to befriend your devotion by solitude.

When you spend any part of the Lord's Day in the ale-house or tavern, do not the good creatures of God, which there you abuse, upbraid you with the basest ingratitude, that when you have been receiving the comfort of those gifts of God's bounty, the rest of the days of the week, you grudge to spend the Lord's Day in humble and thankful acknowledgments of the goodness of God to the whole creation, and to you in particular. Do all God's works praise him every day, and will you think much this day, to join with his saints in blessing him? Ps. 145. 10.

Was it the will of God that his glorious rest from the work of creation, wherein the Eternal Mind took a complacency in the copies of its own wisdom, and the products of its own power, should be thus commemorated here on earth, by a holy rest every seventh day from worldly employments, while it is continually celebrated in heaven, by those blessed spirits there, who rest not day nor night from praising him? And will you in effect tell him to his face, that it does not deserve such a frequent and solemn commemoration? And is the will and law of the eternal God nothing with you? Is his authority and honour of so small account in your eyes? Shall the service of the flesh, to which you are not debtors, be preferred before the service of your God, to whom you are infinitely indebted.

You have your lives from God, your bodies, your souls, all your powers, and all your comforts, and therefore you ought to be his subjects, and to pay him tribute, you are his tenants, and must not withhold his rent; this is his tribute, this is his rent. Sabbath time is demanded as his part of your time; let this then that is his due be justly and faithfully paid him in full: for *will a man rob God?* Your receivings from him are rich and constant, grudge him not these poor returns in their season.

2. Have you no regard to the Lord Jesus who redeemed you, and that gave his life a ransom for many? The New Testament Sabbath, being observed on the first day of the week, is without doubt designed particularly for the honour of Christ, and to be celebrated as an abiding memorial of his resurrection from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and our accepted surety; for, as by dying he

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paid our debt, for he was delivered for our offences, so, by his resurrection he took our acquittance, for he was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4. 25. The advancement of that despised stone to be the head of the corner, was that which made this day remarkable, (Psal. 118. 22, 24.) and they who despise this dignified distinguished day, do in effect still trample upon that exalted stone—It is for the Redeemer's sake that it is called, *The Lord's Day*, an honourable title, and we ought to call it so, that we may shew we look upon it as *Holy of the Lord and honourable*, and may so honour it. It bears Christ's image, and his superscription, we ought, therefore, to render to him the things that are his.

You are called Christians; you profess relation to the blessed Jesus; you are baptized into his name, and wear his livery, and you say you hope to be saved by him; you are enrolled among his followers, and you have in his house, and within his walls a place and a name; and can you find in your hearts so treacherously, and so very disingenuously to alienate from him any part of that time which he claims a special property in? Shall he to whom you owe your all, be defrauded of that little which he demands from you? You name Christ's name, you do well; but you contradict yourselves, and will be found liars and dissemblers, if you dare to profane his day, and grudge to spend it in his service to his praise.

Let me beg of you seriously to consider how much you are indebted to the Redeemer; from what a bondage, to what a liberty, and at what an expense you were redeemed; think what were the kind intentions of the Redeemer's love, and what the blessed fruits of his undertaking, and you will see that you owe him even your own selves, all you are, all you have, all you can do, all little enough, and too little; and will you then grudge him the whole of his own day, which is instituted in remembrance of that blessed work, for which we are so much indebted, and should be ever studying what we shall render?

As the Old Testament sabbath was appointed to be a solemn memorial, not so much of the work of creation itself, as of the finishing of it; so the Christian sabbath was appointed, to preserve in remembrance Christ's resurrection, which gave the finishing stroke to his undertaking on earth. Now consider, if he had not finished his undertaking what had become of us; if he had left it, no other could have taken it up; if he that laid the foundation stone, as the author of our faith, had not brought forth the top-stone as the finisher of it, we had been undone, for ever undone; unworthy therefore, for ever unworthy art thou of an interest in, and benefit by this undertaking, if really thou make so light a matter as thou seemest to do of that weekly solemnity in which the remembrance of it is celebrated not only for the advancing of the Redeemer's honour, but for the advancing the Redeemer's designs and interests.

Let me therefore with all earnestness beseech you in the bowels of Christ, if you have any regard to the sweet and blessed name of JESUS, into which you were baptized, that name which is above every name, and which is as ointment poured forth; that name which is your strong tower, and your best plea for the best blessings, have a conscientious regard to that day which bears his name. As ever you hope to see the face of Christ with comfort, and expect he shall stand your friend, in the day of your extremity; testify your veneration for him now, by a veneration for his day, and dare not to break in upon that sacred rest, which is instituted to his honour, nor trifle away any of those precious hours, which he expects and requires should be employed in his service.

Shall we think one day in seven too much, when eternity itself will be too little, to be spent in the joyful contemplations, and thankful praises, of the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? Do the holy angels attend the Redeemer with their constant adorations, and praise him without intermission; and shall we who are more immediately interested in, and benefited by his undertaking, convert to other purposes any of those few hours of the week which are consecrated to his praise! Is our Lord Jesus continually appearing in heaven for us, always mindful of our concerns there, and shall we make thus light of his glory, and care so little to appear before him, and before the world, for him? Might but the love of Christ command us, and that love constrain us, surely we should love the Lord's Day; for his sake whose day it is, would bid it welcome, and call it a delight.

3. Have you no regard to the blessed Spirit of grace, into whose name also you were baptized, and in honour of whom the christian sabbath is celebrated? The first day of the week was observed by the disciples as a day of solemn meeting, from the very day that Christ rose, for we find them together again that day seven-night probably by his appointment, Job. 20. 26. The day of Pentecost that year fell on the first day of the week, and on that day they were together in a solemn meeting, all with one accord in one place, when the Spirit descended upon them, Acts 2. 1, &c.

Now the pouring out of the Spirit was the great promise of the New Testament, as the incarnation of Christ was of the Old Testament, and was a gift to the Church no less necessary and valuable than the resurrection of Christ. He rose to carry on the good work in us, without which we could have no benefit by his mediation. The influences and operations of the Spirit are as necessary to our salvation, as the satisfaction and intercession of the Son. When Christ rose he retired to heaven, to receive his kingdom and to prepare our's: but when he sent the Spirit, he did in effect return to his Church on earth, for thus the want of his bodily presence was supplied abundantly to the advantage of his disciples. It was expedient for us that he should go away, that he might send the Comforter, Joh. 16. 7.

To the descent of the Spirit we owe those gifts of tongues, which spread the Gospel to distant nations, and to our's among the rest; and those inspired writings which propagated the Gospel to after ages, and will

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will perpetuate it to the end of time: without this the earth, even within the Church's pale, had been still a wilderness and a barren land; for it is only the pouring out of the Spirit upon us from high, that turns the wilderness into a fruitful field, Isa. 32. 15. To the gift of the holy Ghost is owing the conviction of conscience, the regeneration of the soul, its progress and advances in holiness, and all those consolations of God, which are our songs in the house of our pilgrimage: had not the Spirit been given to apply the redemption, we had never been the better for Christ's purchase of it.

Now it is in remembrance of these gifts given to men, after the Redeemer was ascended on high, that we celebrate the Lord's Day; and therefore to the right sanctification of it, it is necessary that we be in the Spirit, (Rev. 1. 10.) that is, that we compose ourselves into a spiritual frame, and submit ourselves to the Spirit's workings. The greatest honour we can do to the Spirit, is to walk after the Spirit, we then give glory to the Holy Ghost, when we diligently attend to that word, which was given by his inspiration, and lay our souls under the commanding power and influence of it; when we pray in the Holy Ghost, under the conduct of the spirit of adoption, teaching us to cry Abba Father: and when we carefully hearken to the checks, and follow the dictates of a well-informed conscience; thus the sabbath must be sanctified to the praise of the Blessed Spirit.

And is it nothing to you who profane the Lord's Day, that thereby you reflect dishonour upon the Eternal Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and who with the Father and the Son, together is and ought to be worshipped and glorified on the Lord's Day? You struggle against him who is given to strive with you for your good; you check your monitor, you resist your sanctifier, and grieve your comforter.

Do you not indeed think it worth your while to spend so many hours every week, as the working part of the Lord's Day amounts to, in the joyful thankful commemoration of so great a blessing bestowed upon the Church, which still remains a real benefit to all its ministers, and to all its members, and is the quickening root of all their fruitfulness and flourishing?

It was on the first day of the first week of time, that the Blessed Spirit moved upon the face of the waters to produce a world, a world of beauty and plenty, out of confusion and emptiness; and it was upon the first day of another week, that he descended on the Apostles, and inspired them to produce a Church; justly, therefore is the first day of the week consecrated to the honour of that divine person, to whom we owe both our being, and our new-being, in order to our well-being. Profane not then that which is thus sanctified, to the praise of the great sanctifier. How can you expect the comfort of his sacred influences, if thus you violate and break in upon his sacred interests: our Saviour speaks of an affront put upon the Holy Ghost as more criminal, more dangerous, and of more fatal consequence to the sinner, than an affront put upon the Lord Jesus himself, Mat. 12. 31, 32. not as if every sin against the Holy Ghost, contracted the indelible stain of an unpardonable sin, God forbid! but it is intimated that there is a peculiar malignity and provocation in those sins, which put a slight upon the Blessed Spirit, as this certainly does, which not only profanes the time which is sacred to his honour, but neglects the opportunity of receiving his promised gifts, in the way of instituted ordinances.

If there be, therefore, any fellowship of the Spirit, value it, improve it, be not strangers to it. As ever you look for any comfort from the Holy Ghost, living or dying, here or hereafter, call it not a task and a burthen, and a weariness, to separate yourselves from the world one day in a week, to an attendance upon the Spirit, that you may give honour to him, and may receive grace and comfort from him: but rejoice in those stated opportunities, not only of professing but of improving your faith in the Holy Ghost.

You see (brethren) how great and honourable, how holy and reverend these names are by which we plead with you, and beseech you not to profane the Lord's Day. I am willing to hope that in what you do, you intend not an affront to the eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; you still honour God with your lips, and call yourselves by his name; but whether you intend it so or no, you see it is with good reason so interpreted. Every contempt of the Day of the Lord, is, if not designedly, yet constructively, a contempt of him who is the Lord of the Day; and so he will resent it, and reckon for it, for in the matters of his worship the Lord whose name is *Jealous is a jealous God.* I beseech you, therefore, (brethren) for the sake of the blessed God, whose you are, and whom you are bound to serve, and to whom you are accountable, if you have any respect to the honour of his name, and the interests of his kingdom, and desire of his favour and grace, or any dread of his wrath and curse, *Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, for it is the sabbath of the Lord your God.* Do not alienate to the world and the flesh, any of those precious minutes, which he challenges a special property in; but by a double care and diligence for the future, endeavour to make restitution of those, which by your neglects hitherto you have embezzled. God fills up your time with mercy, look upon yourselves therefore, as bound in gratitude, to fill up his time with duty, so shall God have the praise, and you the comfort.

II. In profaning the Lord's Day, you sin against your own souls, and throw away that good and benefit, which is designed both to others and to yourselves by the institution of it. Our Saviour has told us that *the sabbath was made for man,* and it is reckoned among the favours God shewed to his Israel, that he made known unto them his holy Sabbath, Neh. 9. 14. And if the Old Testament sabbath was so great a privilege, much more is our Christian Sabbath so, for the New Testament begins with a proclamation of good will toward men. If the ministration of death was glorious, much more the ministration of the Spirit; we solicit you for your own good, and beg of you to consider for what ends the Lord's Day was appointed in your

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favours, and if you will but consult yourselves, and the comfort of your own souls, you will study to comply with the intentions of it; if thou be wise herein, thou shalt be wise for thyself.

1. The Lord's day was appointed for the benefit of the Church and Christian societies. It was wisely designed that by the religious observance of that day, and a visible difference made between it and other days, a face of religion and godliness might be kept up, and a profession of christianity maintained, published, and propagated. This is the shew of that substance; and though the shew without the substance, the form of godliness without the power of it will not avail particular persons that rest in it; yet, it is for the advantage of the Church in general, and helps to support it in the world.

It would have been hard for all Christian Churches, by a common consent among themselves only, to have agreed upon such a badge and token of the communion of saints, as the solemnizing of the Lord's Day is; and therefore the wisdom of the church's head and lawgiver has appointed it. Thus still the sabbath is a sign, a distinguishing sign, as it was to Israel of old, Exod. 31. 13. In the primitive times, when a Christian was examined by the heathen judges, *Hast thou kept the Lord's Day?* His Answer was, *I am a Christian;* intimating, that being a Christian he durst not do otherwise. By this might all men know who were Christ's disciples; it was one of the badges of their profession; so that in sanctifying the Lord's Day, we testify our relation to, and concurrence with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's. Since all Christians cannot possibly meet in one and the same place, by meeting thus on one and the same day, and that the Lord's Day; they testify their communion with each other in faith, hope, and love, and that though they are many, yet they are one. Those, therefore, who violate and profane the Lord's Day, do as much as lies in them to thwart and defeat this intention.

I beseech you consider it seriously, you are baptized into the great body, and by virtue of that you are called Christians, and it is your honour; but unworthy, for ever unworthy are you of that honour, while you manifestly do disservice to the Christian name and cause, stain the beauty of its profession, stop the progress of its interest, and endanger the cutting off of the entail of it, by putting the Lord's Day upon a level with other days, and in effect, trampling upon it as a common thing: hereby you pluck up some of the best ranges of the Church's pale, and lay all in common. Take away the conscience of sabbath sanctification, and you open a gap, at which all religion quickly runs out, and an inundation of wickedness breaks in of course; they who make no difference between God's day and other days, will not long make any difference between God's name and other names, and between God's book and other books. If Sabbaths be generally neglected, bibles and ministers, and other institutions will not be duly prized; and if these hedges of religion be broken down, religion itself will soon become an easy prey to the boar of the wood, and the wild beast of the forest.

And is it nothing to you whether the Lord Jesus has a Church in the world or no! And whether his religion has a place, and an interest among men or no? Are you indeed in confederacy with those who have said "Come and let us cut off the Christian Religion, that the name of it may be no more in remembrance," Ps. 83. 3, 4. Certainly, if all should make as light of the Lord's Day as you do, it would come to this in a little time; the light of the Gospel would be put out, its coal would be quenched, and there would remain to it neither root nor branch; if these out-works be betrayed to the enemy, the main forts cannot long be maintained: but the gates of Hell will prevail against the Church.

Let me, therefore, beg of you for the Church's sake, as you value its being and welfare, its continuance and prosperity in the world, if you have any regard to its bleeding cause, to its dying interests, and would help to revive it; do what you can to support the honour of the Lord's Day. Let not Sion's friends deal treacherously with her, nor betray her to those who seek her ruin; let them not join with her enemies in mocking at her sabbaths: for if those fall into contempt, and the sanctification of them be disused, she soon sits solitary, becomes as a widow, and all her beauty is departed from her. I refer to these complaints, Lam. 1. 1, 2, 6, 7. you would willingly see the good of Jerusalem, and religion in a flourishing state; help then to maintain the honour of God's sabbaths, and thereby shew before the churches your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ.

2. The Lord's Day was appointed for the weaning of us from this present world, and the taking off of our affections from the things of it, by giving a stop and pause once a week to our secular pursuits; and we lose this benefit of it if we neglect it, and violate the appointed rest of that day. It is certain that much of the power of godliness lies in our living above the world, and being dead to it; those are Christians indeed who look upon the things that are seen with a holy indifference and contempt, as those who know their felicity and portion lie in the things that are not seen.

But it would be very hard, and even impossible to attain to this heavenly mind, if we were to be constantly in the crowd and hurry of worldly employments and recreations, and in an uninterrupted converse with the things of sense and time: if every day were to be entirely for the world, without any intermission, every thought and intent of the heart will be for it too, and the whole soul will be plunged and lost in it.

And, therefore, he who knows our frame, and that we are, in mind as well as body, dust, apt to move toward the dust of this earth, and to mingle with it; He who knows where we dwell, even where Satan's seat is, the Prince of this world, (Rev. 2. 13.) has wisely and graciously appointed us some rests from our worldly pursuits. His Providence has appointed us the natural rest of every evening, which calls us in from

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from our work and labour, and gives us some advantageous minutes (if we have but wisdom to improve them) for retirement into ourselves, and reflection upon ourselves, for communing with our own hearts; and meditating on God and his word: but this is not all, his grace has also provided for us the instituted rest of every Sabbath, which gives us a longer breathing time, That while our hands rest from the business of the world our minds may rest from the cares of it, and so we may be saved from the inordinate love of it.

Six days thou shalt labour and do all thy work, all that work that must be done for the body thou carriest about with thee, that that may be supported, and for the world thou livest in, that thou mayest pass comfortably through it: but thou must shortly put off this body, and bid adieu to this world; and, therefore, one day in seven thou shalt rest from this work and labour, and lay it aside, that thou mayest recal thy thoughts and affections from the world and the body; and so learn to sit loose to them, and by these frequent acts confirm the habit of heavenly-mindedness. By our weekly retirements from the world, it will be made the more easy to us always to live above the world as those who are strangers and sojourners in it.

And do you not find (sirs) that there is need of such pauses, such parentheses as these? Do you not find the world encroaching upon you, and gaining ground in your hearts? Do you not experience the insinuating nature of these present things, even of care and toil about them, which are strangely bewitching; and that by constant converse with the things of the earth, we grow in love with them and become earthy? And will you not then take the advantage which this institution gives you, to recover the ground you lose all the week, by a total cessation of worldly business on the Lord's Day? By a close application of yourselves to the proper business and pleasure of the Lord's Day, you will find yourselves so well employed, and so well entertained by your religion, that you will look with a holy contempt upon the employments and entertainments of the world.

Let me add under this head, that your accustoming of yourselves to a strict retirement from the world on the Lord's Day, will make your final removal out of it at death more easy and less formidable. Brethren, you are dying, your souls are continually in your hands, death will shortly seal up your hands, it will cut off all your purposes, and put a full stop to all your pursuits; yet a little while and the place that knows you will know you no more; yet a little while and you must bid an eternal farewel to your houses and lands, your farms and merchandise, and this will be a hard task, if you never knew what it was to intermit these cares and pleasures. If you will not think it worth your while to leave them at the bottom of the hill, while you go up to worship with a purpose to return to them again, as Abraham, (Gen. 22. 5.) what a difficulty will it be to you to leave them, not to return to them again? You cannot find in your hearts to keep from your shops or sports, to lay aside your worldly business and diversions, one day in seven: How then will you persuade yourselves willingly to quit all at death, which yet you must do whether you will or no. We must forsake these things shortly; to prepare us for which, it is good for us, at least, as often as God hath appointed us, to forget them now, and lay aside the thoughts of them. If we would make a virtue of the necessity we shall be under of leaving the world when we die, let us make a necessity of the virtue of retiring from the world, and putting off the care and business of it every Lord's Day.

3. The Lord's Day was appointed for our communion and fellowship with God, with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ by the Spirit, and we are enemies to ourselves, if we neglect to improve it for this purpose; we are on that day not only called off from the world, but called up into the *holiest*, into which, by the blood of Jesus, we have access with humble boldness. We are invited from on high, *Come up hither*, to the highest degrees of comfort and honour that man on earth is capable of, and will you chuse to tarry below, to converse with earthly things, when you are invited to a conversation with things heavenly and divine? How much soever this may seem a paradox to those who are strangers to the life of God, and to the power of Godliness, all who are serious and devout know what it is.

This is a day in which we are with all humility to make visits to God, and with all reverence and observance to receive visits from him, to hear what he speaks to us out of his word, and to speak to him by prayer. This is the proper conversation of that day, for this it was instituted and intended; and, therefore, to spend it in idle visits, and in impertinent talk, either foolish in itself, and which would be culpable any day, or, at least, in that which is foreign to the business of this day, is to put a great slight upon God Almighty, and upon the provision he has made for our communion with him. It is as if a Prince or some great or wise man should invite you into his company, offer to entertain you with the most pleasant and edifying discourse, and appoint a time and place for the interview, and you should leave him, and turn your back upon him to go and talk with some idle beggar or buffoon at the door; would not this justly be construed an intolerable affront? Would you not blush to think that you should ever be guilty of such a piece of rudeness? Would you not expect to be forbidden the house and presence of the person you had thus slighted? Yet you do ten thousand times worse than this, when you trifle away that day in common conversation and business, which God has appointed you to spend in communion with himself, according as your opportunities are.

The whole life of a Christian ought to be a life of communion with God, our eyes must be ever toward the Lord; we must walk with him, and set him always before us, and in all our ways we must acknowledge him. Now in order to the keeping up of this habitual regard to God, wherein consists so much of the power of godliness; it is requisite that we be frequent and

constant

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constant at stated times in the solemn acts of devotion. We contract an acquaintance with our friends, and an affection for them by being often in their company, interchanging knowlege and love: thus our acquaintance with God is cultivated by religious worship, and without that it withers and dies, and comes to nothing. The divine life is supported and maintained by the receiving and digesting of the bread of life, and no otherwise.

Communion with God is in short this: it is to admit into our minds the discoveries God has been pleased to make of himself, and of his will and grace, and to dwell upon them in our thoughts, and to make returns of agreeable affections and motions of soul suited to those discoveries. It is to delight ourselves in the pleasing contemplation of the beauty, bounty, and benignity of our God, and to employ ourselves in the pious exercises of faith, love, and resignation to him, and in the joyful praises of his name.

And is one day in seven too much to be spent in such work as this? Or shall we break in upon the bounds which the divine law has set about that mountain on which God has promised to come down,—and lay it in common with the wilderness? Should we not rather wish that every day were a sabbath day, and that we might always dwell in God's House, with them who are there still praising him?

If we did indeed love God, as we ought, with all our heart, and soul, we would not say, when we have been attending upon him two or three hours in public worship, now we have sure done enough for this day, when we are invited, encouraged and appointed still to continue our communion with him, still to feast upon his holy word, and repeat our addresses at the throne of his grace in our closets and families? Would we be so soon weary of an intimate conversation with a friend we love and take pleasure in? No, with such a friend we contrive how to prolong the time of conversation, and when the hours of sitting together are expired, we stand together, and, as those who are loth to part, bid often farewell, and we add to this a walk together for further discourses; *Is this thy kindness to thy friend*, and wilt thou say of communion with thy God, *Behold what a weariness is it?* and contrive excuses to contract it, to break it off, or cut it short?

Reading the holy bible and other good books, repetition, catechizing, singing psalms, praying, praising, profitable discourse; these are the exercises, which, if they meet with a heart piously and devoutly affected toward God, will furnish us with such a pleasing variety of good works to fill up those hours of the Lord's Day which are not spent in public worship, or in works of necessity and mercy, and will turn so much to our advantage, that we shall complain of nothing so much as the speedy returns of the sabbath evening, and the shadows thereof. Did we call the sabbath a Delight, as we ought, and the work of it a pleasure; we would be ready to say, *Sun, stand thou still upon this Gibeon*, let the day be prolonged, and the minutes of it doubled, for *it is good to be here*, here let us *make tabernacles:* or rather let us endeavour by the grace of God to do a double work in a single day, and long to be there where we shall spend an everlasting sabbath in communion with God, a sabbath that will have no night at the end of it, nor any week-day to come after it.

You who trifle away sabbath time, I beseech you consider this seriously; *Seemeth it a small thing to you, that the God of Israel* has *separated you to bring you near to himself?* That he has not only admitted you into covenant, but invited you into communion with himself? And is this a favour that must go a begging with you, and that after all the court it makes to you, you will not be persuaded to accept of? And shall the conversation of a vain companion in an ale-house or tavern, the entertainments of a coffee-house, or an idle walk into the fields, be preferred before the honour and pleasure of communion with God in Christ? And will you indeed chuse these broken cisterns rather than the fountain of living waters; these lying vanities rather than your own mercies? God in mercy open your eyes and shew you your folly! Would David rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness? And will you rather be door-keepers, slaves, and drudges in the tents of wickedness, than dwell in liberty, ease, and honour in the house of your God?

O that I could now prevail with you to look upon it as your main business on the Lord's Day, from the beginning to the end of the day, to converse with God, and to mind it accordingly. If God will condescend to meet with you in your secret, as well as public addresses to him, and has appointed you a set time for them; be not you so rude to him, and so unjust to yourselves as to neglect them, or make but a short and slighting business of them.

4. The Lord's Day was appointed for our furtherance and increase in holiness, and the carrying on of the work of sanctification in us. In the due performance of the work of the Lord's Day, and the due observance of its rest; in order thereunto there is not only the pleasure of maintaining communion with God, but the real benefit of increasing our conformity to him. This profit we shall have, if we pray to him and keep his ordinances; while thus we behold the glory of the Lord, we are through grace changed into the same image. By worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness we come to be partakers of his holiness, and so the beauty of the Lord our God is upon us. And is it not worth while to oblige ourselves to the strictest and most careful observance of the Lord's Day, in prospect of those advantages by it?

The Sabbath Day is a market day, a harvest day for the soul: it is an opportunity,—it is time fitted for the doing of that which cannot be done at all, or not so well done, at another time: now, if this day be suffered to run waste, and other business minded than that which is the proper work of the day, our souls cannot but be miserably impoverished and neglected, and the vineyards, we are made keepers of, cannot but be like the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void

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void of understanding. While you make no conscience of keeping the sabbath day, and improving the precious minutes of it, no wonder that you are ignorant in the things of God, fools, or at least but babes in knowledge, for that is the time of getting understanding: no wonder that your lusts and corruptions are so strong as they are, and you so unable to resist Satan's temptations,—your graces so weak, and you so unready to every good word and work,—for when you should be furnishing yourselves with what is needful for the support of your spiritual life, and the carrying on of your spiritual warfare; you are doing something else that is not only foreign and impertinent, but prejudicial and inconsistent.

Solomon has long since pronounced it not only as the sentence of a wise king, but of a righteous God, that he who sleeps or plays in harvest, is a *son that causeth shame*, and when he *begs in winter, he shall have nothing*. This is your character, and this, if you do not repent and amend your doings, will be your case. If at last you perish eternally, under the power of a vain and carnal mind, and go down to hell in impenitence and unbelief, your contempt and profanation of the Lord's Day will greatly aggravate your condemnation; because your due improvement of that sacred day would have been a means to prevent your coming to that place of torment, without a messenger sent to you from the dead.

Sirs, it is better to think of this now, when lost sabbaths may be redeemed by an after care and diligence, than remember it in the bottomless pit, when the reflection upon it will but pour oil into the flames, and it will be too late to retrieve the precious hours that you are now so prodigal of. O what a cutting, what a killing remembrance will it be hereafter, to think if I had spent that time on the Lord's Day in reading and meditation, in prayer and praise, and the study of the scriptures, and other religious exercises, public, private, and secret, which I spent in tipling, or sporting, or working at my calling, or in idle or unprofitable conversation, I might have got that knowledge and grace, and kept up that communion with God, which would not only have prevented my misery in this land of darkness, but would have prepared me for the inheritance of the saints in light! If I had been as eager to get wisdom, as I was to get wealth, and as solicitous and industrious to please God, as I was to gratify my own sensual appetite, and to recommend myself to a vain world, I might have been eternally happy, and equal to the angels of light, who am now likely to be for ever miserable, a companion with devils, and a sharer with them in their endless pains and horrors.

Then, O then, thou wouldest give a thousand worlds, if thou hadst them, for one of those days of the Son of Man thou art now so prodigal of. But the unpassable gulph between thee and that grace which is now offered thee, will then be immoveably fixt, the bridge of mercy will then be drawn, and the door of hope will be shut for ever. Sabbaths cannot then be recalled, nor will the offers of life be made thee any more? now God calls and thou wilt not hear, then thou shalt call and he will not hear. Thou art now called once a week to rest; to rest from the world, and rest in God: But thou callest even this rest a weariness, and snuffest at it, justly, therefore, will he swear in his wrath, that thou shalt never enter into that rest of which this is a type, and if thou be shut out from it, thy condition will be for ever restless.—Surely thy heart is desperately hardened, if this consideration make no impression on thee.

5. The Lord's Day was appointed to be an earnest and sign of our everlasting rest; the rest that remains for the people of God. It is intended to remind us of heaven, to fit us for heaven, and to give some comfortable pledges and foretastes of the joys and glories of that blessed state, to all those who have their conversation in heaven, and their affections set upon things above. These are the days of heaven, and if heaven be an everlasting sabbath, surely sabbaths are a heaven upon earth, in them the *Tabernacle of God is with men.*

And have you no value for eternal life, (sirs,) no concern about it? Is heaven nothing to you, or not worth the thinking of? Do you indeed despise the pleasant land, and prefer Egypt's garlic and onions, before Canaan's milk and honey, and a mess of pottage before such a birthright and the privileges of it? Your profanation and contempt of the Lord's Day plainly says that you do so, and according to your choice you shall have your lot, *so shall your doom be.*

You say you hope to be saved, but what ground have you for those hopes, while you plainly shew that you neglect this great salvation, by your neglect to commemorate Christ's resurrection, by which it was wrought out, and your neglect to improve the means of grace, by which you are prepared for it? If you had indeed any good hope of eternal life, you would not think much to spend one day in seven, in the joyful contemplation of it, and in getting yourselves ready for it.

You say you hope to go to heaven, but what pleasure can you take in the expectations of an everlasting sabbath, and of the employments and enjoyments of that world, when you are so soon weary of these short sabbaths, which are types of that, and are ready to say *when will they be gone?* What pleasure can it be to you to be for ever with the Lord, to whom it is a pain and a penance to be an hour or two with him now? What happiness will it be to you to dwell in his house, and to be still praising him in heaven, who, by your good-will would be never praising him on earth, but grudge the few minutes that are so employed. Heaven will not be heaven to a sabbath-breaker, for there is no idle company, no vain sports, no foolish mirth or unprofitable chat there: and these are his delights now which he prefers before that communion with God, which is both the work and bliss of that world! All who shall go to heaven hereafter begin their heaven now, as in other things, so, particularly, in their cheerful conscientious observance of the Lord's Day.

And now lay all this together, and then tell me if there be not a great deal of reason why you should keep

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keep holy the Sabath day, *call it a delight, holy of the Lord,* and therefore truly honourable, and why you should therefore honour and sanctify him on that day; not doing your own ways but his; not finding your own pleasure, but aiming to please God; not speaking your own words as on other days, but speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Isa. 58. 13.

Can the entanglements of custom, company, carnal pleasure, or worldly profit be more powerful with you than all those sacred cords and bonds? Can the pleasing of a customer, the obliging of a friend, much less the gratifying of a base lust balance the displeasing of God, the dishonouring of Christ, and the wronging of your own souls? I beseech you to consider it seriously, and be wise for yourselves.

After these considerations which I have urged, surely I need not insist upon any other; I am confident the reigning love of God in your hearts, and a deep and serious concern about your precious souls and their eternal welfare, will furnish you with considerations sufficient to oblige you to as much strictness and care in the sanctification of the Lord's Day, as the word of God requires, and as is necessary to answer the intentions of the institution: and more than this we do not insist on. Think much of that of the Pharisees, which though blasphemously misapplied to the Saviour, was grounded upon a great truth. *This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath Day,* John 9. 16.

Will it be to any purpose to suggest this further consideration to you? That the way to prosper in your affairs all the week, and to have the blessing of God upon you in them, is to make conscience of the Lord's Day. That truly great and good man, the Lord Chief Justice Hales, writes very solemnly to his children: "I have found by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observance of the duties of the Lord's Day, hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments the week following. This I write (saith he) not lightly or inconsiderately, but upon long and sound observation and experience."*

Shall I remind you how much it will be for your credit with all wise and good people? Those who honour God he will honour. Shall I tell you with what comfort you may lie down at night in the close of a Sabbath, after you have carefully done the work of the day in its day? Yea, thou *shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.* Especially, think how sweet and easy your reflections upon well-spent sabbaths will be when you come to die, and with what pleasure you will then look forward upon the everlasting sabbath you hope to keep within the veil.

Wonder not that I am thus earnest with you in this matter; I see how much depends upon it, and I persuade as one who desires and hopes to prevail with you; let me not be disappointed, as you value the glory of your Creator, the honour of your Redeemer, and your own comfort and happiness in both worlds. I beseech you *Remember the Sabbath Day,* the Christian sabbath *to keep it holy.* Most certainly true that saying is, which I have somewhere met with; *That the stream of all religion runs either deep or shallow, according as the banks of the sabbath are kept up or neglected.*

* Lord Hales Contemplations, vol. I. p. 323.

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TO AN

UNGOVERNED TONGUE.

THE criminal we are now dealing with, is pronounced by an inspired writer, *An unruly evil, full of deadly poison,* (James 3. 8.) and, which is a very great discouragement to any attempt for the reformation of it, it is there said, *That the tongue can no man tame:* not that it is impossible for men to govern their own tongues, but it is extremely difficult, and next to impossible, to reclaim and reform the extravagances of other people's tongues. And yet though no man can tame this unruly evil, doubtless, the almighty grace of God can. With *men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible;* even this. And that grace, though not tied to any methods in its operations, yet, ordinarily, makes use of the endeavours of men, as means to accomplish and effect its purposes.

Against this Goliah therefore, we go forth to battle, though armed only with a sling and a stone, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom it hath defied; leaving the success of the attempt to him who made man's mouth, and is alone able to new make it, as he certainly does, wherever he gives a new heart.

And we will first mention particularly the most common and daring extravagancies of an ungoverned tongue, and severally shew the evil of them; designing and endeavouring thereby to confirm the innocent, and, especially, to reform the guilty: and then we will, in some general directions, offer something toward the cure of these epidemical diseases. And God grant that this labour may not be altogether in vain!

1. Profane swearing is one of the common transgressions, or rebellions rather, of an ungoverned ill-governed tongue. A sin so common, that in most places it is become the vulgar dialect of all sorts of persons, with whose poisonous breath the air itself seems to be infected; and yet a sin so exceeding sinful, that the tongue

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tongue is therein set against the Heavens, (Ps. 73. 9.) insults over and tramples upon that which is most sacred and honourable.

The malignity of this sin lies especially in the prostituting of that solemn appeal, which by an oath is made, to God's knowledge and justice, to the most impertinent and trivial purposes. Devout and religious swearing, when we are duly called to be sworn, is an ordinance of God, whereby we give unto him the glory due unto his name, as an omniscient, true, and righteous God. Profane swearing is a scornful and insolent contempt of that ordinance, treading it under foot, as a common thing, and thereby doing despite to him, for whose honour it is intended. It is a sacrilegious alienating of those forms of speech which are consecrated to the glory of God, and turning them to a profane and wicked use; like Belshazzar's polluting the vessels of the temple, by gracing his drunken revels with them, which filled the measure of his iniquity. It is trifling and jesting with that, which in its own nature is awful and reverend; and which ought at all times to be treated and attended to with the greatest seriousness.

Some accustom themselves wholly to this language of Hell; all their discourse is corrupted by it. They cannot talk with you about business, nor tell you a story, nor give you an answer to the most common question, but almost every other word must be an oath. It is so familiar to them, that it passes altogether unregarded; charge them with it, and they will tell you in the next breath, they do not know that they swore.

Others, with whom it is not altogether so common, yet think it no harm now and then when they are in a passion, or speak earnestly, or when they are in company with those to whom they know it is agreeable, to "rap out an oath," (as they call it) and perhaps, to multiply oaths; and by these frequent acts, at length they contract a habit, and become as bad as the worst. It may be, some swear under pretence of gaining credit, nobody will believe them unless they swear what they say; and I know no wise man will believe them the sooner for it; for he that can dispense with the sin of profane swearing, which he gets nothing by, I fear will not boggle much at the sin of wilful lying; especially, when any thing is to be got by it. Others swear under pretence of striking an awe upon their inferiors, nobody will fear them unless they swear at them; that is, they would rather be dreaded and shunned, as roaring lions and ranging bears, than respected and honoured as wise, sober, and religious men, who make conscience of what they say and do, even when they are ever so much provoked.

And there are many who are such hearty well-wishers to this sin, that though they have not yet learned to swear distinctly, and in plain English, for fear of the censure, either of the law, or of their friends, or of their own consciences; yet they venture to lisp this language, and have the Sibboleth of an oath, upon every occasion, at their tongue's end; though it be not swearing at large, and in express terms, it is the abridgment of it; it is swearing in short-hand: they have learnt to contract wicked words, and to disguise them by half words, which, as they have the resemblance of profane swearing, take rise from it, and border upon it, are bad words, and at the best, are idle words, for which they must give account in the Judgment; and being more than yea, yea, and nay, nay, more than bare affirmations and negations, they come of evil, Mat. 5. 37. No wise man will say he-knows-not-what, or that which has no sense at all; and no good man will say that which he knows has the appearance of evil, and borders upon a bad sense.

And now, O that this paper might seasonably fall into the hands of the swearer, the common swearer, and the more cautious one, and might (by the blessing of God) be an effectual and happy means to convince and reform both the one and the other, before the flying roll which carries the curse, (which we read of as the swearer's doom, Zech. 5. 3, 4.) come into their houses, or which is worse, into their souls, to consume them; that is a roll which cannot be slighted and thrown by, as I suppose this paper will.

You ask sometimes what evil there is in swearing? Why so much ado should be made about a common form of speech, and a man made an offender for a word? You plead, that it hurts nobody, words are but wind.

But you will not say so, if you can but be persuaded seriously to weigh the following considerations, and to fix them in your minds.

1. Consider what an enmity there is, in profane swearing, to the Blessed God, and what an indignity is done by it to his glorious and fearful name. Would it not be justly interpreted a very high affront to a magistrate, though a man like yourselves, if you should send for him in all haste,—to keep the peace, to decide a controversy, to seize a criminal, or to do any act of his office; and when he comes, it is all ludicrous, and a jest, and you intend nothing but to make a fool of him, and to expose him and his authority to contempt and ridicule? How would such an intolerable abuse be resented among men, especially if it were often repeated? Yet just such an affront, a daring affront, does the insolent swearer put upon God Almighty; making his truth, justice, and omniscience to attend all the extravagancies of an ungoverned passion, and an unbridled tongue. And the affront is so much the worse, because it reflects upon his government, profanes his crown, disgraces the throne of his glory, vilifies his judgment-seat, and attempts to make it mean and contemptible, and thereby to render it questionable.

And is there no harm in this? Whence can this proceed but from that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and from a rooted antipathy to him, and to his dominion? To this poisonous fountain the Psalmist traces all these bitter streams, (Ps. 139. 20.) *Thine enemies take thy name in vain.* It cannot be imputed either to the lusts of the flesh, or the lusts of the eye, or the pride of life; this is a forbidden fruit that neither is good for food nor pleasant to the eye, nor at all to be desired to make one wise, or bespeak one so; the sin-

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ner is not led to it by the love of pleasure, or the hope of any gain or reward; it can, therefore, proceed from nothing else but a spirit of contradiction to God Almighty, a contempt of his honour, and a hatred of his government. This sin, as much as any other, seems to have taken occasion from the commandment, and to have put forth itself purposely in defiance of the divine law; so that it may be questioned whether there would have been such a sin as profane swearing, if it had not been prohibited by the third commandment. Now this renders the sin exceeding sinful, and adds rebellion to it; and the swearer being a transgressor without cause, (as the Psalmist speaks, Ps. 25. 3.) is a sinner without excuse, and sins purely for sinning' sake.

This is excellently expressed by our divine Poet, Mr. Herbert.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain,
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse:
Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain,
But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice
Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing:
Were I an Epicure, I could hate swearing.

And thinkest thou this, O man, whoever thou art that thus affrontest the majesty, ridiculest the government, and defiest the judgment of the eternal God, that thou shalt go unpunished? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* He is jealous for the honour of his own name, and will not see it trampled upon and made a bye-word, as it is by every profane swearer. You would resent it, if your names should thus be turned into a proverb, and jested with by every idle fellow: and what then will God do for his great name, which is thus abused? Shall he not visit for these things? Shall not his soul be avenged on such sinners as these? Yes, no doubt, when the day of recompense comes: For, he has said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay. Nemo me impune lacessit—No one provokes me with impunity.*

2. Consider what an evidence it is against yourselves, that you have no fear of God before your eyes. Though you should indeed neither fear God nor regard man, yet why should you hang out a sign to give notice of this to every one who passes by? What need you declare your sin as Sodom, and thus publicly proclaim the Devil king in your souls? Is it not enough that you harbour in your hearts a secret enmity to God and godliness, but dare you thus avow the quarrel, and openly wage war with heaven? Dare you thus bid defiance to all that is sacred, and wear the livery of satan's family? Is it not enough that your hearts are graceless, and you yourselves in the interest of the kingdom of darkness, but you must be industrious to let the world know this? Thy wisdom fails thee, indeed, if (like the fool Solomon describes) when thou walkest by the way, thou thus *sayest to every one that thou art a fool,* Ecc. 10. 3.

Shall I beg of you to consider this a little; you are called Christians; your baptism, which I take it for granted you have not renounced, entitles you to that worthy name; you live in an age and place wherein it is your honour to be called by that name; it will do you neither credit nor kindness to have your Christianity disproved; nay, you would take it as an affront to have it questioned; this you would have looked upon as a thing so certain, that "As I am a Christian" must pass for an oath with you, or vehement assertion; which gives just cause to suspect that you have little value for your Christianity, since you are so willing to pawn it, as you do other sacred things, upon every trifling occasion. But while thus you boast of your Christianity, you do with your own tongues disprove it by your common swearing, and plainly give yourselves and your profession the lie. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* I see not how it is possible that such a daring contempt of God's sovereign authority and sacred name, as profane swearing (especially where it is commonly used) most certainly is, can consist with the reigning fear and love of God in the heart, and that sincere regard to the glory and honour of God, which are necessary to denominate a man a true Christian.

When Peter was charged with it as a crime, that he was a disciple of Christ, he took this method to make it appear that he was not, he began to curse and to swear, Mat. 26. 74. His speech indeed bewrayed him to be a Galilean; but this manner of speech bewrayed him to be none of the followers of Christ, for none of them used to curse and swear; all that knew any thing of their master, and his life and doctrine, would certainly conclude so. When Peter therefore cursed and swore, he did as effectually deny his master, as when he said, *I know not the man:* these are none of the spots of God's children. It was but once that Peter was thus guilty, and many a bitter tear it cost him; let none, therefore, make Peter's example an excuse for their swearing, unless they intend, as he did, to signify thereby that they disown Christ and their Christianity; and since they are resolved not to be ruled by their religion, they disclaim all hopes of benefit by it. I have that charity for you, as to believe that you will not do this professedly, and, therefore, you should be so just to yourselves as not to do that which amounts to it, and which is capable of such a construction, and which, the Apostle tells us, endangers our falling into condemnation, Jam. 5. 12. While there is a possibility of your being heirs of heaven, and of the inheritance of the saints in light, prove not yourselves the children of hell, by your speaking the language of that kingdom of darkness.

3. Consider what an injury it is to those with whom you converse. You think it does no harm to others, because it does not hurt them in their bodies, goods, or good name; but is harm done to the souls of others no harm? Nay, is it not the worst harm you can do them? If these who hear you swear be wicked, their hearts are hardened by it, and their hands strengthened, that they may not turn from their evil way; from your poisonous breath they take their infection, and add this to all their other sins. And is it no harm to propagate sin, and to support the Devil's interest,

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terest, as his agents, and factors for hell? Yes, it is harm to them who are thus, by your means, instructed and confirmed in wickedness; and you will find it harm to you too, when you shall bear the iniquity of those who by your example are taught, and encouraged to swear. To what a height will your account rise, when you shall be to answer for all the sins you have thus been accessary to? Which, though it aggravate your sin, yet, will not excuse those who have learnt this evil from you, nor lessen their account; for they also shall die in their iniquity.

If they who hear you swear have the fear of God in their hearts, and any concern for his glory, their hearts are grieved, and their hands weakened. It may be, that they have not courage to reprove you for it, but it troubles them, and saddens their spirits to hear God's name dishonoured, and his sovereignty thus insulted, and to see you thus sell your souls and all your valuable birth-rights for less than a morsel of meat. It spoils the pleasure of their conversation with you, makes them shy of your company, and perhaps, dull and uneasy in it; such an affliction it is to them to hear you swear. When David had mentioned those who take God's name in vain, he immediately adds, *Do not I hate them, am not I grieved because of them?* Ps. 139. 21. Though now, perhaps, you make a light matter of this, and rather take a pride and pleasure in thus creating vexation to a good man; yet shortly you will find it had been *better that a mill-stone were hanged about your neck, and you cast into the sea,* than that you should wilfully *offend one of Christ's little ones.* They are the words of our Lord Jesus, and we are sure no word of his shall fall to the ground.

Besides this, is it no harm to bring the curse of God into your house, which shall consume it? Is it no harm to add to the measure of the nation's guilt, and to increase God's controversy with it? *Because of swearing the land mourns,* (Jer. 23. 10.) the land of your nativity, and is it nothing to you that you contribute to its grief, and to the reproach which this, as other sins, puts upon any people? Pro. 14. 34.

4. Consider, how very frivolous all your pleas in defence of this sin are, and how unbecoming one who pretends reason. When your own consciences sometimes rebuke you for it, and admonish you to reform, you shift off these convictions with such trifling excuses as you would be ashamed to offer in any other case.

I cannot think of more than two things that you can allege in your own defence, and they have neither of them so much as the colour of an excuse, while there is all that intrinsic malignity in the sin which we have already shewed you, and God has declared he will not hold you guiltless.

(1.) You urge, That it is what you have been long accustomed to, and you cannot leave it off. But this cannot make it lawful, no not though the custom were of so early a date, that you were taught to swear, as soon as you were taught to speak; for though we brought sin into the world with us, that does not make it the less sinful: though it be bred in the bone it must be forsaken, or it will be our ruin. If it be absurd to allege a prescription against a record, in human courts, much more to allege it against a divine law. If a thief has been accustomed to stealing, or an assassin to blood and murder, that will be so far from justifying their villanies, that it will justly be accounted the highest aggravation of them.

Nor does it follow that because thou hast long used thyself to this profane and blasphemous dialect, that it will therefore be impossible to leave it off; if thou wert sure that the next time thou swearest thou shouldest certainly have thy tongue cut out, or thy head struck off, I am confident thou wouldest break off the custom: and is not the wrath of God, and the damnation of Hell infinitely more formidable than any punishment man can inflict? It is indeed difficult for a man to change his language, and requires some care and pains, but by the grace of God duly and diligently improved, even this Ethiopian may be made to change his skin, and this leopard his spots. And if now thou wilt not believe it, thou wilt be convinced of it when it is too late, that it is better a thousand times, to break through the difficulties of a reformation, than to perish eternally in the sin.

Despair not of a cure though the disease be chronical, but apply thyself with resolution to the use of proper means: Thou wouldest do so in case of bodily sickness; be as wise for thy soul then. If a diseased appetite has long used itself to trash and dirt, does it therefore follow that it must never be healed? If the prodigal have been long upon the ramble, must he never return to his father's house? better late than never.

The longer thou hast been accustomed to the sin, the more need thou hast to repent and reform, and that quickly, lest thy heart be hardened, and thy conscience seared; and lest by a judicial sentence of divine wrath, thou be at length given up to thine own heart's lusts, abandoned by the divine grace, and repentance ever hid from thine eyes. God's Spirit is, it may be, now striving with thee, but if thou resist him, he will not always strive.

Let me add this further, to shame you out of this plea, that by persisting in this sin, after you have been plainly told the evil of it, you not only in effect disclaim your religion, but you likewise cast a reproach upon your reason. Nothing can be more absurd, than for a man that pretends to any degree of wisdom, to confess himself so weak, and so incapable of governing himself, as not to be able to forbear a bad word, which he knows can do him no service, but will certainly turn to his prejudice. *Remember this, and shew yourselves men,* men of reason, *O ye transgressors,* and allow not yourselves in that which your own sober thoughts cannot but condemn.

(2.) You urge, That it is the fashionable language of the place you live in, and the company you converse with, and therefore you are not willing to leave it off. And if it were so, it is too great a compliment to be willing to go to Hell for company; what will you get by herding yourselves with those who shall be bundled for the fire, and by doing as they do who are *treasu-*

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ring up to themselves wrath, against the day of wrath? That is an expensive fashion indeed which we cannot conform to without losing the favour of God and ruining our souls for ever. If that which is fashionable were manifestly prejudicial to your health, and threatening to your life, you would rather be singular than sick, and would you not rather be singular than damned?

But the matter is not so: we will not grant that swearing is the fashionable language of our country, it is only the common language of the fools in Israel, who are the shame and scandal of their country. That which is in its own nature ugly and indecent, and a reproach to mankind, though it may in some places become common, yet cannot be made fashionable. There are those, (thanks be to God) there are many who have a deep and sincere reverence for the blessed name of God, who fear an oath, and dare not profane it: there are enough such to save you from the imputation of singularity, and to keep you in countenance, though you distinguish yourselves from the vile herd of common swearers, and take not that impious liberty of speech which they do, who say, *Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us?*

Is that to be called fashionable, which not only all the godly divines, in the nation, of every persuasion, both in their preaching and conversation, witness against, as directly contrary to the law of God; but which has the laws of the land against it too, as an iniquity to be punished by the judge, and those laws enforced and strictly ordered to be put in execution, by Her Majesty's most pious proclamations, and these publicly read, both in our churches, and in our courts of justice? Is that to be called fashionable, which is branded with so many marks of public infamy, and which is so frequently and solemnly proclaimed to be a discredit to the kingdom, and a reproach to our holy religion? Shall it be in the power of a few inconsiderate, inconsiderable sots to keep up the reputation of that which all wise, sober, and good men are agreed to run down? Shall that be called fashionable among persons of distinction, which is become most customary with those of the meanest rank and employment, and is the vulgar language of the rakes and such as are the refuse of the people?

Be persuaded therefore to break off all intimate society and conversation with those, who, not only do such things, but have pleasure in them that do them; and with David, (Ps. 119. 63.) be companions with those that fear God and keep his precepts, and then you will find it no hard matter (by the grace of God) to break off this wicked practice, how much soever you have been accustomed to it; and to forbear that language which you know is so provoking to God, so displeasing to all good men, and so destructive to the peace and welfare of your own souls.

Set a double watch before the door of your lips that you thus offend not. Abstain from all appearances of this sin; avoid temptations to it. If gaming have ensnared you in it, either never play at all, or fix it as a principle, that as there is no gain, so there is no game worth a profane oath. Keep up a dread of the sin, which certainly you will do if you truly repent of it. Tremble to hear others swear. Learn to pray, and then you will not be so apt to swear.

II. Cursing is near a-kin to profane swearing, is the common companion of it, and is another of the exorbitances of an ungoverned tongue: cursing is wishing evil to ourselves or others, absolutely or conditionally: a sin exceeding sinful; as great an instance of the corruption and degeneracy of the human nature, and as sure an evidence of the reigning power of Satan in the soul, as any other whatsoever. Nothing is more naturally the language of Hell than this; nay, the Devil himself seems to have smothered the curse implied, when he said (Job 1. 11. according to the original) *If he curse thee not to thy face;* but that which he stifled, his children speak out, wishing themselves confounded and damned, and what not, if such a thing be not so.

To shew you the evil of it, I will only recommend two things to your thoughts.

1. Consider, what a brutish piece of madness it is to curse yourselves. If you do it absolutely, it is of the same nature with self-murder; wishing harm to yourselves is in effect doing it; and is a breach of one of the first and great laws of nature, that of self-preservation. If you do it conditionally, it is of the same nature with profane swearing, and incurs the same guilt, with this additional stain, that it is not only a mocking of God's government, by a ludicrous appeal to him, but a defying of his judgment, a challenge to the Almighty to do his worst.

O the daring presumption of these sinners, sinners against their own heads, their own souls! The devils begged of our Saviour, whose power they were not ignorant of, not to torment them before the time: but these presumptuous wretches, as if they thought their judgment lingered, and their damnation slumbered too long, pull vengeance down upon their own heads, and pray to God to damn them, and they need not fear but they shall be heard, for so shall their doom be, themselves have decided it. They challenge the Devil to take them, and he is ready enough to seize his prey. But, shall I ask you, are the arrests of Devils, and the flames of Hell such delectable things that you should court them? Or are they only the creatures of fancy and imagination, that you should make so light of them? Be not deceived, God's judgment is not a jest, nor Hell a sham; if you persist in this impious contempt of divine revelation, you will feel too late what you would not believe in time.

If you have no regard to God, nor any concern for his honour, yet have you no good-will to yourselves, nor any love to your own souls? Is it not enough that you are doing that every day which deserves damnation, but will you be solicitous to demand sentence against yourselves? It is but a moderate curse with you to wish yourselves hanged, yet, I have read of a person of quality in our own nation, who, coming to die upon the gallows for murder, publicly reflected upon it with bitter regret, that he had accustomed himself to that wicked imprecation, " and now" (says he) " I see the Lord is righteous."

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But if this were a small matter, you challenge God to damn you, and the Devil to take you: and what if God should say "Amen" to the next curse, and immediately order Death to fetch you, and Hell to receive you? What if the Devils should be ready at the next call, and take you presently? And *can thine heart endure, or thy hands be strong, when God shall deal with thee?* Art thou able to dwell with devouring fire, and to inhabit everlasting burnings? Knowest thou the power of God's anger? Is thine eternal salvation of such small account with thee, that thou art willing to pawn it upon every trifling occasion, and to imprecate the loss of it, if such or such a thing be not so, which it is very possible may prove otherwise? How darest thou thus *provoke the Lord to jealousy*, whilst thou canst not pretend to be *stronger than he?* 1 Cor. 10. 22. *Wo unto you that* thus *desire the day of the Lord!* you know not what you do, for *the day of the Lord*, whatever it is to others, *will be* to you *darkness, and not light*, Amos 5. 18.

2. Consider what diabolical malice it is to curse others. It is the highest degree of hatred, nor can any thing be more contrary than this to the royal law of love and charity. He who prays to God to damn his neighbour, plainly intimates that he would do it himself if he could; and if he who hates his brother is a murderer, surely he who thus curses him is the worst of murderers, he is *Abaddon,—a destroyer*. That tongue is doubtless set on fire of Hell, which is for sending every body thither at a word, and which, by cursing men who are made after the similitude of God, would set on fire the whole course of nature, and is an advocate for the Devil, that roaring lion which seeks to devour precious souls, Jam. 3. 6, 9. Must the righteous God be summoned to execute thine angry resentments, and called upon to destroy those whom he sent his own Son into the world to save, and to whom he is waiting to be gracious? Because thou art out of humour, must all about thee be sunk and ruined presently? As a madman in his frenzy throws about him, firebrands, arrows, and death, so is he who curses his neighbour; nay, perhaps his wife, his child, his friend; and says, "Am not I in passion?" or, "Am not I in sport?" Hast thou no other way of signifying thy displeasure (if it be just) but by the imprecation of evil, the worst of evils, which bear no proportion at all to the offence given?

Put this case close to thine own heart: when thou wishest thy child, or servant, or neighbour hanged, confounded or damned, or sent to the Devil, either thou meanest as thou sayest, or not. If thou dost not wish it, (as I charitably hope thou dost not) thou art guilty of a manifest falshood, and must own thyself a liar: if thou dost really wish it, (and what wickedness is it that will not enter into the heart of a furious man?) thou canst not but acknowledge thyself guilty of the most barbarous and inhuman malice imaginable: so that every curse proves thee a wilful transgressor, either of the law of truth, or of the law of love, two as sacred laws, and which have as much of the image of the Law-Maker as any mankind is bound by.

Consider further, that the curses thou art so liberal of will not hurt those against whom they are levelled: thou dost but shew thy ill-will; for *as the bird by wandering, and the swallow by flying, so the curse causeless shall not come*, Pro. 26. 2. But they will certainly return upon thine own head, to thy confusion, *As he loved cursing so let it come unto him.—Into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones*, Ps. 109. 17, 18. They who are called to inherit the blessing are commanded to *Bless and not to curse*, Rom. 12. 14. Believe it, sirs, curses are edge-tools, which *it is dangerous playing with.*

In your furious and outrageous cursing of the brute creatures, or that which is inanimate and incapable of the harm you wish it, what is wanting in malice is made up in folly and absurdity, like that which the Apostle calls the *madness of Balaam*, when he wished he had his sword to kill his own ass with. By such silly nonsensical curses as you sometimes throw about in your passion, you make it to appear, that with your religion you put off common-sense. You are men, you are rational creatures, speak with reason then, and act with reason, and *Be ye not as the horse and the mule, that have no understanding; as natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed.*

III. Lying is another of the exorbitances of an ungoverned tongue, and a very pernicious one.

It has been said of some, that though they do not swear yet they will lie; it is to be feared there are those, of whom it is too true; and let them bear their own burthen; but let not those, who would not for a world do either, suffer for the same; nor let swearers think it will in the least excuse their sin, that there are liars who are no swearers. It is certain, they are both damning sins, and either of them persisted in will undoubtedly be the ruin of the sinner. But if we may guess at one sin by another, it is more probable, (as I hinted before) that they who make no conscience of swearing, will not stick at lying; and we may charitably hope, unless we know the contrary, that they who dread a profane oath, will be as much afraid of telling a wilful lie.

Let me, therefore, in God's name, seriously apply myself to those who (as the Prophet speaks) have *taught their tongue to speak lies*, Jer. 9. 5. For there is an art in it, whether they be such lies as seem to do good, or such as are directly intended to do hurt, or such as are idle, and intended neither for good nor hurt. If they are lies, they are sins against God, and all liars shall have their portion in the bottomless pit, if they repent not; and the nice distinctions with which they think to justify, or at least excuse themselves, will prove, in the great day, but a refuge of lies, which the hail will sweep away, Isa. 28. 17.

1. A few words, one would think, may serve for the conviction and discovery of these sinners. Sure, you need not be told what lying is, your own consciences will tell you, if they be not seared, or bribed, or forbidden to deal plainly with you.

In your bargains and contracts if you say that, either for selling the dearer, or buying the cheaper, which you know to be false, it is a lie. Yet how common is it, in the multitude of those words, for the seller to call the commodity good and cheap, and to aver that he gave so much for it, when he knows that it is neither so nor so!

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so! And the buyer in his bidding will call that worthless and dear which he has no reason to call so, and will say he can buy it cheaper elsewhere, when he does not know that he can. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone away, then he boasteth* of a good bargain, not considering that he was helped to it by a lie, Prov. 20. 14.

In your excuses which you make, either to superiors or equals, if you deny, extenuate, or conceal a fault, by representing a thing otherwise than it was, though you may gain your point, and not be so much as suspected of falshood, yet the guilt is never the less. When you are charged with any neglect or injury, you are ready to say you did not know, or did not remember, that which you are conscious to yourselves you did know, and did remember: you plead that you thought, or intended so and so, when really you did not think or intend any such thing: these are the common refuges of those who are culpable, because the profession of a man's thoughts and purposes is not easily disproved. But though men cannot convict us of falshood in those professions, he that searches the heart can. Men may be shammed with a frivolous excuse, but God is not mocked.

In your commendations of yourselves or others, if you give a better character than you know there is cause or ground for; if you boast of a false gift, and represent your abilities, possessions, and performances, to greater advantage than they deserve, and than the truth will bear, though these may pass for innocent hyperboles with those who take the same liberty themselves, yet your own consciences will tell you, if they be faithful, that hereby you add the sin of lying to the sin of pride, than which there are not two sins that God hates more.

In your censures, if you put false constructions upon the words and actions of your neighbours, making a great crime of that which was nothing, or next to nothing, unjustly aggravating faults, and making them worse than really they are, or representing that as certain, which is but suspected and doubtful, much more, if it should prove that you lay to men's charge things that they know not, hereby you involve yourselves in a double guilt, falshood and uncharitableness.

In your promises, if you engage that you will do so or so, pay such a debt, or finish such a piece of work within such a time, or do such a kindness for your friend, when either you do not at all intend it, or foresee you cannot perform it, or afterward take no care either to fulfil the promise when it is in the power of your hand, or if disabled to do that, in due time to recal it, hereby there is guilt contracted. Either the promise should not have been made, or it should have been kept.

In your common reports, and the stories you tell for discourse sake and the keeping up of conversation, if you report that as true and certain which you know to be otherwise, and do not make conscience of representing every thing as near as possible to the truth, and to your own sober thoughts, you become transgressors.

2. Sure there need not many words to persuade you to repent of this sin, and carefully to watch against it for the future, and all appearances of it. Consider how contrary it is to God, it is a breach of his law, it is a defacing of his image, for he is the God of Truth. And it exposes us to his wrath, for lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Consider how conformable it is to the Devil, and how much it makes you to resemble him, for he is a liar and the father of it. It is an injury to your brother, not only to the particular person, who, perhaps, is wronged by it, but to human society in general. And it will be the ruin of your own precious souls, if you persist in it. They who thus do the works of the Devil, shall have their portion with the Devil and his Angels. A lie is soon told, and perhaps as soon forgotten, and a light matter made of it; but the punishment of it will be everlasting in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, out of which there is no redemption.

IV. The common careless using of the blessed name of God, without due application, is another instance of the ill-government of the tongue, which needs a check.

Many who never curse or swear, yet allow themselves in the taking of God's name in vain, and either know not, or consider not the evil of it, and the dishonour done (though not intended) to God by it. When you use these forms of speech, which are properly expressive of a pious ejaculation, in a light and careless manner, and to any other purpose than their genuine and original signification, which appears by your way of speaking, not to be intended, but something else, you profane that which is sacred, and alienate to a common use that which appears to have been dedicated to God, and has holiness to the Lord written on it. To say, "O Lord," when you mean no more but "I am hurt; and "God knows," when you mean no more but "I do not know;" and "God bless me," when you mean no more but "I am surprised;" and "God help you," when you mean no more but "I pity you," or any the like, is certainly taking the name of the Lord your God in vain, and to no purpose, that is, to no good purpose.

Now will you who accustom yourselves to this language consider a little,

1. That it is a great affront to the God of heaven. You hereby make his blessed name a by-word, and put that slight upon it which you would not bear to be put upon your own names. That is a great example which the bishop of Sarum tells us was observed of the honourable Mr. Boyle, that he never mentioned the name of God but with a discernible stop or pause in his discourse, in token of a reverence for that glorious and fearful name, and to leave room for a devout thought. Great and serious things ought to be spoken of with great seriousness, and they are abused if they are prostituted to a common use.

2. That it is certainly a breach of the law of the third commandment, which is very express, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, and it is backed with a threatening that *the Lord will not hold them*

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them guiltless that do so, in which certainly more is implied than is expressed; it is supposed that many such will hold themselves guiltless, and think they do no harm, and others will hold them guiltless, but God will severely reckon with them, for he is a jealous God.

3. That it is a great profanation of the holy ordinance of prayer. The better any thing is, the worse it is when it is corrupted? there is nothing better than the devout and serious mention of the name of our God as there is occasion, nothing better than pious addresses to God when the heart goes along with them; but if this degenerate into a mockery, if the dead carcase hereof only is retained, and there is no spirit or life in it, if there be not so much as an outward solemnity and decorum observed, but the manner of using those good words plainly shews and avows it, that there is nothing pious and devout intended by them, it is in effect a banter upon prayer, turns it into burlesque and ridicule, and is exceedingly offensive to God and good men.

It will be hard to use these words seriously, when they should be used so, which you have so often used vainly when you should not; and what comfort can you expect in prayer, when you are serious and need the comfort of it, if at other times you use the words of prayer thus lightly and profanely?

And now shall I prevail with you never to mention the name of God but with seriousness, and in a holy and reverent manner? Say not you have so used yourselves to these expressions that you cannot leave them; resolution, by the grace of God, will change the dialect. Will those ever lose their lives for Christ who will not leave a sinful inconsiderate word for him? One would think this a small piece of self-denial. Let the fear of God rule in your hearts, and always maintain a holy awe and reverence of him, and then out of the abundance of that the mouth will speak of him with reverence, and will not dare to speak otherwise. The description which the Scripture gives of hypocrites, (Isa. 48. 1.) is, that *they make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth*; but the description of true saints is, that *they think on God's name*, Mal. 3. 16. Act with reason, and either think of what you say, or do not say, what you do not think of.

V. Scoffing at religion and godliness, and jesting with sacred things, is another of the exorbitances of an ungoverned tongue.

By the commonness of this sin, in this loose and degenerate age of ours, it appears that we live in the dregs of time; for the scripture speaks expressly that in the last days, those corrupt and perilous times, there should arise *Scoffers walking after their own lusts*, 2 Pet. 3. 3. Profane people, when they set up for wits, think they cannot better shew their wit than in endeavouring to justify their profaneness.

To shew you the evil of it, consider,

1. The malignant principles whence it flows. When there is in the heart an habitual contempt of divine things, and an antipathy to them, and a reigning enmity to the power of godliness, thus it vents itself, and what is wanting in reason on its side, is made up in jest and banter. When men are resolved not to make themselves serious with the things of God, they will make themselves merry with them, and think they gain their point if they can but turn them off with a jest; as if that, which they are pleased to make the subject of their laughter, were therefore to be looked upon as a just object of contempt. They endeavour to represent the Word of God as a sham, Heaven as a fool's paradise, and Hell as merely the creature of a disordered imagination, by playing upon them, and turning them into burlesque; thus sporting themselves with their own deceivings; but it will prove like the Philistines making sport with Sampson, what they sport with will prove too strong for them, and their profane mirth will be a prologue to their ruin. *Be ye not mockers lest your bands be made strong*, Isa. 28. 22.

2. The mischievous consequences that flow from it. You who thus make a jest of holy things, though you make a light matter of it, ought to consider what you do, and what will be in the end hereof. Think what an affront you hereby put upon the blessed God, imputing folly to infinite wisdom, and vilifying him who is the fountain of honour. Think what an injury you hereby do to religion, and how much you serve the interest of the Devil and his kingdom, as those who are retained of council in his cause. Seems it a light thing to you, that you are wicked yourselves, but will you do what you can to make others wicked too, that you may, besides your own torments hereafter, share in the torments of all the souls you help to ruin? Think how you will answer it at the great day, and what bitter reflections you will then make upon your daring impieties of this kind, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven to execute judgment upon all for all their hard speeches spoken against him. It is better to reflect, and repent, and reform now, while there is a possibility of your reconciliation to the God you have provoked, than to be forced to remember it in Hell to your utter confusion, in a state of endless and hopeless separation from God.

VI. Scurrilous and reproachful language given to those you have dealings with, or power over, is another exorbitance of an ungoverned tongue.

This is that which our Saviour has told us is a breach of the sixth commandment, *Thou shalt not kill*; it is tongue-murder, a sin exceeding sinful, and certainly damning to the sinner if it be not repented of and forsaken, so he has forewarned us who is to be our judge. We are sure that his judgment will be according to the truth of his word; and he has said (Mat. 5. 22.) *Whosoever shall*, in wrath and passion, *say to his brother Raca*, Thou base empty fellow, rogue, and rascal, (for *Raca* was used then as those opprobrious names are now) he that does so *shall be in danger of the council*, that is shall be exposed to the wrath and curse of the eternal God; and not only so, but if he had his desert should be called to an account for it by the civil magistrate, for it is an iniquity to be punished by the judge: and whosoever shall in like manner say, *Thou fool*, thou reprobate, thou wicked wretch, thou damned confounded

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founded fellow, *shall* himself *be in danger of* that *Hell fire*, to which he so rashly condemns his brother.

Calling foul names, and giving foul language, especially to servants and inferiors, is grown so very common among us, that with those who live at large, and not only *set their mouth against the heavens*, but let their *tongue walk* at liberty *through the earth*, (Ps. 73. 9.) it is looked upon as part of the accomplishment of a gentleman to be able to do it blusteringly, and with fluency and variety; and yet, perhaps, there are those of the meanest rank who may vie with them, and can do it with as good a grace.

But how common soever it is, and how much soever countenanced by the practice of some who make a figure, you see it is a sin expressly against the Law of Christ, and is certainly included, and perhaps principally intended in that bitterness and wrath, that clamour and evil speaking which ought to be put far from us, lest we grieve the holy Spirit of God, Eph. 4. 30, 31.

You who allow yourselves this liberty of abusing all about you, and of dealing nick-names, and names of reproach at your pleasure among those you converse with, or have power over! Shall I propound two or three things to your serious thoughts?

1. Consider who they are that you thus abuse and trample upon, thus taunt and hector over. Are they not your fellow creatures, of the same rank of beings with yourselves? Were not you made of the same clay that they were, and as mean as they in your original? Were not they made by the same great and mighty hand that you were, and as honourable as you in their relation to the Father of Spirits? This consideration swayed with holy Job to carry it with all possible tenderness and respect, even to his own servant, when he contended with him, (Job 31. 15.) *Did not he that made me in the womb make him?* And the same argument is urged in a case not much unlike, (Mal. 2. 10.) *Have we not all one Father? why then do we deal treacherously every man against his brother?*

Perhaps those whom you so readily, and with so great an assurance call "Fools" and "Knaves," have as much ingenuity and integrity as yourselves; nay it may be they are every way wiser and better. However as the Apostle argues, (Jam. 3. 9.) they are *made after the similitude of God*, they are of that species of creatures which was at first so made; and therefore God is reflected on by the ignominious treatment you give them. If they have natural defects and infirmities of body or mind, which they cannot help, those ought not to be turned to their reproach, for they are as God made them, and he might have made you so. If their condition in the world be mean and despicable, and the distance that Providence has put between you and them seems great, it does not therefore follow that you may give them what language and what usage you please. Though God be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly, much more should you. *He that mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker*, (Pro. 17. 5.) not only him that made him, but him that made him poor.

The crime is much aggravated if those you thus abuse are pious and good, such as by grace are renewed after the image of God, and made partakers of his holiness, which possibly they may be, and yet not be numbered among either the witty or the wealthy part of mankind. Whatever you may think of yourselves, in comparison with those you thus insult over, a wiser than you, even infinite wisdom itself, has said it once, yea twice, (Pro. 19. 1. and ch. 28. 6.) *Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity than he that is perverse in his lips, though he be rich.* Will you then despise those whom God has honoured, and lay those under your feet whom God has laid in his bosom? Dare you put those among the dogs of your flock whom Christ has put among the lambs of his flock?

2. Consider, that there is no good done by this sort of language, but a great deal of hurt. What desirable end can you propose to yourselves in it? You would be obeyed, you would be feared, and will not the meekness of wisdom command respect a thousand times better than the outrages of folly? It is certain there is nothing you say, which is introduced and accented with this rude and boisterous language, but the same thing might be better said, and to much better purpose, if it were not so prefaced. Solomon's observation holds true, that *The words of wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that rules among fools*, Ecc. 9. 17.

Nay, you do a great deal of hurt by using yourselves to such language.

(1.) You disturb and provoke others by it. These grievous words stir up anger, and who knows how long that anger may last, what it may produce, and where it may end? nor how great a matter a little fire of this kind may kindle? Put your souls into their soul's stead whom you thus abuse, and consider if you were in poverty and meanness, and in an inferior relation, how you would like it, and how you could bear it, to be rated and trampled on, and called by so many ill names: and do not that to others which you would not should be done to you,

(2) You disgrace and disparage yourselves by it. While you think hereby to keep up your authority, and make yourselves great and formidable, you really prostitute your authority, and render yourselves mean and contemptible, and give just occasion to those you abuse to think as ill of you as you say of them, though they dare not speak it out. You declare plainly [1.] That you are slaves to your own passions, which is as toilsome, and dishonourable a slavery as a man can be in: you say that in the heat of passion, which you yourselves could scarce turn your tongues to if you were sober and calm, and thereby proclaim Passion King over you, that great Leviathan who is *King over all the children of pride*, Job 41. 34. [2.] That you are not masters of your own reason; your anger is a fit of madness, and for the time your wisdom is departed from you; when in wrath you call others fools, the reproach returns upon your own heads. Some of this foul ill-favoured language you use to give, carries along with it its own conviction of absurdity.

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You will call him a "Dog," whom you see to be a man, and a "Bastard," whom you really take to be legitimate: and what sense is there in this? Does this become one who pretends to reason? Blush at it for shame, and resolve never again to make such a fool of thyself.

3. Consider how obnoxious you yourselves are to the righteous judgment of God. If you seriously retire into your own hearts, and impartially reflect upon your own ways, you will find that you have much more reason to reproach yourselves for your provocations against God, than to fall foul upon your servants or others for their defects in their duty to you. We ought to forbear threatening, and to moderate it, (Eph. 6. 9.) for what would become of us if God should enter into judgment with us? When we taunt others for their dulness and folly, their carelessness and forgetfulness, we ought to remember the same things against ourselves, and then we shall only give just and gentle reproofs, and not senseless and furious reproaches. Holy Job restrained himself from the heats of passion, with this consideration, (ch. 31. 14.) *What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?* Think not that the strength of your passion will be a sufficient excuse for the indecencies of your language. The sin of the heart will never justify the sin of the tongue; but on the contrary, the sin of the tongue will aggravate the sin of the heart. Resolve therefore for the future, whenever your heart is hot within you, that you will keep your mouth as with a bridle.

VII. Lewd, obscene, and filthy talk, is another of the vile exorbitances of an unsanctified, ungoverned tongue.

It is a thing to be greatly lamented that this impudent sin, which bids open defiance to virtue and honour, and wages war with them, like a spreading leprosy, stains the beauty of our land, turns a Canaan into a Sodom, and is become an epidemical disease. For the relief of those who are infected with it, and are not incurably unclean, I would in a few words shew you the evil of it.

1. Consider what an offence it is to the pure and holy God, who takes notice of, and is much displeased with the uncleanness of your lips, as well as of your hearts and lives. It is a violation even of the law of nature, which prescribes modesty, and teaches us to blush at every thing that is immodest. The law of Moses provided for the keeping up of this hedge of chastity, and in many instances punished that which broke through this hedge. It was one of the laws of Romulus, (some of the most ancient human laws that are extant) *Nequis obscœna verba facit,—None should dare to speak an obscene word.* But (which to us is above all) the Law of Christ is very express against all filthiness and foolish talking and jesting, and appoints that *fornication and all uncleanness* should *not be once named* among Christians without the greatest abhorrence, Eph. 5. 3, 4. And is the law of Christ nothing with you? Can you go so directly contrary to it, and yet hope to prosper? God has told you plainly there, (v. 5.) that such unclean persons have *no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God,* and (v. 6.) that *because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* And you cannot suppose that the fixed laws of Heaven should be dispensed with to gratify your base lusts. The law of Christ shall either rule you, or judge you.

2. Consider what an evidence it is against yourselves, that you are possessed by the unclean spirit, and are under his power. Out of the abundance of the filthiness that is in the heart the tongue speaks thus filthily, and from that root of bitterness arises this gall and wormwood. The abominable lewdness that is in the heart, and is harboured and indulged there, boils up in this noisome dross. Stinking breath is a sign of putrid lungs. While you please yourselves and your companions with this dirty language, you do but foam out your own shame, and sport yourselves with your own deceivings. You think you shew your wit by it, but indeed you shew your wickedness, and declare your sin as Sodom, as those who are not ashamed, and cannot blush. Chastity and modesty have been virtues, are so, and will be so, how much soever they are despised and disdained by the first-rate sinners of the age; and that which is a virtue, is a praise, is an honour; which if you want, yet you need not proclaim that you do so, nor be proud of your shame.

Unclean thoughts may, through the infirmity of the flesh, and for want of watchfulness, come into the minds of those who disallow them, lament them, and strive against them, knowing that even these thoughts of foolishness are sin: but unclean discourse is much worse, and more exceeding sinful, for thereby you signify your approbation and allowance of those unclean thoughts; you put an "Imprimatur" to them, and consent to the publication of them from the common service of the Devil's kingdom.

3. Consider what a great deal of hurt it is likely to do to others. Though this sin does not so immediately reflect upon the blessed name of God as swearing does, and, therefore has not so much malignity in its nature, yet it does more toward the corrupting of the minds of others, and the propagating of vice and wickedness, than perhaps any other tongue-sin whatsoever, and so is more mischievous in its consequences. Such tinder is the corrupt heart of man to these sparks, that one unclean word to an unguarded soul may be the unhappy occasion of a thousand unclean thoughts, which may produce a world of iniquity. If this root of bitterness thus spring up and sprout forth, thereby many are defiled, (Heb. 12. 15.) more than perhaps you are aware of: and your account in the great day will rise high if you must be answerable for all that uncleanness which has been spawned in the minds of others by your lewd talk.

Filthy stories, and songs, and jests, are the pestilential breath of hell, which propagates the infection of sin, Old Satan's wiles, by which he betrays unwary souls into their own ruin. And those unclean lips

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which help to lay those snares, are factors for the unclean spirit, and by debauching the minds of others with their vile discourses, perhaps serve the Devil's kingdom and the interests of it as effectually as those who debauch the bodies of others with their vile adulteries. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.*

If those who hear your lewd talk be not so bad as to be infected by it, certainly they are so good as to be offended at it. He is unfit for civil company, and breaks the law of good manners, who takes a pleasure in saying that which a wise and good man must frown upon, and hear with shame, or with an angry countenance. What Mr. Cowly says of lewd poems, is, with a little alteration, applicable to lewd discourse.

> ———'Tis just,
> The speaker blush there where the hearer must.

That discourse is but bad entertainment which occasions either guilt or grief to all that hear it.

Therefore, let all who have accustomed themselves to this language, be persuaded to leave it off, and henceforward to set such a careful watch before the door of their lips, that they never more offend thus with their tongue; and if at any time they think this evil, let them lay their hand upon their mouth, (Pro. 30. 32.) that it go no further. That mirth is dear bought, which is purchased at the expense of the favour of God, the honour of virtue, and the purity and peace of our own consciences. Better lose your jest, than lose all these jewels. Dread the consequences of it, not to others only, but to yourselves. Those who allow themselves in the transgression of the laws of modesty, it is to be feared, will not long be governed by the laws of chastity. The way of sin is down hill.

And let me bespeak all who are well-wishers to religion and virtue, not only to be very cautious themselves never to say any thing that looks like lewdness, or looks toward it, but in all companies to contrive how they may put this vice to the blush, expose it to contempt, and dash it out of countenance. They who would approve themselves strictly modest, must never seem pleased at the hearing of that which is otherwise, nor laugh at an immodest jest or story, lest they should have fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, which ought to be frowned upon, and reproved rather. Let it be seen that you can be merry and wise, merry and modest. Reckon it a burthen to dwell among a people of unclean lips, (Isa. 6. 5.) and pray to God that (according to his promise, Zeph. 3. 9.) he would *turn our people to a pure language*, that we may be fit to *call upon the name of the Lord.*

Having thus mentioned some of the vices of an ungoverned tongue, (especially those that are most common with such as are openly profane,) and given some particular hints of argument against them, I shall now close with some general directions for the reducing of the exorbitant power of an unruly tongue.

1. See that the heart be truly and thoroughly sanctified by the grace of God. If you would have the disease cured, you must lay the axe to the root, and meet it in its causes. The peccant humour within must be purged out, else these eruptions, though they may be checked for a time by external restraints, yet, will never be healed. The right method prescribed by the Great Physician, is first to *keep the heart with all diligence*, and then by that means to *put away the froward lips.* See Pro. 4. 23, 24. The way to heal the poisonous waters is, like Elisha, (2 Kin. 2. 21.) to cast salt into the spring, *Make the tree good, and then the fruit will be good.* It is out of an evil treasure in the heart that evil things are brought; men speak slightly of God, and spitefully of their brethren, because they think so; let but the thoughts be rectified, and the language will be soon reformed.

If the law of holy love to God and your neighbour were written in your hearts, and you were as you should be, actuated and governed by these as a living commanding principle, you would not dare to offend either the one or the other with your tongue; that good treasure laid up in the heart would bring forth good things to the use of edifying, which would manifest grace in him that speaks, and minister grace unto the hearers. The fear of God always before your eyes will be an effectual restraint upon you from saying that by which either his name is dishonoured, or his law violated. The grace of God is *a coal from the altar*, which if it touch the tongue, the iniquity of it will be purged away, Isa. 6. 7.

Let the throne of Christ be set up in your hearts, and his love shed abroad there, and then you will not call it a needless preciseness to be thus careful of your words, but a necessary strictness, because by our words we must be justified, or condemned. Then you will not call it a task and a slavery to be thus tied up, and to speak by rule, but an honour and a pleasure: for assuredly this blessed change, wrought in the soul by the renewing grace of God, will open such surprising springs of present joy and comfort, as will abundantly balance all the uneasiness which corrupt nature will complain of in these restraints.

2. Solemnly resolve against these and all other tongue-sins. Let holy David's vow be yours, and bind your souls with it this day, *I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue*, and remember as he does there, that you have said it, that you may not break your promise, Ps. 39. 1, 2.

While the result of your convictions is no more but this, that you hope you shall govern your tongues better for the future, and that, for ought you know, you will not swear so much as you have done, and in the mind you are in, you will not speak so many idle filthy words as you have spoken—if this be all, you leave room for Satan to thrust in with his temptations; faint purposes are soon shaken, and prove to no purpose: but when you are come to a point, and without equivocation, or mental reservation, will solemnly promise that by the grace of God you will never swear nor curse any more; you will never take God's name in vain any more; you will never speak a lewd or scurrilous word any more; this fortifies the strong

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strong hold against the tempter, who (like Naomi, Ruth 1. 18.) when he sees you are stedfastly resolved, will leave off speaking to you.

Renew this resolution every day, especially if you have a prospect of any occasion which will be a more than ordinary temptation to you. Thus set a guard upon the door of your lips, and, at some times, double your guard, where you find yourselves weakest and most exposed. Try the strength of your resolutions, and do not for shame suffer yourselves to be baffled in them. Only remember to make and renew these resolutions in a dependance upon the grace of Jesus Christ, which alone is sufficient for you. Peter resolved against a tongue-sin in his own strength, but it failed him, and he was made ashamed of his confidence; confide therefore in divine strength only.

3. Keep out of the way of bad company. Speech is learned by imitation, and so is corrupt speech. We are apt in discourse to conform to those with whom we do associate, and, therefore, if we would keep those commandments of our God which relate to the government of the tongue, we must say to evil doers, *Depart from us*, Ps. 119. 115. Converse not familiarly and of choice with those who accustom themselves to any evil communication, lest you learn their way, lest you learn their words, and get such a snare to your souls as you will not easily disentangle yourselves from.

That dread and terror, and abhorrence of swearing and cursing, and all profane discourse, which all who are virtuously and piously educated, are conscious to themselves of at first, is apt to wear off by frequent and free conversation with those who use such language. It is excused as a slip of the tongue which does nobody any harm; nay, it is justified as a fashionable ornament of speech; and so by degrees the debauched conscience comes to be reconciled to it, and at last the tongue is taught not only to lisp the same cursed language, but, with a great deal of art and assurance, to speak it plain. Joseph himself, in the Court of Egypt, had unawares got the courtier's oath, *By the life of Pharaoh.*

If you love your souls, therefore, be very careful what company you keep; chuse to converse familiarly with those of whom you may learn that which is edifying, and by whose discourse and example you may be made wiser and better: and avoid the society of those by whom, without a greater degree of wisdom and watchfulness than you can pretend to, you will certainly get hurt to yourselves. Improper words are sooner learned than unlearned. Therefore, *if sinners entice thee, consent thou not*, (Pro. 1. 10.) though they do not say (as they there, v. 11. *Come and let us lay wait for blood;*) "Come and let us swear and curse, and bid defiance to all that is sacred;" but palliate the temptation, and make it look very harmless, "Come and let us take a glass and be merry over it." If they be such as are commonly profane and lewd in their discourse, fear a snare in their company, and keep at a distance from it. Walk not in their counsel, stand not in their way, sit not in their seat, Ps. 1. 1. Make no friendship with those who make no conscience of their words, and who shew that they have no veneration for the blessed name of God. Remember Solomon's advice, (Pro. 14. 7.) and be ruled by it. *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.*

4. Think twice before you speak once. We often speak amiss, because we speak in haste; when that comes out which comes uppermost, what can it be but froth and dross? Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips, not consulting with himself before he spake, and then he said that which shut him out of Canaan, Ps. 106. 33. What we speak in haste, we often find cause afterwards to repent of at leisure. David more than once reflects with regret upon what he said in his haste, and we have all a great deal of reason to do so. Our second thoughts, if we would take time for them, would correct the errors of the first; and we should not offend with our tongues so often as we do, if we would but consider what we say, before we say it. *The heart of the righteous studieth to answer* that which is fit and seasonable, while *the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*

Be sparing of your words, and then you will not have so many bad words to answer for as most have: for, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, and *divers vanities.* You have often been the worse for speaking, but seldom the worse for keeping silence. Many a thing which you have said, you would have smothered and suppressed if you had but allowed yourselves the liberty of a serious and impartial thought upon it. "Little said, soon amended."

You durst not profane God's blessed name with your unhallowed breath, if you would but think seriously what a God he is whom you thus blaspheme and provoke. You durst not curse yourselves or others if you would but consider the weight of the curse, and what a fearful thing it is to fall under it. You durst not scoff at religion if you did but consider how sacred and honourable it is. Reason in other cases is of use to rectify the mistakes of imagination, use it here then.

5. Have a care to the account that is now kept, and must shortly be given, of all your idle wicked words. You believe the holy Scriptures, you do well. Now they tell you what will be in the end hereof. The word of God will judge you shortly, therefore, let it rule you now.

Notice is now taken of all you say, whether you are aware of it or no. There is not a word in your tongue, though spoken in haste, and not regarded by you, but God knows it altogether, and a book of remembrance is written. God told the Prophet Ezekiel what the people said of him by the walls, and in the doors of their houses, (Ezek. 33. 30.) and he can make a bird of the air to carry the voice of that which is said in the heart, or in the bedchamber, Ecc. 10. 20. You think you may curse and swear securely when you are out of the reach of those who would reprove you, or inform against you; and because God for the present keeps silence, you think he is altogether such an one as yourselves, as careless of his government as you are of your duty; but he will reprove you, and set them in order before you, and make it to appear that he kept an exact account of all you said: *Now consider this, ye that forget God*, (Ps. 50. 21.) stand in awe of this,

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and sin not with your tongues. Take heed, God hears; were you in the presence of some grave men that you had a reverence for, you would have a care what you say, and shall not the presence of the great God strike an awe upon you?

But this is not all, the day is coming when there will be a review; when the books that are written will be opened, and all your profane oaths and curses, and corrupt communications, will be found upon record there and produced as evidence against you. He that is to be the Judge in that day, has himself expressly told us, (Mat. 12. 36.) *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;* and if for every idle word, much more for every profane and wicked word. What an account will they have to make, all whose breath was corrupt, till their days were extinct, who always allowed themselves a boundless liberty of speech from under the dominion of religion and right reason, and never took care by repentance and prayer, and reformation, to empty the measure of guilt they had filled, nor to balance the account in the blood of Christ which cleanses from all sin.

Think not that any profession of religion which you make will excuse you, or stand you in any stead in that day, while you thus contradict it, and give the lie to it, by the extravagances of your tongues. The word of God has laid it down as a certain rule, (Jam. 1. 26.) *If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain;* and if your religion be vain, it will never bring you to Heaven, and then I need not tell you whither your irreligion will bring you.

It will be the eternal doom of those who persisted in their tongue-sins, and would not be reformed, that *their own tongues shall fall upon themselves,* (Ps. 64. 8.) and if they do, they will sink them to the lowest Hell, in which the remembrance of all the sins of an ungoverned tongue will be very bitter, and bring oil to the flames. We read of it, as the misery of condemned sinners, that they are tormented in a flame, where they have not a drop of water to cool their tongues. Words are soon spoken, and when they are spoken are soon gone, and yet words spoken against an earthly prince, though repented of, have cost many a man his life; and shall it then be difficult to us to believe that words spoken against the King of Kings, and never repented of, shall exclude men from his kingdom, and lay them for ever under his wrath? It is commonly said, "*Words are but wind,*" but wicked words will prove such a mischievous wind, as will not only keep the soul out of the blessed haven of rest and happiness, but sink it into the gulf of everlasting destruction.

6. Reflect upon it with sorrow and shame, and great regret, if at any time you have, ere you were aware, spoken any wicked word. Keep conscience tender in this matter, and if, through the surprise of temptation, you any way offend with your tongue, let your heart presently smite you for it, humble yourselves greatly before God for it, pass it not over with a slighty careless "God forgive me," but be in pain and bitterness at the remembrance of it; abhor yourselves, as holy Job, when he was reflecting upon his tongue-sins, and repent in dust and ashes. If you can easily forgive yourselves what is past, it is to be feared you will easily be brought to do the like again.

Lastly, Pray earnestly to God for his grace, to keep you from sinning with your tongue. Though the tongue be an unruly evil, yet He can tame it who sets bounds to the proud waves of the sea, and once stopped the lions' mouths. To him therefore, you must apply yourselves by faithful and fervent prayer, and put yourselves under the conduct and custody of his grace, which will be sufficient for you if you seek it, and improve it, and go forth in the strength of it. Let David's prayer be your's daily, (Ps. 141. 3.) *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips,* for without his assistance we can do nothing. Pray against provocations to these sins, and pray for wisdom wherewith to govern yourselves in the midst of provocations; *Watch and pray* that either you may not be led into temptation, or however not overcome by it. *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.*

And now, what shall be the success of this endeavour? Shall all our reasonings with you, in love to your souls, be slighted and laughed at like the foolish banter of your vain companions? Can we not prevail for a reformation of your language, when we plead the honour of God, the law of Christ, the good of your brethren, and the welfare of your own souls, and you have nothing to plead to the contrary but a foolish wicked custom? *I hope better things, and things that accompany salvation.* Your tongue is your glory, do not turn this glory into shame, but use it as your glory, by honouring God and edifying one another with it; so shall the tongue which is thus accustomed to the language of Canaan, sing Hallelujahs eternally in the new Jerusalem.

Self-

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Self-Consideration necessary to Self-Preservation:

OR,

THE FOLLY OF DESPISING OUR OWN SOULS

AND

OUR OWN WAYS.

DISPLAYED IN

TWO SERMONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE.

The former on Pro. 15. 32. The latter on Pro. 19. 16.

To the Reader.

I Was far from any thoughts of publishing these two plain discourses, when I preached the former of them, at the request of Mr. Billingsley and his Catechumens, the 25th of the last month, being Monday in Whitsun-week, a day of leisure; having designed not to trouble the press any more till the fifth volume of Expositions was ready for it, which, if God spare my life and health, and continue his gracious assistances, I hope will be by the end of this year, and which (to answer a question that I am often asked) I purpose shall contain the four Evangelists and the Acts, if the Lord will.

The importunity of the many who earnestly desired me to publish that sermon should not have overcome me to alter my purpose, if the advice of some of my brethren, whose judgment I have a value for, had not over-ruled me to think it might be worth while to take so much time from my greater work, as the preparing and enlarging of that sermon for the press would require.

And this made me the more easily to yield to those who very earnestly pressed me to publish the latter sermon, which was preached the day following, at the request of Mr. Gordon and his Catechumens.

It grieves me, (yet not so much as it should,) to see among the *children of my people* a great carelessness and unconcernedness about the things that belong to their everlasting peace: I lament it in myself, and therefore I hope I shall not be blamed if I thus endeavour, as God enables me, to awaken myself and others to a due seriousness in those things which relate to the soul and eternity; I think it can do harm to none: I hope it may do good to some. And nothing more likely to cool and compose the heated and disquieted minds of men, than thus to turn their zeal into the right channel.

June 4, 1713. Mat. Henry.

THE

FOLLY

OF DESPISING OUR OWN SOULS.

Pro. 15. 32.

He that refuseth Instruction despiseth his own Soul.

SOLOMON's proverbs being generally designed to instruct us in our duty to God and man, many of them are particularly intended to dispose us to receive those sacred dictates, and to make way for the rest, by opening the ear to instruction, and bowing the heart to comply with it. If people were but willing and desirous to learn, the teacher's work were half done: but (as says the proverb of the antients) "They who will not be counselled cannot be helped." How should those attain to knowledge and grace, who will not be reconciled to the means of knowledge and grace?

In this text Solomon gives such an account of those (in a few words) whom he found he could do no good to, as makes their folly manifest before all men. Though this princely preacher made it his business still to teach the people knowledge; though his sermons were elaborate and well-studied, for he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs; though his discourses were plain and practical, sententious and methodical; though he took pains to find out acceptable words, and that which was written was upright, even words of truth;[a] yet there were those who were never the better for such a preacher, and such preaching. Now Solomon gives this short account of them, and then leaves you to judge concerning them; they refuse instruction, and in so doing they despise their own souls. We who have the Gospel preached among us, and wisdom herself by it teaching in our streets, may truly say, *Behold a greater than Solomon is here;* and yet, as to multitudes, he stretches out his hand in

[a] Ecc. 12. 9, 10.

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vain; even Israel is not gathered, his ministers labour in vain among them. And what is the reason?

I. They refuse instruction. The fool in the text (and he is, without doubt, more despicable than the fool in the play) is described to be one who refuseth instruction, פּוֹרֵעַ מוּסָר. We have the same words, and thus translated,—*Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction;*[a] that neglects instruction, (so some) puts it far from him, and sets himself at a distance from it; not only because he hates it, but because he fears it. That strips himself of instruction, (that is another signification of the word, not only *elongare*, but *denudare*)—*shaking off* his education, as a garment he will not be heated with, or hampered with, makes himself naked, to his shame. Nay, the original word has a further signification, (*ulcisci*) He that will be *revenged on instruction;* that takes it for an affront, and studies revenge, if he be told of his faults.

The word for instruction the margin reads *correction;* for in our fallen state, when we are all wrong, that which instructs us must correct us; we cannot be taught to do well, but we must be shewed wherein we have done ill. *The rod and reproof give wisdom.* The corrections of Providence are intended for instruction; *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest.* But many, though they cannot help being chastened, yet refuse and reject the instruction designed them by the chastening, and will not learn any of the many good lessons designed to be taught them by the chastening: instead of that, they strive with their maker, and kick against the pricks. They will not comply with the correction, or answer the ends of it. They refuse discipline; they will not be under check and controul, will no more be admonished.

1. They refuse to hear instruction; they turn their backs upon the word, and will not come where it is preached, if they can help it. Wisdom cries, and they get out of the hearing of her cries, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. A little formality of devotion they can dispense with, to save their credit, and keep up their reputation among men, *Missa non mordet—And being dismissed it no longer stings,* but the close and powerful application of the word, as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, they cannot bear: they cannot go so far as Ezekiel's hearers, to whom his preaching was as a lovely song,[b] charming enough, and which, as they heard it, helped to lull them asleep; but it is to them as the sound of a trumpet, the alarm of war; it makes their ears to tingle, and therefore they get as far as they can from it.

2. They refuse to heed it; like the deaf Adder, they (if they should come within hearing of it) stop their ears, and will not hearken to the voice of the *charmer, charm he never so wisely.*[c] If they cannot keep it from sounding in their ears, they keep it from sinking into their hearts, and, if possible, will keep it from going any further. They do not value instruction, they see no need of it, and, therefore, do not desire it. *The word of the Lord is to them a reproach,*[d] they are weary of it; yea, though it should come from the mouth of Christ himself; witness the lawyer that complained, *Master, in so saying, thou reproachest us also,* Luke 11. 45.

3. They refuse to comply with it; they will do as they have a mind, whatever they are told or taught to the contrary; they have loved strangers, and whatever you can say to put them out of love with them, after them they will go.[e] They hold fast deceit, though they are told of the deceitfulness of it, and refuse to return.[f] This is the way of many, who are running headlong upon their own ruin, and hate to be stopped.

But it may be thought improper for me to insist upon this now, when I am called to address myself to a number of serious young men, who are every Lord's Day evening catechised in this place, and who are so far from refusing instruction, that they covet it, they delight in it, they are forward to receive it, and, as the good ground, drink in this rain, that comes often upon them; who have piously projected and combined to set up this exercise, and diligently attend it, not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of many; for what is said to them, is said to all; and whoever will, may come and feed upon that bread of life which is broken to them.

Yet to them it may be of use to hear of the sin and folly of them who refuse instruction, of the many that do so.

(1.) Bless God, who made you to differ; and let his grace have all the glory, which has given your hearts, by nature corrupt as others, such a different bent from what it was, from what others are: that you are crying after knowledge, when others are crying out against it; are seeking it as silver,[g] when others are seeking silver only, and not it; are delighting to know God's ways, when others are delighting in the by-paths of sin and vanity; are helping to let many into the knowledge of Christ, when there are those who are contriving to take away the key of knowledge; you have reason to say with thankfulness, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?*[h] You ought not to take a pride in it, the honour of it is spoiled if you do so, you have nothing to boast of: but you ought to give God the praise, the honour of it is doubled if you do so, for you have a great deal to be thankful for. Who teacheth like God?

(2.) Take heed, lest any of you should, notwithstanding this, be found among those who refuse instruction; who are pleased with it, and yet are not ruled by it. It is not enough for you to have a pleasing relish of divine truths, but you must be delivered into the mould of them; your souls must be transformed by them, and conformed to them. The instructions given you, must be transcribed and copied out into your whole conversations, must guide and regulate them; must not only restrain them from the gross pollutions of sin, but must beautify and adorn them with every thing that is excellent and praise-worthy.

[a] Exc. 13. 18. [b] Ezek. 33. 32. [c] Ps. 58. 4, 5. Jer. 6. 10. [d] Jer. 6. 10. [e] Jer. 2. 25. [f] Jer. 8. 5. [g] Pro. 2. 3, 4. [h] John 14. 22.

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You who are so much in the mount with God on the Lord's Day, ought to shew it, as Moses did, by the shining of your faces, in all instances of wisdom and grace, all the week after. That man does but shame himself, who boasts how long he went to the writing-school, and yet writes a bad hand; or to the dancing-school, and, yet, has a graceless carriage; much more does that man do so, who boasts how much he has been conversant with the principles of the Christian religion, and yet submits not to the laws of it, nor practises according to it.

(3.) Pity those who refuse instruction, and do not despise them, but if you can do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help them.—You may have an opportunity, perhaps in your common converse, to influence some who have hitherto turned a deaf ear to the calls of God, to be willing to hearken to Christ, and to bring them in by degrees to a liking of those truths of God which they have been prejudiced against, and those instances of serious godliness which they have looked upon with contempt; and they that will not be won by the word, may be won upon by your conversation with them.[a]

(4.) What is said of the folly of those who refuse instruction, is the commendation of the wisdom of those who receive instruction. You do well for yourselves, and so it will appear shortly; and therefore go on and prosper, for the Lord is with you while you be with him: encourage yourselves and one another in so good a work, and be not weary in well-doing.

II. They who refuse instruction thereby make it to appear, that they despise their own souls; they evidence that they have very low and mean thoughts of their souls. Now this is here mentioned as a very absurd thing, and that which no rational man will own himself guilty of, and yet which every wicked man is really guilty of. He who refuseth instruction, μισεῖ ἑαυτὸν,—so the Seventy,—*he hates himself;* despises himself; for *Animus cujusque is est quisque,—The soul is the man.*

There is a despising ourselves which is commendable, and our duty, the same with denying ourselves, abasing, abhoring, and humbling ourselves. The poor in spirit despise themselves; those who are willing to suffer rather than to sin, despise their own lives, and do not count them dear. This gracious self-contempt is a qualification for the greatest honour and advancement, to which nothing is a greater bar than self-conceit, and making an idol of ourselves.

But there is a despising of ourselves and of our own souls, which is culpable, and of pernicious consequence, such a piece of folly as is the cause of abundance of other folly, and particularly this of refusing instruction. By giving us divine revelation for the enlightening and directing, the renewing and sanctifying of our souls, God has put the greatest honour imaginable upon them, has distinguished them not only from the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven, but from many and mighty nations of the earth. Now if we regard not the dictates of divine revelation, we throw away this honour that God has put upon our souls, and declare that we do not value it.

[a] 1 Pet. 3. 1.

The honour of the soul is, that it is rational and immortal: now they who refuse divine instruction despise their own souls under both these considerations; for the design of that instruction is to cure, direct, and cultivate the rational powers of the soul, to support their authority, and assist their operations; if, therefore, we have any value for that part of their honour, we shall receive that instruction. It is likewise intended to prepare the soul for its future and immortal state, and so to secure to it a blessed immortality: if, therefore, we have any value for that part of our soul's honour, we shall reckon the instructions of God's word well worthy of all acceptation.

But I shall speak to it more generally, that I may take in more of the many instances of contempt which people put upon their own souls. And being desired to address myself particularly to young people, I know not how I could better serve the design I have in view, which is to engage them to be truly religious betimes, than by possessing them with a value for their own souls, and arming them against the folly of despising them. If the soul is the man, (as certainly it is) as there is a holy self-love, so there is a holy self-esteem which is necessary to that due concern which we all ought to have about our souls and eternity.

Take this then for the Doctrine,
That it is the greatest absurdity and folly imaginable for men to despise their own souls. Or thus, It is the original error of wilful sinners, that they undervalue their own souls.

In prosecution of this I shall endeavour,—I. To shew who they are that despise their own souls.—II. To prove the absurdity and folly of it.—III. To make some application of it.

I. How do people make it appear that they despise their own souls? Who—where—is he that is guilty of such a gross absurdity?

1. Some despise their own souls in opinion; who advance notions of the human soul that derogate from the honour of it, and put men upon a level with the beasts that perish; that care not how mean a character they put upon the soul, so they can but place their own souls from under God's government and judgment.

The Atheists and Sadducees of the age, that believe there is no substance but matter, and shut out all incorporeal nature out of the number of beings, and consequently make their own souls to be only a particular species of matter modified and put in motion, so as to produce sense and perception, and that that is it which thinks and apprehends, that reflects and deliberates, doubts and determines, chuses and refuses; that all the performances of philosophy and politics are the products of matter and motion; and, in short, that man is but a very little above the beasts, whereas the

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the word of God has made him but a little below the angels. The absurdity of these notions is philosophically demonstrated by Dr. Bentley, in his "Confutation of Atheism from the faculties of the soul." But it is no wonder that men can look within them and say "They have no souls," when they are such fools as to look about them and say *There is no God.*

Many who would be thought to understand themselves better than their neighbours, that they may get clear of the obligations of reason and conscience, under colour of wit, wage war with Wisdom; and that they may not be charged with neglecting the salvation, or incurring the damnation of their own souls, chuse rather to despise them, as not capable either of salvation or damnation; and that they may not come under the imputation of acting unreasonably, ridicule reason, as the *Ignis fatuus—the vapour* of the mind; so it is called in a profane poem which I remember to have seen in manuscript long since, (I know not whether ever it was printed) called, "A satire upon man." It begun thus:

> Were I (who to my cost already am
> One of those strange prodigious creatures man)
> A spirit, free to chuse for my own share
> What case of flesh and blood I'd please to wear,
> I'd rather be a monkey, dog, or bear,
> Or any thing than that vain animal
> That boasts himself of being rational.

Those who speak thus scornfully of that noble rank of beings, and of the faculties and capacities of their own souls, make me think of that of Solomon, Ecc. 10. 3. *When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.*

Those despise their own souls who deny the immortality of them; who, that they may justify themselves in living like beasts, expect no other but to die like beasts. *Ede, bibe, lude, post mortem nulla voluptas,—Let us eat, drink, and play, for after death there is no pleasure. Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die,*[a] and there is an end of us. What a contempt do they put upon this candle of the Lord, who think it is put out by death, whereas, it is only taken out of a dark lanthorn and set upon a candlestick, where it extends its light much further! And how ridiculously do the pretenders to free-thinking insinuate that Solomon, in his Ecclesiastes, (ch. 3. 21.) speaks doubtfully of the existence of the soul in a state of separation from the body, *Who knows that the spirit of a man goes upward?* Whereas he speaks so very expressly, and with the greatest assurance of it, in the same book, (ch. 12. 7.) that *when the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it;* and in that other place only speaks as one in the dark concerning the manner of its removal to that separate state; none knows the way of the spirit,[b] either into the body, or out of it.

The sober Heathen will rise up in judgment against such men of this generation, and will condemn them; for though they had no divine revelation, as we have, to acquaint them how man at first became a living soul; that there is a spirit in man, and that the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding; that death itself cannot kill the soul; and, that it shall be redeemed from the power of the grave; yet had admirable notions of the excellent nature of the human soul, and of its immortality: they looked upon it to be a ray of divine light, a spark of divine fire. *Quid aliud voces Animam quam Deum in Corpore hospitantem, What can you call the soul but God dwelling in the body?* says Tully. He could not say, that the soul of man was made in the image of God and after his likeness, because he was not told so, as we are, but he says that which is equivalent.

But among you here, I hope, I need not enlarge upon these things; you know and believe that God has given to every man a soul of his own which is immaterial, intelligent, and immortal, which is formed by the Father of Spirits, is nearly allied to the world of spirits, and must shortly remove to that world. The Lord strengthen and increase our faith herein, and fortify us against the sly and subtile insinuations of those who lie in wait to deceive!

2. Many more, who give not in with the notions of those who thus in opinion despise their own souls, and professedly degrade them, yet in practice despise them; as those who will give to a great man his titles of honour, and yet look upon him as a vile person who is to be contemned. As many, who, profess they know God, and his glory, so many, who, profess they know the dignity of their own souls, yet in works deny both the one and the other.

Those despise their own souls, (1.) Who abuse them. (2.) Who hazard them. (3.) Who neglect them. (4.) Who prefer their bodies before them.

(1.) Those who abuse their own souls, may truly be said to despise them. Those we do injury to we put the greatest contempt upon, as not worthy to have right done them. Solomon fastens this brand of foolishness and madness upon those who sin against God, that they wrong their own souls, to that degree, that they may be said to be in love with the death and ruin of them.[c] Those who wrong their servants, and abuse them, shew that they despise them, and set them with the dogs of their flock: so those who without compassion, or even sense of equity and justice, put despite upon their souls, do indeed despise them. O what base usage do many people give their own souls, and as the Ostrich against her young ones, are hardened against them as though they were not theirs.

[1.] Those abuse their own souls who devote them to the service of Satan; as all wilfully-wicked people do, who make themselves his children by doing his lusts,[d] and surrender themselves his slaves and vassals, to be led captive by him at his will,[e] and held fast in his snare; who, being children of disobedience, yield themselves not only to work for, but, which is worse, to be wrought upon by the Prince of

[a] Isa. 22. 13. [b] Ecc. 11. 5. [c] Pro. 8. 36. [d] Joh. 8. 44. [e] 2 Tim. 2. 26.

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the power of the air.[a] The faculties of the soul are employed in doing Satan's will, and serving his interest, so that the man seems listed under Satan's banner; he is for Baal, and not on the Lord's side; with Beelzebub, and, therefore, not only not with Christ, but against him.

It is the honour of our souls that they are made to be the *Temples of the Holy Ghost*, the living temples of the living God; they are capable of being so, and intended to be so; than which, what greater honour could be put upon them? But how then do those dishonour their own souls who suffer Satan that apostate from God and rebel against him, the head of the apostacy and rebellion, to keep his palace as a rival with God, nay, and to keep garrison as an enemy against God, in the soul, and are willing not only that his goods should be in peace, and unmolested, but that all the powers of the soul should be employed for him, and be armour for him to trust in.[b]

It is the honour of our souls, that they have a relation to heaven, are in alliance with that upper world; and though they have by sin very much lost their acquaintance with it, yet they are still through grace capable of keeping up a correspondence with it, and stand fair for an inheritance in it. What greater dishonour then can they put upon themselves, than by entering into a league with the Devil, (and all who go on still in their trespasses do so, instead of entering into a war with him,) who left his first estate there, was shamefully thrust out thence, cast down to Hell, and is in no manner of hopes, as we are, to retrieve the honour from which he is degraded? Shall fire from Heaven mingle itself with fire from Hell? or that spirit of a man which is the candle of the Lord, the light which lighteth every man that cometh into this world, come into the interests of the rulers of the darkness of this world? Can it forget itself so far?

It is the honour of our souls that they are made capable of serving God, of doing his will, carrying on his work, and so of pleasing him, and praising him, and advancing the interests of his kingdom among men: those souls, therefore, are basely abused that are subjected to the power of Satan, and are under his conduct. Our Saviour has represented this to us in the parable of the prodigal son, who when he had spent and wasted all his portion, (representing the wretched havock which outrageous sinners make of their knowledge and gifts, the sparks of virtue that were struck into their minds by a good education, and the convictions of their own consciences,) then disparaged himself to the last degree, when he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine;[c] representing the slavery, that is, both the ignominy and the drudgery, which sinners submit themselves to, by giving themselves up to the service of Satan, and looking upon his temptations not as the assaults of an adversary, which are to be resisted, but as the commands of a master, which are to be obeyed; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage; as all those are who are the servants of corruption.[d]

What! Is the Devil a master good enough for a soul that has God for its maker? Is feeding swine, making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, work good enough for a soul that is capable of glorifying and enjoying God? Are husks, the food of swine, proper provision for a soul that is capable of being feasted with Angels' food? What disparagement is it to a soul to serve its enemies, that tyrannize over it, and seek its ruin, especially since, if it had any spark of honour left in it, it might by divine grace easily and certainly not only regain a glorious liberty from them, but gain a more glorious victory over them! O that the sounding of the jubilee trumpet, which proclaims the release of captives, might awaken and animate poor enslaved souls, to think their own liberty from Satan's yoke worth struggling for, and to exert themselves accordingly. Let them apply to their own case what God by the Prophet says to the Jews in Babylon, *Awake, awake, put on thy strength*,[e] O Zion. Put on thy strength, O soul, put on a holy resolution, in dependance upon divine grace, no longer to be ruled by a base lust, and led captive by Satan: throw away the rags of thy slavery, and put on thy beautiful garments; be bold, and appear great; for if thou wilt but take Christ for thy Redeemer and Ruler, and give up thyself entirely to him, he will undertake that henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean, that have no right to rule thee, but a design to ruin thee; sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace. And therefore, as it follows there, *Shake thyself from the dust*, the dust of the earth, dirt it should rather be called, that dust into which by sin thou art not only fallen, but in a manner turned; for dust thou art, earthly and carnal, and corrupt thou art, shake thyself from that, and arise, and sit down, to consider what thou hast to do, and resolve to loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion: despise not thyself, despise not thy own soul any longer by a sneaking submission to the tyranny of Satan, but reach out to, and take up not short of the glorious liberty of God's children.

[2.] Those abuse their own souls who defile them with the pollutions of sin; who having devoted themselves to the conduct of the unclean Spirit, are unclean like him, and work all manner of uncleanness. All sin is defiling to the mind and to the conscience, brings a blot and stain upon the soul, which renders it odious in the eyes of the holy God, and nauseous, and uneasy too, to itself, whenever it comes to have spiritual senses exercised; renders it unfit to approach to God, and to eat of the holy things, as ceremonial pollutions under the law did. Now what an abuse is it to the soul, whose happiness consists in the enjoyment of God and itself, to be thus made offensive to both; afraid of its God, and ashamed of itself? What mean

[a] Eph. 2. 2. [b] Luke 11. 21, 22. [c] Luke 15. 15. [d] 2 Peter 21. 19. [e] Isa. 52. 1.

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thoughts have those of their own souls who can do them this indignity, do them this injury, rather than deny themselves the gratification of a base lust! Let us, therefore, shew that we have really a value for our own souls, by hastening to make use of the water of purification provided for them in the blood of Christ, that the conscience being sprinkled with that, may be purged from dead works, and so restored to the service and enjoyment of the living God, and the privileges of his sanctuary, from which we had debarred ourselves.[a]

But fleshly lusts are in a particular manner defiling, all the irregular inordinate use of the pleasures and delights of sense; these are said to war against the soul, against its purity and peace, and enjoyment of itself; they are a reproach and disparagement to the soul: and, therefore, we sadly abuse our souls when we think to refresh ourselves by bathing in the filthy muddy streams of sensual pleasures, by which we do but defile ourselves, and like the sow wallow in the mire.

It is the honour of our souls that they are capable of spiritual and heavenly pleasures; of entertaining themselves with divine contemplations and devout affections, the pleasures of which may be brought near to the delights of blessed spirits above, that are already entered into the joy of our Lord. And those maintain the honour of their souls, who by faith and love, by prayer and meditation, keep up their correspondence with heaven. But how do those despise their souls, and this honour put upon them, who, not only neglect those heavenly entertainments, but disfit themselves for them, and exclude themselves from them by the guilt they contract every day in the use of the pleasures of sense, which become pleasures of sin to them!

For the soul to be thrown from its rest in God, where only it can find true rest, to be shut out from its communion with God, to be put in confusion in its approaches to God, and made uneasy to itself, is to have a deal of wrong done it, and a great deal of contempt put upon it: and all this they do in their own souls who go a whoring after their own inventions, and so are defiled with their own works, with their own ways.[b]

[3.] Those abuse their own souls who deceive them with lies and falshoods; those certainly put a contempt upon them who put a cheat upon them, and delude them with flatteries to act against their own true interest. A man justly reckons himself affronted, and resents it accordingly, who is imposed upon with sham and banter; it is a reflection upon his understanding, as if he were not able to discern the fraud, as well as a wrong to his interests, which are prejudiced by it: and yet, perhaps, he is doing the same thing to his own soul. Taking advantage of its credulity in favour of itself, he not only suffers it to persist in its mistakes, and guards against the rectifying of them, but does all he can to rivet and confirm them.

How many cheats do people put upon their own souls, which will turn at last to their own ruin, for self-flatterers and self-deceivers will prove in the end to have been self-destroyers! How do they make themselves believe the strangest and grossest absurdities, and proceed upon them as if they were undoubted truths! There is none bad, but they are so upon some bad principle, which, if it were true, would bear them out; but it is a strong delusion. The wicked heart is a deceived heart, that turns men aside; and none perish, but it is with a lie in their right hand.[c] And it is with lying vanities that they are deceived who forsake their own mercies.[d] They who mock God, and think to put a cheat upon him, do but deceive themselves, and put a damning cheat upon their own souls.[e]

When the word of God, which is a discerner of the thoughts, tells us what sinners say in their hearts; or, as sometimes it is in the original, say to their hearts, we may thence infer what slights they put upon their own souls, and how they abuse them. The fool appeases his conscience with this, that there is no God; or if there be, that he may go on securely in his wicked way, for *the Lord hath forsaken the earth*;[f] *He hath forgotten, he hides his face, and will not require it.*[g] *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard.*[h] Did ever any man banter another as sinners banter their own souls, run them down with assurance, and beguile them with fraud and artifice?

When the soul begins to be afraid of the wrath of God, and to think of fleeing from it by repentance, it is abused with this suggestion, that there is no danger; as God is not so strict in his demands, so he is not so severe in his punishments as the Scripture makes him to be. God has indeed said, *There is no peace to the wicked;* but when the sinner comes to apply it to himself, he tells his own soul, *I shall have Peace, though I go on to walk in the way of my heart, and to add drunkenness to thirst.*[i] He says in his heart, *I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity.*[k] He is drawn into an opinion, and lulled asleep with it, that Heaven is a fool's paradise, and Hell is but a bugbear to frighten children, and therefore he is taught to mock at fear, and not to be affrighted, and not to believe that it is the sound of the trumpet.

They who flatter themselves with a conceit that the external professions and performances of religion will serve to bear them out, and bring them off, in the judgment of the Great Day, though their spirit and conversation be ever so disagreeable, give the lie to their own consciences, and tell a lie to them, and in both abuse and despise their own souls. Thus the Apostle tells us, that he, who only seems to be religious, and is not so really, deceives his own heart, seduces it, misleads it, and so abuses it; and, that they who are hearers of the word only, and not doers, do but deceive themselves;[l] they put a fallacy or false reasoning upon themselves, and not in a small matter which one may

[a] Heb. 9. 14, Ps. 106. 39.

[c] Isa. 44. 20. [d] Jon. 2. 8. [e] Gal. 6. 7. [f] Ezek. 9. 9. [g] Ps. 10. 11, 13. [h] Ps. 94. 7. [i] Deut. 29. 19. [k] Ps. 10. 6. [l] Jam. 1. 22, 26.

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safely make a jest of, but in a matter of the greatest consequence, which every man is concerned to be in good earnest about.

Let us, therefore, do this justice to our own souls, and put this respect upon them, to tell them the truth: Let one faculty deal faithfully with another; for if they act separately, it will be to the ruin of the whole. Let the understanding be true to the conscience in informing it right concerning truth and falshood, good and evil; and then let the conscience be true to the soul in applying it, otherwise we put a contempt upon our own souls.

[4.] Those abuse their own souls who distract and disquiet them with inordinate cares and griefs about this world, and the things of it. As those despise their souls who wallow in the mire of sensual pleasures, so do they who make them work in the mines, and tug at the oar of worldly pursuits; who rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow,[a] in the business of this world; who are careful and cumbered about many things, and have their hearts burthened and quite overcharged with an anxious solicitude, not only what they shall eat and drink, but what they shall do to get estates and grow great in the world.

It is our duty to labour, working with our hands the thing that is good. It is our sentence to eat our bread in the sweat of our faces; and it is our sin and folly, and an abuse to our own souls, if, all our days, we eat in sorrows and darkness,[b] always in fear of losing what we have, and always in care to make it more, to lay house to house, and field to field,[c] with an insatiable and boundless desire. If we be hurried hither and thither with the cares of this world; if our souls be put upon the rack, always to the stretch in pursuit of lying vanities; if we be of doubtful mind, live in careful suspence,[d] if we hover as meteors in the air, (so the word signifies) so that we have no rest or enjoyment of ourselves, we abuse our own souls.

It is the honour of our souls that they are made capable of working, for the glory of God, and the securing of eternal life; of working for another world, in preparation for it, working out our own salvation; and of working with another world, in concert with it; of doing the will of God as the Angels do it who are in Heaven. What a disparagement then is it to these souls, to make them slaves and drudges to the world, and to keep all their faculties employed in the work of the beasts that perish, while those high and noble services for which they were designed are last and least thought of! Covetous worldlings are said to load themselves with thick clay, and with a continual perplexity about it; such perfect pack-horses do they make of their souls, and so fast do they chain them to this earth, when they should be mounting up with wings like eagles heavenwards.

Let us, therefore, maintain the dignity of our own souls by disentangling them from the world, and the cares of it, and managing ourselves with a holy indifference as to those things, rejoicing as though we rejoiced not, and weeping as though we wept not, and letting our souls dwell at ease, in an assurance of the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Providence working all for our good at last, and putting it out of the power of any worldly cross or disappointment to disturb us in that repose. This is to treat our souls respectfully, and as they ought to be treated, reserving them for the employments that become them, and that they are fitted for. Let us think it below us to fill our heads with contrivances about those things, which, when we have compassed them, we cannot fill our hearts with the enjoyment of them; nor suffer the losing of that to be vexation of spirit to us, the having of which is but vanity, and no satisfaction of spirit.

[5.] Those abuse their own souls who divide them a portion of the things of this world, and put them off with those things. As the soul is abused by an inordinate coveting and pursuing of the world, so it is abused by an inordinate complacency and repose in the world; for though that may give it a present easiness, and so seem to befriend it, yet it cuts it off from its true happiness, and lays a foundation for an eternal uneasiness.

Those know how to value their own souls, who can be content with a little of this world for their passage, because there is better in reserve; but those greatly undervalue them, who could be content with it all for their inheritance and home.

It is the honour of the soul, that its original and alliance is heavenly: it stands in relation to the upper world, and, therefore, it is a debasement to it to let it take up with the things of this world for its felicity, which can neither suit its capacities, nor satisfy its vast desires. This is excellently expressed by Mr. George Herbert:

> If souls be made of earthly mould,
> Let them love gold;
> If born on high,
> Let them unto their kindred fly:
> For they can never be at rest
> Till they regain their ancient nest.

It is the honour of the soul, that it is spiritual, and is capable of spiritual enjoyments, spiritual riches: Those, therefore, put a slight upon them who think that the entertainments of sense, which we have in common with the brutes, are sufficient to make them happy, and can call them *Their good things*.[e] A father cannot more shew his displeasure against a son he is irreconcileably fallen out with, than in making his will to cut him off with twelvepence, who, otherwise, was entitled to a child's part of a great estate: yet much greater is the disproportion between the happiness which the souls of men are born to, and that which the greatest part of men foolishly take up with, as their reward, as their consolation, as their all, and which, therefore, they shall justly be put off with: *Didst not thou agree with me for a penny?* And, therefore so shall thy doom be.

[a] Ps. 127. 2. [b] Ecc. 5. 17. [c] Isa. 5. 8. [d] Luke 12. 29. [e] Luke 16, 25.

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It is the honour of the soul that it is immortal, is so in its duration, and has something in its constitution, which, if it were not blinded and biassed by the world and the flesh, would aspire after immortal blessedness; *Non est Mortale quod optat, Immortale petit—It desires not mortal, but seeks immortal objects.* How do they then dishonour their own souls, who take up a rest and home for them in those things that will not last so long as they must last, that must be very shortly either buried in our graves, or left to our heirs, and will not go with us to the judgment, nor stand us in any stead in the soul's state of separation from the body; who confine their happiness within the bounds of time, whereas they are not themselves so confined, but are hastening into a boundless eternity! And thus the soul's being must survive, must eternally survive its bliss, and, therefore, must of course be eternally miserable.

How did that rich man in the parable despise and abuse his own soul, who, when he had his barns enlarged and filled, said to his soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years,* it is all thine own, and it is enough, it is thine all, now, *take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!* [a] If the man had had the soul of a swine, it had been something to talk to it at this rate; but what is this to a soul that must this night be required, that must this night remove it knows not where, and must leave all these things behind, to it knows not who? From his folly let us all learn this wisdom for ourselves, this justice and kindness to our own souls, to lay up treasure for them, not in this world, which we are hastening from, but in the other world, which we are hastening to.

(2.) Those despise their own souls who hazard them, and lay them open to danger, as well as those who abuse them, and do them a direct mischief. What we value we are loth to venture the loss of: those who know how to value their souls will not endanger their souls' lives; yet this is that which multitudes do, without any regret or reflection upon their own folly.

[1.] Those hazard their souls who expose them to the wrath and curse of God every day by wilful sin, upon presumption that after a while they shall repent of their sin, and it shall be forgiven them, and all shall be well. Those have very light thoughts of their own souls, who can thus venture them in hopes of God's mercy, when at the same time they bid defiance to his justice.

It is certain that every wilful sin lays us open to the curse of God, and to the arrests of his law; and it is the soul that is exposed. As the sin is the sin of the soul, so the curse it brings upon us is a curse to the soul: so it is expressed with an emphasis, (Job. 31. 30.) by wishing a curse to his soul, which will destroy it and all its comforts, as a curse in the house consumes it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof. A curse upon the soul is a penetrating thing, it comes into the bowels like water, and like oil into the bones. [b] How little account do they make of their souls who run them upon this sword's point, and tremble not at all at the apprehension of their danger! They do in effect say, "No matter what becomes of them." They are by nature as children of disobedience, children of wrath, and that wrath they not only leave abiding on them, [c] but are daily adding to it, and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, not considering what a deluge of wrath it will be when this treasury comes to be broken up, nor what will become of their souls in that deluge; it is as much as to say, they care not what comes of them.

It is true, there is a way of escaping that wrath, by repentance and faith in Christ, but these are God's gift, and his work, for those who pray for them, not for those that presume upon them. It is but a peradventure, whether God will give repentance, whether the Divine Providence will give space to repent, and whether the divine grace will give a heart to repent, a tender heart, to those who have thus hardened their hearts by the deceitfulness of sin. Those have certainly little regard to their own souls, who throw them thus into the fire of God's wrath, in hopes of snatching them as brands out of it, when there is such danger of perishing in it.

But, of all sinners, none do more impudently avow and proclaim their contempt of their own souls than those do who curse themselves in their passions or vehement asseverations; who challenge God Almighty to damn them, nay, and sometimes explain themselves, and challenge him with a horrid emphasis to damn their souls: as if they thought that their damnation lingered and slumbered too long, they imprecate that which the Devils themselves deprecated, and that is, being tormented before the time. Do they know what damnation is, what the damnation of the soul is, who dare thus run upon God, upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler, and stretch out their hands against him? [d] Those make nothing of their own souls, who make nothing of God's wrath, nor consider what a fearful thing it is for a living soul, who hates holiness, to fall into the hands of a living God, who hates sin, and will reckon for it.

[2.] Those hazard their souls who embark them in a false and deceitful bottom, and in that venture them into the vast ocean of eternity. We have a house to build for our souls, for them to retire to and repose in when a storm comes, when the night comes: now, if we build this house upon the sand, when there is a rock provided for us to build it upon, it is a sign that we despise our own souls, and think any thing will serve to be a security for them; as it is a sign that a man makes small account of his money when he puts it out upon very slender security, and cares not who he trusts with it, nor what hands he lodges it in.

It is a great thing (my brethren) to venture into another world, to be brought to judgment, and to have our everlasting state determined by an irreversible sentence: and it concerns us all seriously to consider what hope we have that we shall come off well in that day, and what ground we have for that hope: whe-

[a] Luke 12. 19. [b] Ps. 109. 18. [c] Joh. 3. 36. [d] Job 15. 25, 26.

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ther it be a hope that will not make us ashamed. You are baptized, you are called Christians, you make a visible profession of religion, a passable, perhaps a plausible one; you have a form of godliness, and perhaps join yourselves with those who are most strict and serious; and this, you think, will be a good security to you for the favour of God, and the happiness of Heaven, though you are strangers to the power of godliness, and are under the dominion of the world and the flesh. It is a sign that you know not the worth of your souls, when you dare venture them thus upon that which will not bear their weight.

Those despise their souls who can send them to God's bar with no other plea in their hands but that, *We are Abraham's seed:* or that, *I am rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin.*[a] Or that, *We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets:* or that, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we,* though they have no evidence at all for them that they love God, or believe in Christ, or repent of their sins, or that they are sanctified by the grace of God. They would not bring a cause to man's bar supported with no better pleas, that will certainly be over-ruled; nor venture a rich cargo in an old rotten vessel, that a thousand to one founders at sea.

Let us, therefore, shew the esteem we have for our own souls, by building upon a firm foundation, and making sure work for them, and preparing that for their removal into another world which will stand them in stead, and which they may triumph in. Let us not think it enough when we die, to say, We commit our souls into the hands of Almighty God, and to cry, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit;* but let us make it the care and business of our lives to prepare our souls, and get them made meet to be committed into the hands of God and Christ, and to be welcomed, that it may not be said to them, *Depart, I know you not:* these are not souls prepared for Heaven, and therefore Heaven was not prepared for them.——Let not us run a risk in the concerns of our souls, but press after that assurance which blessed Paul had attained when he said, *I know whom I have believed,* whom I have trusted with this precious soul of mine, that great trust which I have lodged in the hands of the great trustee, and he is able to keep that which I have submitted to his conduct, and then committed to his care against that day.[b]

[3.] Those hazard their souls who engage them as a pawn for the world, and the gains of it. They are aiming at great things here below, they will be rich, for they think they must be rich, or they cannot be happy. And this mistake makes way for a thousand more. They are in haste to be rich, and are told, that they who are so cannot be innocent;[c] yet they will hazard their innocence, and with it all the comfort and happiness of their souls, rather than not be rich, than not be quickly rich. Contrary to the judgment of Christ, they think themselves profited if they gain the world, though they should lose their souls at last by it.

Here's a bargain to be made, some worldly design to be compassed, which, with the help of a lie, of a fraud, of a false oath, may bring home a great deal of worldly advantage: they cannot but own that such ill practices are highly dangerous to their souls, that they run a great hazard by them. Natural conscience at first startles at such things, but it is for the getting of money, a present gain, and which they think is certain, and not loseable. The loss of the soul is future, and they are willing to think it either uncertain or retrievable, and, therefore, they resolve to run the hazard; they flatter themselves with hopes that they may gain the world, and save their souls, too: however, if they can but gain the world, let the worst come to the worst, if they do lose their souls, they shall fare as well as their neighbours; and if they alone must bear it, they will bear it as well as they can. Now this is making light of the soul indeed, to hazard its eternal bliss for an inconsiderable trifle of this world's wealth, and then to turn it off with a jest, *If I perish, I perish,* and there is an end of it: no, there is not an end of it, for it is an everlasting destruction; and those who run this venture will see their folly when it is too late, and will be taught by the loss of their souls to know the worth of them, which they had better have considered in time.

How ready are many vain people to pawn their souls for the truth of every idle word they speak; "Upon my soul it is so." Verily they make light of their souls indeed, who will venture them upon the most trifling occasion. Dost thou know what thou pawnest, man, and what the value of it is? Thou wouldst not be so free of a precious stone, if thou hadst it, as thou art of a precious soul. Those play high, that whether in jest or earnest, stake their souls, and do not consider what a subtile gamester the Devil is, that souls are the prize he aims at; and that it is them he lies in wait to deceive, and so to devour: and, if we be so foolish as to hazard their ruin,—let him alone, to make sure their ruin.

Let us, therefore, make it appear that we do not despise our own souls, by taking heed to them, and keeping them diligently, keeping them out of harm's way, keeping them that the wicked one toucheth them not;[d] for there is danger, lest if he touch, he take. Let us avoid all occasions of sin, and temptations to it, all appearances of evil, and approaches toward it, and take heed of a bold adventure in any case wherein the soul is concerned, for fear of the worst. In things of value, and that our all, it is good to be sure, and folly to run a hazard; to hazard a soul for that which a man would be loath to hazard his life.

(3.) Those despise their own souls that neglect them, and though they do not, or think they do not do themselves and their own souls any harm, yet are not at any care to do them the good they should do them.

[a] Hos. 12. 8. [b] 2 Tim. 1. 12. [c] Pro. 28. 20. [d] 1 John 5. 18.

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They think it is well enough if they do not wilfully destroy their souls, though nothing is done towards the salvation of them; whereas starving the child is as surely the murder of it as poisoning it. Those certainly despise their own souls who make no provision for them.

[1.] Who take no care to get the wounds of their souls healed. Sin is a wound to the soul, a bleeding killing wound, a wound and dishonour: Jesus Christ has made provision for the cure of this wound, there is balm in Gilead, and he himself is the Physician there; by his stripes we may be healed; but in vain doth the Physician do his part in prescribing, if the patient will not do his in observing the prescriptions. Christ would have healed them, but they would not be healed; and so as David complains, the *wounds stink and are corrupt*, and all because of the sinner's foolishness.[a] They fester, and are in danger of being gangrened, because no care is taken to get them drest: and thus the wound, not looked after in time, proves fatal.

Those who take no care to get their sins pardoned, and their consciences purified, and their corruptions mortified, leave their own souls as the Priest and Levite did the wounded man, because (like them) they have no value for them; they care not whether they live or die. They feel not the pain of their wounds in conviction of sin, they fear not the consequences of them in a dread of wrath, and so no application is made to Christ, no enquiry, What shall I do to get my sin pardoned? What method shall I take to escape the death they threaten me with? And so the soul is filled with wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores[b] which are not bound up.

It is certain that those fools who make a mock at sin, and make light of it, are chargeable with this further instance of folly, they make light of their own souls, and are not at all solicitous what becomes of them. By this, therefore, let us all make it appear that we value the lives of our souls, by enquiring, With what will the Lord be pleased? What shall we do to recover his favour? with a readiness to do any thing; to submit to any operation, to go through any course of spiritual physic prescribed, so that we may not die of our wounds. When we are reproved for a fault, and warned against it for the future, and are called to repent of what we have done amiss, if we fly in the face of the reprover, and say, we care not for his help who would help us up when we are fallen; it is a sign that we do not value our own souls; for we would thank any one that would thus offer his service to help to cure a wound in our bodies, or if we had missed our way, would put us in the road again. If, therefore, by falling into sin we have shewed our neglect of our souls, by hastening our repentance, let us shew our concern for them.

[2.] Those who take no care to get the wants of their souls supplied, despise them. The soul in its own nature is craving, and has desires which ought to be satisfied; but the soul in its fallen state is needy, it is miserably poor, it is ready to perish for hunger, as the prodigal in the far country. This world has nothing but husks for it: in our Father's house, and there only, there is bread enough. Now those have no value for themselves, who put off their souls with these husks, and think not of applying themselves to the Father of Spirits for the food of spirits, the bread of life.

The soul wants knowledge, wants to be acquainted with God its Maker, with Christ its Redeemer, with the employments it is brought up to, with the enjoyments it is designed for, wants to be acquainted with the upper world it is a-kin to, with the future world it is bound for. The needful knowledge of these things will not be got without care and gains. Now those who will rather let their own souls be destroyed for lack of knowledge, than take that care and pains, shew what a small account they make of them. They are in care to furnish themselves with that knowledge which is necessary to their getting a livelihood in this world, but not that which is necessary to their serving, glorifying, and enjoying God; and so in the greatness of their folly wander endlessly.

The soul wants to have communion with God, it is tired with the pursuits of the world, and surfeited with its pleasures, and longs to have fellowship with its own relations, to associate with those of its own kind, to have a correspondence with Heaven, wants to hear thence, and send thither; there is a way appointed for such an intercourse as this, which would be its life and joy; but holy ordinances, by which it is to be kept up and maintained, are neglected, and not attended on at all, or not duly attended to: the great things of God's law and gospel are accounted as a strange thing: prayer, by which the supply of our soul's wants should be fetched in from the fulness which is in Jesus Christ, is either omitted or sinks into a formality; and in all this a contempt is put upon the soul, as if it were not worth making provision for.

[3.] Those who take no care to get the watch over their own souls kept up, despise them. There ought to be a constant guard upon our own spirits, a jealous eye, and a careful hand upon them, that the first risings of corruption in them may be subdued and mortified, stifled and suppressed, and the first risings of any good affections in them cherished and encouraged: we must have an eye upon them, as upon children at their book, and servants at their work, to keep them to it: must have an eye upon these jewels in our hands, that they be not snatched from us. *Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.*[c] We are entrusted with these talents, and charged to keep that which is committed to our trust. And those who know how to value their souls, will keep them with all diligence, as knowing that out of them, out of souls well kept, are the issues of life.

But how many are there who have precious souls to keep, and never cast an eye upon them, nor make inquiries concerning them, where they are, or what they are doing, or what is likely to become of them; never

[a] Ps. 58. 5. [b] Isa. 1. 6.

[c] Deut. 4. 9.

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retire into their hearts, or commune with them; there is no care taken to keep out that which is dangerous and prejudicial to the soul's interests, nor to fetch in or keep up that which is necessary and will be serviceable to them.

And for want of watchfulness and circumspection, the soul soon becomes like the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, which when the stone-wall was broken down, was all grown over with thorns; and nettles covered the face thereof.[a] There's the picture of a neglected soul; it is all overgrown with vain and foolish thoughts, corrupt and vile affections, like the ground when it was cursed, which brought forth thorns and thistles. By these God is dishonoured, the soul is disgraced, all good fruit is choked, and the earth that brings forth these thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. It is sad to think how many precious souls, that stand fair for heaven, are ruined and undone to all eternity, through mere carelessness.

[4.] Those who take no care to get the welfare, the eternal welfare of their souls secured; they are hastening into a state where they must be for ever, either completely happy, or completely miserable, and never were truly solicitous what they should do to escape that misery, and to lay hold on that happiness: certainly these despise their own souls, they do not think them worth saving; not worth the jailor's inquiry, *What must I do to be saved?* or that young man's, *Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?* A thousand impertinences are inquired after, and the great concerns of the soul and eternity not regarded.

This honour God has put upon the soul, that he has not only by its creation made it capable of eternal life, but by its redemption made it a candidate for eternal life: but those despise this honour God has put upon them, who neglect the great salvation, and think it not worth taking any care about, or striving for; they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life; as is said of the unbelieving Jews.[b] It is not from a penitent sense of the sinfulness of their souls, but from a proud contempt of the capacities of their souls, which they do not think worth gratifying with that life, and the joys and glories of it. They are not at all solicitous what will become of them in the other world, so that they can but have their wishes in this world; nor have the wisdom of the unjust steward, who took care of a house to be in when he was turned out of his stewardship. It is to be feared, that even among those who are called Christians, read the scriptures, and hear sermons, there are many who never yet put the question seriously to themselves, "*What will become of me in the other world?* If I should die to-night, *Whither would death bring me?*"

Or if they have asked the question, they have not pursued it, nor brought it to any issue, but the matter is still at uncertainties; and they are content it should be so, and put off the prosecution of this inquiry, as Felix did, to some more convenient season; they know not when. When they come to be sick, or come to be old, then they will begin to think of their souls and eternity, and to prepare for another world, when they find they must stay no longer in this. What low thoughts do these delays speak of their own souls, as if their welfare were to be the last and farthest thing in their thoughts?

And those who seem to be in earnest in inquiring the way to heaven, yet perhaps do not like it when they are shewed it, but fly off from the bargain when it comes to be struck; as he did who went away sorrowful from Christ, because he had great possessions. Some value he had for his soul, else he had not gone away sorrowful; but he had a greater value for the world, else he had not gone away at all. Those who have a beloved sin, a Dalilah, an Herodias, a house of Rimmon, which they cannot find in their hearts to part with, no, not to save their souls, shew how little they value them: for those who know the worth of them will be glad to accept of Christ upon his own terms, of Christ upon any terms.

(4.) Those despise their own souls, who prefer their bodies before their souls. Man is a creature admirably composed of matter and spirit, that though closely united, have distinct and separate interests and capacities: it is the sinfulness and misery of our fallen state, that the body has got dominion over the soul, and the soul is become carnal; it also is flesh. It will be the felicity of our glorified state, that the soul will have the dominion, and the body itself will become spiritual; but it is the test now, in this state of trial and probation, which of these we will give the preference to, and maintain the dominion of, the soul or the body: now those may truly be said to despise their own souls comparatively, that prefer their bodies before them, and allow them their principal cares.

[1.] Those who employ their souls only to serve their bodies, and make provision for them, do in effect despise their own souls. The body was made to serve the soul, in serving God, and when it is kept so employed, it is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and upon that account truly honourable: but if, instead of that, the soul be made to serve the body in serving the world, and all its noble powers are kept at constant work to provide for the gratifications of the body and its appetites, this is a great contempt put upon the soul.

Many people live, as if they had bodies only to take care of, and not souls; or, as if the reasonable soul were intended only to forecast for the sensitive one; and man had no other prerogative above the beasts, but that with the use of his reason, he is capable to screw up the delights of sense to a greater degree of pleasure, and make them more nice and delicate; to improve by art the gifts of nature, which the inferior creatures are content to take as they find them; which, after all, does but make the desires of sense the more humoursome, and consequently the delights of sense the less pleasing.

But what a disparagement is this to a rational soul, to be wholly taken up in such sordid employments, and

[a] Pro. 24. 30, 31. [b] Acts 13. 46.

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and to be made a perfect drudge to the body; as if we had souls given us for no other end but to keep our bodies from putrifying; and the powers of reason served for no other purpose, but to be caterers for the desires of sense! This is that sore evil which Solomon saw under the sun, as an error, the servant on horseback, and the prince attending as a servant or lacquey to him.[a] When the wits are set on work to invent satisfactions for the appetites and passions, and the intellectual powers, which should be employed in the noblest speculations, and the most needful conduct of the heart and life, are employed in the meanest projects, here is a soul despised, and making itself truly despicable.

[2.] Those who injure their souls to please their bodies, comparatively despise their own souls, and shew they do not value them as they ought.

Those do so who indulge the ease of the flesh to the soul's loss and detriment, who, to spare a little pains to the body, come short of great advantages to the soul, which it might gain to itself either here or hereafter. The sluggard who will not plow by reason of cold, and, therefore, has nothing to gather in at harvest, but is forced to beg in winter, preferred his present ease before his future benefit: so do they, who, by observing the winds and clouds,[b] are hindered from sowing and reaping; and such is the incogitancy of those, who to save a little labour of the body, lose the benefit of the means of grace for their souls: this will be found very improvident husbandry at last when profit and loss come to be compared.

Those do so who indulge the appetite of the flesh to the soul's hurt and damage; who not only lose the good their souls might reap, because they cannot find in their hearts to exert themselves, but involve themselves in a great deal of mischief, because they cannot find in their hearts to deny themselves, and to cross the cravings of the flesh. The sensual appetite is apt to be carried out inordinately toward excesses, and as far as it is gratified, the soul is prejudiced by it, the heart is overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and rendered unfit for heavenly converse and pursuits: and, therefore, those manifestly prefer their bodies above their souls, who, as Solomon speaks, are given to appetite, and have not learned to put a knife to their throat.[c]

The Israelites in the wilderness coveted quails, they could not live without flesh, and God gave them their request; but at the same time he sent leanness into their souls.[d] He withdrew his grace from them, and those comforts which used to make their souls as a watered garden. Those do not know how to value their own souls, who can be content to have them starved and made lean, so that their bodies may be feasted and fattened, and fed to the full.

There is no sin that does more immediately prejudice the soul to please the body, than drunkenness does, for it deprives men for the time of the use of their reason, and profanes that crown, that glory of the human nature, by casting it to the ground, and levelling men with the beasts that perish. The understanding of the man is darkened when he is drunk, his memory in a manner lost, his thoughts in a tumult, and his passions have got clear of the government of reason, and are all in an uproar; his speech bewrays him to be a fool.

> The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
> All worldly right, save what he has by beast.
>
> HERBERT.

Can a man put a greater contempt than this upon his own soul, thus to trample it in the dirt; not once or twice, but often; to make a practice of it, as many do? And besides the present injury that it does to reason, which a night's sleep does in some measure recover, it does a lasting mischief to conscience and religion; it debauches the mind, hardens the heart and stupifies it; it alienates the affections from divine things, and has been the ruin of many who were well educated, and began well. Drunkards, to gratify the spark in the throat, as they call it, extinguish the fire from heaven, the fire of holy love and devotion, and kindle a fire of vile affections there, which, if infinite mercy do not prevent, will burn to the lowest hell.

[3.] Those who endanger their souls to secure their bodies, despise their own souls, and give the preference to the inferior part of them. It is natural to us when the head is struck at, to venture the right hand for its preservation, which, though dear, is not so dear. When at any time we are brought to this dilemma, that there is no way of avoiding the sin of the soul, but by suffering in the body, and no way of avoiding suffering in the body, but by the sin of the soul, then it will appear which we give the preference to, the soul or the body: they are both dear we will suppose, but then it will be seen which is most dear.

Those who will deny Christ, rather than die for him, and to escape the fiery furnace, will worship the golden image, plainly shew that they despise their own souls; for they will rather throw away their comforts in God and their hopes of Heaven, than their hopes and comforts in this world. When the storm of persecution arises because of the word, they will rather make shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, than of the world and of a good estate; and, contrary to the common dictates of reason, will rather cast themselves overboard than their wares: and, though all that a man has he will give for his life, but little of what they have will they give for the life of their souls. Our Lord Jesus has expressly told us, that he who will save his life by disowning Christ, the same shall lose it;[e] by saving a transient satisfaction he shall lose an eternal felicity; but whosoever is willing to lose his life, shall find it with infinite advantage in eternal life: but they will not take his word, and, therefore, chuse iniquity rather than affliction; a choice which they will certainly repent: it were well if they would repent in time.

[a] Ecc. 10. 5, 6, 7. [b] Ch. 11. 4. [c] Pro. 23. 1, 2. [d] Ps. 106, 15. [e] Mat. 16. 25.

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But let us shew that we value our souls by making Moses's choice, *Rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;*[a] and their's who loved not their lives to the death in the cause of Christ; and that of blessed Paul, who counted not his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with joy:[b] and let us reckon our losses for our religion abundantly made up, if we do but secure the salvation of the soul. When that blessed martyr Bishop Hooper was urged to recant, with this consideration, "Life is sweet, and death bitter:" "It is true," said he, "but eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death more bitter." This was the language of one who put a value upon his own soul; as on the contrary, he who in the like case said, "The fire is hot, and nature is frail, and the truth is, I cannot burn," and, therefore, denied Christ, and turned papist; shewed that he preferred his body before his soul, as multitudes do, who will rue it at the last.

II. I come next briefly to shew the folly of those who thus despise their own souls; and really the thing speaks for itself; men cannot be guilty of a greater absurdity: their folly will shortly be made manifest to all men; and to themselves too, when all these things, for the sake of which they slighted their own souls, are lost and gone, and the soul that despised itself is for ever abandoned by its Maker to a miserable remembrance of its own folly, in forsaking its own mercies, which would have put a crown upon its hopes, for lying vanities, which put a cheat upon them.

To shew the folly of those who despise their own souls, let us consider only these five things, The nature of the soul; its nearness to us; the purchase of the soul; the projects that are concerning it, and its perpetual duration.

1. Consider the nature of the soul, which is too noble, too excellent to be despised; they who despise it despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities. *They pursue my soul*, says Job, (chap. 30. 15.) the word in the original signifies *my principal one*; for the soul is the principal part of us. Jacob calls it *His honour.*[c] David calls it *His glory.*[d] It is folly therefore to despise that which has such an innate excellency in it, and has so much honour put upon it. The soul of man is no despicable thing, and therefore they are fools who despise it.

The soul is of divine original; it was not made of the dust, as the body was, but it was the breath of the Almighty, had the image of God stamped upon it, and is the master-piece of God's workmanship in this lower world. He who despises the poor, reproaches his Maker, so does he who despises his own soul, he thereby reflects dishonour upon the Father of Spirits; as if that work of his hands which he rejoiced in were not worth our regarding.

The soul is of inestimable value; for its powers are great and noble; its apprehensions not bounded by the horizon of sense and time, but reach far beyond it; it is capable of knowing God, and conversing with him, and of receiving a divine revelation in order thereunto; it is capable of being sanctified by the Spirit and Grace of God, and employed in praising and blessing God: nay, it is capable of being glorified with God, of seeing him as he is, and enjoying him to eternity; and is this a thing to be despised? The soul is that one talent which they who have received least from their Master are entrusted with; its being a talent speaks it of value, as does the doom past upon the slothful servant who did not improve that one talent, though he was entrusted with no more. The soul is a price in the hand to get wisdom, that principal thing, which is to be laboured for above all gettings.

Self-consciousness is in the nature of the soul; it is capable of reflecting upon itself, and conversing with itself; *Nosce teipsum—Know thyself*, was an ancient dictate of wisdom: and self-ignorance is supposed to be a gross absurdity when it is asked, *Know ye not your own selves?*[e] But those who despise themselves, and are in no concern about their own souls, shew that they have no knowledge, no right knowledge of themselves. This faculty of the soul, which is so much its honour, does not do its part; the light that is in them is darkness.

2. Consider the nearness of the soul. It is his own soul that the sinner despises, that is, it is himself, for the soul is the man, and what is the man but a living soul? Abstract the soul as living, and the body is a lump of clay: abstract the soul as rational, and the man is as the beasts that perish. Persons in scripture are often reckoned by souls; for the body is but the shell, the soul is the kernel.

Now to the right value of a thing, it must be considered not only what it is in itself, but what interest we have in it. The loan of a thing is not so valuable as the property. Now the world is but lent us, whatever we have in it, it is not to be called our own; but our souls are our own; we brought them into this world, and shall carry them out. The soul is called *The darling:*[f] in the original it is *My only one.* We are entrusted with but one soul, and, therefore, the greater is the shame if we neglect it, and the greater the loss if we lose it. Our souls being our only ones, should be our darlings, not our drudges; being near to us, they should be dear to us, and our constant care and concern should be about them. This is my vineyard which is mine (such an emphasis does the spouse lay upon the property) and therefore should be ever before us.[g]

Our soul is our own, for we are entrusted with it, as committed to our charge, by him whose all souls are, to be employed in his service now, and to be fitted for a happiness in the vision and fruition of him hereafter: and of this trust we must shortly give account: "Man, woman, thou hadst a soul of thine own, what didst thou do with it? it was lodged in thy hand, where is it? It was to be thy peculiar care, has it been so?" O what folly is it to despise our souls, when we are so nearly interested in them, that we really are good or bad, and it is with us well or ill according as our

[a] Heb. 11. 25. [b] Acts 20. 24. [c] Gen. 49. 5. [d] Ps. 16. 9.
[e] 2 Cor. 13. 5. [f] Ps. 35. 17. [g] Cant. 8. 12.

souls

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souls are, or are not well looked after. The concerns of our souls are as our Saviour speaks, the τὰ ἡμέτερα,—*the things that are our own*. The concerns of the world are the τὰ ἀλλότρια—*another man's*; Luke 16. 12. Epictetus spoke much the same when he made the conduct and government of our appetites and passions, *Abstine* and *Sustine*, to be the τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν—*the duty which is our's*, but the issues of our worldly affairs to be the τὰ οὐκ ἐφ' ἡμῖν—*the event*, which is God's. The keeping of our hearts is above all keepings, and therefore, they ought to be kept with all diligence, and not to be despised.[a]

3. Consider the purchase of the soul, and the price that was paid for its redemption. If we despise the soul, we despise that, which not only the all-wise Creator dignified, but which the all-wise Redeemer too put yet greater honour upon, and so reflect upon his judgment too. We reckon the value of a thing by that which a wise man will give for it, that knows it, and is under no necessity of purchasing it. Our Lord Jesus knew very well what souls were, and had no need of them, was happy without them, and yet gave himself, his own precious blood to be a ransom for them; ἀντίλυτρον—*a counter-price*.[b] He made his soul an offering for our's to teach us how to value them. When God would prove the excellency of his people, and his value for them, he mentions this instance of it, *I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee*.[c] What a demonstration is it then of the intrinsic value of souls, as well as of the kindness he had for them, when he gave his own son out of his bosom for them, the son of his love, to suffer and die for them!

You see how high souls stand in Christ's book of rates, and shall they then stand low in our's? As silver and gold would not satisfy the desires of a soul, nor its capacities, *in puris ejus naturalibus—in its innate purity*, so neither would they satisfy for the sins of the soul, if I may so speak, *in impuris ejus naturalibus—in its innate impurity*. We are not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the blood of Christ, which is of inestimable value; nothing less than that would buy them back out of the hands of divine justice, would save them from ruin, and secure to them their blessedness: shall we then despise that which he paid so dear for, and sell that for a mess of pottage, like profane Esau, which he purchased with his own blood?

And let us further consider, that if Christ paid such a price for the purchase of our souls, he will inquire after them, whether we take any care of them or no; as all wise men do after their purchases. If we carelessly lose our own souls, yet Christ will be no loser by it; for if he be not glorified by our souls in their everlasting happiness, he will be glorified upon them in their everlasting ruin. And if they forget the rock that formed them, and deny the Lord that bought them, let them know, that as he who formed them will shew them no favor, so he who bought them will say, *Depart from me, I know you not*.

4. Consider the projects that are laid about souls, and what striving there is for them, and for their love and service. Nothing makes men value themselves so much as being courted and contended about. Sirs, you are fools if you despise your own souls, for you cannot imagine what work there is about them. God and the world, Christ and Satan are rivals for the throne in them: the Good Spirit is striving with men's souls, to sanctify and save them: the Evil Spirit goes about continually seeking to debauch and destroy them. God cannot have a more acceptable present brought him than your souls, *My Son, give me thy heart*; nor Satan a more acceptable prey.

It concerns you then to look about you, and to make such a disposition of your own souls as you are obliged to make, and as will be for your true interest: it concerns you to fortify them against the assaults of the worst of their enemies, and to furnish them for the service of the best of their friends.

Think what projects the love of God has to save souls; with what a peculiar care that God, whose the worlds are, even a world of angels, has been pleased to concern himself for the world of mankind, the world of souls. He had thoughts of love to a remnant of the sons of men, of the souls of men, before the worlds were; was devising means that his banished might not be for ever expelled from him.[d] He sent his Son to seek and save lost souls; and says himself to the returning soul, *I am thy Salvation*:[e] he has given his Spirit to work upon our spirits, and to witness with them: he has appointed his ministers to watch for your souls;[f] their business is to win souls:[g] so much is done, so much is doing for souls' salvation.

Think also what projects the malice of Satan has to ruin souls, to ruin your souls; to get to rule them, and then he knows he shall ruin them. What devices, what depths, what wiles he has in hunting for the precious soul! and how all the forces of the powers of darkness are kept continually in arms to war against the soul! The Devil's agents trade in the souls of men; so we find, Rev. 18. 13. Let us not therefore despise our own souls, but have a careful eye upon them, that they may become God's children, and not the Devil's slaves.

5. Consider the perpetual duration of souls, and the preparations that are made in the other world to receive them. Did we but live by that faith, which is the *substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, we should value ourselves and our own souls at another rate than commonly we do: did we look more before us, we should look more carefully and concernedly within us; and, therefore, our care about our souls, and our care about eternity are very fitly put together.

Things are valued very much by their duration: gold is therefore the most valuable metal, because most durable. Now this is the great thing which speaks the worth of the soul, and shames those who despise it, that it is an immortal spirit, it is to last and live for ever: it is a flame that can never be extinguished; the spirit of a man is that candle of the Lord which will never be blown out, or burn out; it must survive both

[a] Pro. 4. 23. [b] Mat. 20. 28. [c] Isa. 43. 3, 4. [d] 2 Sam. 14. 14. [e] Ps. 35. 3. [f] Heb. 13. 17. [g] Pro. 11. 30.

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the little world when that is turned into dust and ashes, and the great world, when that is become a vast heap of ruins. O! think of thy soul, as that which will not only live and act when it is separated from the body, but as that which must be somewhere for ever, for ever.

It is an awful consideration when a child is born, to think here is the beginning of a being that must outlive all the ages of time, and whose life will run parallel with the endless ages of eternity. Here is a candle lighted that must burn for ever, in flames either of divine love, or of divine wrath. Here is a perpetual motion set on foot that shall know no stop or period. The brute creatures are mortal; it is not of the particular animals, but of the κτίσις, the whole creation in general, that there is said to be that earnest expectation, Rom. 8. 19. But man will be immortal in his individuals; and is such a soul as this to be despised then?

But this is not all; there is everlasting happiness or everlasting misery designed for souls in the other world, according to their character in this, and according as they are found when they are fetched hence. Were we all sure that our immortal souls would without fail be immortally happy in the other world, they ought not to be despised, but a great deal of care taken of them, to prepare them for that happiness; but the matter is not so,—we are in danger of falling short of that happiness, and forfeiting our title to it, and of being cast away at last, and then we are undone.

Think what preparations of wrath are made to receive sinful souls, the *Tophet* that is ordained of old, and to which they are reserved; the day of wrath, to which the wicked shall be brought forth, and you will see yourselves concerned for your precious souls, that they may be saved from that wrath to come, and will stir them up as the Angel did Lot, *Escape for thy life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the plain, escape to the mountain,* to the holy mountain, *lest thou be consumed*;[a] for souls that are despised may even be despaired of: who will pity thy soul, and snatch it as a brand out of the burning, if thou hast thyself no regard to it?

Think what preparations of glory are made for sanctified souls; such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.[b] Souls must needs be of great value, when there is so much laid out, so much laid up, to make those souls truly happy whom the King of Kings delights to honour. The faculties and capacities of the soul must needs be large, when there goes so much to fill them and bear proportion to them.

Look, therefore, upon the world to come, and then you will see your souls worth taking care of. How lightly soever some people now think of their own souls, I am confident that they will be of another mind shortly, when either the grace of God opens their eyes; for one of the first things that a sinner is convinced of in order to his conversion, is of the worth of his own soul; or, when death having closed the eyes of the body, and so drawn aside the interposing veil of sense, opens the eyes of the mind. When the soul is stript, it will see itself to be no such despicable thing as it now looks upon itself to be. Well, it is good for us always to have such thoughts of ourselves, and of other things, as we shall have shortly when we come to ourselves.

III. Let us apply the subject.

1. Let us see and bewail our folly in having had such low thoughts of our own souls, and that we have forgot their dignity, and put dishonour upon them. Evidences there are too many, and too plain, of the low thoughts we have had of our own souls, while we have thought of our bodies with a pride, and pleasure, and concern more than was meet; as if we had bodies only to take care of, and not souls.

We are apt to take up with a cheap and easy religion, are still asking how much will serve just to bring us to heaven, as if we were afraid of doing too much for our own souls, whereas all the danger is of doing too little. We crowd our religion into a corner, and instead of making a business of it as it requires and deserves, make a by-business of it: we are eager in our worldly pursuits, but very remiss and indifferent in holy duties; and this is a sign that we have low thoughts of our own souls.

We converse little with our own souls; we do not commune with them, nor enquire as we should into their state and temper; we shew but little concern about them, as if it were an indifferent thing to us whether they were lost or saved; we take no care to balance the accounts of our souls, but let their affairs lie at large and unsettled, and this is an evidence that we despise our own souls; we make ourselves strangers to them, as if they were not worthy our acquaintance. The face it may be is admired, and therefore is often looked at in the glass, but the soul is despised, and therefore never considered.

We are very prodigal of our time and opportunities, and take no care to improve what we have, or to redeem what we have lost, and that is an evidence against us that we have despised our own souls; for those who value their souls, value their time, as knowing that the eternal welfare of their souls depends upon the due improvement of the days of time. What value do those put upon their souls who sleep in summer, and play in harvest, when they should be laying-in provision for their souls against winter; who idle away sabbath-time, and the time of the morning and evening-sacrifice every day, when they should be doing some service to their own souls, or, which is equivalent, to God with their souls?

Well, let us be ashamed of our own folly in this matter; say, *So foolish have I been and ignorant; surely I am more brutish than any man.* If Christ had not more care for our souls than we ourselves have had, we had been in Hell long since. Let us be humbled before God for our contempt of that which God has given us such a charge of, and which we ought to

[a] Gen. 19. 17. [b] 1 Cor. 2. 9.

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have had such a concern for. The matter is so bad, that it is not capable of aggravation. We ourselves have suffered so much by our neglect, that we are inexcusable if we be not troubled for it, and lay not that to heart which has been not only so great a sin, but so great a damage to us, that though we have reason to hope that upon our repentance God has forgiven it to us, yet we have reason enough not to forgive ourselves.

2. Let us learn for the future how to put a due value upon our own souls; not to magnify ourselves above our brethren, for they also have understanding as well as we, they are not inferior to us,—but to magnify ourselves above the brutes, so as to scorn in any respect to level ourselves with them: and to magnify our souls above our bodies, so as to be more solicitous about our spiritual and eternal concerns, than about any secular affairs whatsoever, even those of the greatest importance.

Let us believe that one soul is more worth than all the world; that this soul of ours is so, and that the gain of all the world, if we could compass it, will not compensate or countervail the loss of it; but the saving of the soul will make us abundant amends for whatever loss we may sustain in providing for our souls, or protecting them.

Let us value our souls, as they have relation to God, whose image they bear, and for whose glory they were made, to shew forth his praise, and to qualify us to be the collectors of his praises from the inferior creatures, and to pay them into the treasury above. Let us value them as they have relation to another world, which they were made for, and are hastening to; value them as spiritual, value them as immortal, that they may employ themselves in spiritual work, and entertain themselves with spiritual delights, and may be still aiming high, at glory, honour, and immortality, resolved not to take up short.

Let us not so value ourselves, as to think any good work below us, nor any service we can do to God or our brethren, though it may be the meanest and most despised; but let us always so value ourselves, as to think any evil work below us, and a disparagement to us to do an improper thing, though never so much in fashion and reputation. Let us think our souls too good to be made drudges to the world, and captives to the flesh, and slaves to any base lust. A Heathen could say, *Major sum & ad majora natus quam ut Corpori sim mancipium—I am superior, and destined to superior privileges than to be the slave of the body.* It is the great soul of man, (so it has been fitly called by some) that great soul of thine, whose cause we are pleading against thyself, who dost despise it: shall we gain our point, and prevail with you to think more highly and honourably of it, and of its noble powers and faculties?

3. Let us make it appear that we do indeed value our own souls, and do nothing that looks like despising or undervaluing them. You will all say you value your own souls, but what proof do you give of it? Shew it me by your works that you have indeed a concern for your precious souls, and prefer them before your bodies, and that you have nothing so much at heart as their true welfare. Let all who converse with you know, by your constant watchfulness over your words and ways, that you have a true respect for your own souls, and would not do any thing to their prejudice.

Be much in communion with your own hearts, in reflecting upon yourselves, and inquiring what progress you make in the way to heaven, and how you grow in grace, what ground you get of your corruptions, and whether you do not lose ground: be aware of guilt contracted by your sins of daily infirmity, and renew your repentance daily, and the application of the blood of Christ to your consciences, to cleanse and purify them; and thus make it appear that you value your souls.

Be afraid of sin, of every thing that looks like it and leads to it, and stand upon your guard against every temptation, that you may resist it at the first. Check the risings of corruption, and look diligently, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble and defile you. To sin, is to wrong the soul, and to save that wrong from being its ruin, there is no other way but to repent, and that is to afflict the soul, to be pricked to the heart. To sin, is to make work for repentance, that is the best that can come of it; so that if we have any value for our own souls, we must shew it by keeping at a distance from sin, and having not only a dread of it, but an antipathy to it.

We must shew that we love our souls by our diligent and constant attendance on the means of grace, by our keeping up secret prayer, and conversing much with the word of God, without which the soul cannot prosper, or be in health. Whatever has a tendency to the good of our souls, and the improving of them in knowledge and grace, and fitness for heaven, we must shew our esteem for our souls by improving them, for the directing and quickening, the strengthening and comforting of our souls, and the renewing of the inward man more and more.

4. Let us value other things as they have relation to our souls, and fix our estimate of them by the value of our souls, and stand affected to them accordingly.

Let us value the bible as the best book, because it is a book for the soul; it discovers our souls to us as a glass, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.[a] It discovers to our souls the way that leads to their present and future happiness. In the scriptures we think we have eternal life, life for the soul. It is the excellency of the word of God, that it converteth the soul, it enlightens the mind, it rejoiceth the heart;[b] and for this we should value it, because it makes the soul wise unto salvation, and furnishes it for every thing that is good.

Let us value the sabbath as the best day of the week, because it is a day for the soul, a day that befriends the soul's employments and enjoyments, when the body

[a] Heb. 4. 12. [b] Ps. 19. 7, 8.

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rests, that it may give the soul the more scope: and, therefore, all who have an honour for their own souls, will call the sabbath *A Delight, Holy of the Lord, and Honourable.*

Let us value those as our best friends who are friends to our souls, and fear those as our worst enemies who are enemies to our souls; too often we do the contrary. It is certain that those who tempt us to sin are enemies to our souls, who court us to forbidden pleasures, and flatter us in forbidden practices, and tell us that we shall have peace, though we go on: yet such as these most people are pleased with as their friends, delight in their company, and willingly hearken to all they say. It is certain that those who reprove us for sin are friends to our souls, who faithfully tell us of our faults, and warn us of our danger, and call us to our duty: yet, such as these most people are displeased with as their enemies; so they reckon them, because they tell them the truth. Would we shew that we value our own souls, let us learn to say to a tempter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, thou speakest as one of the foolish people speak;* and to say to a reprover, *Smite me, and it shall be a kindness: and that which I see not teach thou me.*

Let us reckon that condition of life best for us, that is best for our souls; which is most free from temptations, especially, to the sin that most easily besets us; and which gives us the greatest advantages for our souls. Our value for our souls should reconcile us to afflictions, which though grievous to the body, yet by the grace of God working with them, are beneficial to the soul, and yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby. *Blessed is the man whom God chasteneth;* though it be painful and uneasy to the body, if, thereby, he teach him out of the law, that will be nourishing to the soul. [a]

But above all, let us value our Lord Jesus Christ as the best friend that ever poor souls had, who died to redeem and save them. The Good Shepherd is the shepherd and bishop of our souls; [b] a good shepherd indeed, who laid down his life for our souls; who has provided food for our souls, and healing for our souls, and rest for our souls, and an eternal happiness for our souls! O let our souls love him, and prize him, and study what we shall render to him for his love. And what shall we render? All the return he expects is, that since he has approved himself such a good friend to our souls, we should apply ourselves to him accordingly, and make use of him. Let me therefore now, in the close, press this upon you with all earnestness; shew the value you have, both for precious Jesus and for your own precious souls, by trusting him with them; commit them to his care, submit them to his conduct and government; observe his orders, follow his prescriptions, and then depend upon his power and goodness to do all that for your souls which their case calls for. What his mother said to the servants at the marriage in Cana, is my charge to you; *Whatsoever he saith unto you do it,* [c] though displeasing to flesh and blood, and then he will turn water into wine in your souls, and they shall want for nothing. Trust your souls with Jesus Christ, and know whom you have trusted, even one who is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day.

Lastly, If we must not despise our own souls, we must not despise the souls of others; for if ours be precious, so are theirs; and if we ought in love to our own souls to do all we can for their salvation, which is the true self-love, certainly the great commandment, which binds us to love our neighbour as ourselves, binds us to do all we can for the salvation of the souls of others, as for the salvation of our own.

It certainly obliges us to take heed of doing any thing to the prejudice of the souls of others. Those despise their brethrens' souls who care not what stumbling-blocks and occasions of sin they lay in the way of their brethren, by their abuse of their Christian liberty; nor how much they contribute to the wickedness of the wicked, and to the grief and trouble of the spirits of good people. Destroy not those souls which are the work of God, [d] and precious work; which are the purchase of Christ, for whom Christ died. [e] Be afraid of doing any thing to discourage those who are weak in their way to heaven; Christ will not quench the smoaking flax, do not you then. Be tender of tender consciences, and despise not those who scruple to do that which you are free in, nor insult over them for their weakness.

Nay, it is not enough that we do not put contempt upon our brethrens' souls, but we must put a value upon them, and be ready to do them all the service we can. All the children of men who dwell on the face of all the earth have precious souls; Turks and Heathens, Moors and Indians, have so; the Negroes who are bought and sold have so; precious souls, that are capable of knowing, and glorifying, and enjoying God, and must be ever either happy or miserable. O that this were more thought of, and that the souls of such were not despised as they are! In God's hand is the soul of all mankind, and therefore they should be much upon our hearts, and we should concern ourselves for them. This is a good reason why we should pray for all men, that God's name may be sanctified, and his will done by all men on earth, as it is done by all angels in heaven; because they have all precious souls, capable of this honour and work. Thus we must honour all men.

Pity self-destroying sinners, who are damning their own souls, and if you can do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help them. We should justly condemn ourselves, as not having the value we ought to have for human life, if we saw a madman ready to cut his own throat, and did not interpose to prevent it; and may we not justly then charge it upon ourselves that we have not the value we ought to have for human souls, when we see wicked people who are beside themselves running headlong upon the destruction of their own souls, and never shew any concern

[a] Ps. 94. 12. [b] 1 Pet. 2. 25. [c] Joh. 2. 5. [d] Rom. 14. 20. [e] 1 Cor. 8. 11.

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about it? Observe what an emphasis the Apostle lays upon this, in the encouragement he gives us to do our utmost for the converting of sinners from the error of their ways, that they who do so shall *save a soul from death*.[a] There is a soul in the case, and therefore we should think nothing too much to do to help it.

Pity self-disquieting saints, whose souls are troubled and cast down, who are of a sorrowful spirit, and go mourning from day to day; put your souls into their souls' stead,[b] and then, instead of despising them, (as those are apt to do who are themselves wholly at ease and quiet) try what you can do to strengthen them with your mouth; and let the moving of your lips be, if possible, to assuage their grief, and to help them out of that horrible pit and miry clay, considering yourselves, lest ye also be tempted.

Especially have a tender regard to the souls of those who are under your charge: O do not despise them; let it not be an indifferent thing to you whether the souls of your children and servants be saved or damned; as it plainly is to those who never teach them the *things that belong to their peace*, who never pray with them, or for them, nor take any care to restrain them from doing evil, or quicken them to do well. They forget how precious their souls are, and what an opportunity they have of doing them a kindness. You would think yourselves barbarous and unjust if you did not provide what is necessary for their bodies, and are you not much more so if you provide not what is necessary for their souls? O that the souls of your poor children might be dear to you! They derive corruption through your loins, and, therefore, nothing should be wanting on your part to get that hereditary disease cured. You should travail in birth again, to see Christ formed in them. Let it be much more your care to get them fit to live in Heaven, than fit to live in this world: to get their souls enriched and established with grace, than to raise estates for them: and let this be the top of your ambition concerning them, that they may be praising God on earth, when you are praising him in Heaven; and, that you and they may be together for ever praising him. It will be so, if you really have the value you ought to have for their souls, and for your own.

THE

FOLLY

OF

DESPISING OUR OWN WAYS.

PROV. 19. 16.

But he that despiseth his ways shall die.

WE have here a fair warning to a careless world; a fair warning given, O that it were but taken! there are those by whom it is taken: David speaks of it with comfort, that he had taken the alarms which God's commands gave, and, therefore, hoped for the rewards they proposed; *by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping them there is great reward.* The written word is a word of warning.[c] The work of ministers is to warn sinners, they are set as watchmen for this purpose, and are to hear the word from God's mouth, and to warn them from him and in his name. And this is that warning which they are to give from him; *O wicked man! thou shalt surely die*,[d] if thou go on still in thy trespasses. O drunkard! O swearer! O sabbath-breaker! O extortioner! O unclean person! Whoever thou art, thou shalt surely die; the God of Heaven has said it, and he will never unsay it, nor can all the world gainsay it, *The soul that sinneth it shall die.*

I am here to-day in God's name to warn you, from this text, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, *O thou that despiseth thine own ways, thou shalt die*; if thou persist in this contumacy and contempt, thou shalt surely die. O that I may give the warning so as to deliver my own soul, and that you may all receive it so as to deliver your's!

There are two things in the text,

1. The sinner's fall and ruin, which we are here warned of: *He shall die; the wages of sin is death.* It is that which sin, when it is finished, brings forth. It is the birth from that conception, the harvest from that seedness. The end of all those things is death; that is it which sin has a direct tendency to.

There is a death that is the common lot of mankind; it is appointed to men, to all men, once to die: and that is the general effect of sin; it came in at the same door, at the same time: *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.* And if our breasts were but as susceptible of just resentments as they are of unjust ones, surely mankind would by consent detest and abhor all sin, because that is the mother of all mischief; that was it that introduced all that death which sullies the world's beauty, ruffles its peace, and stains the pride of all its glory.

But there is a death which is the particular lot of impenitent sinners; we lie under a sentence of death for the breach of the original law, but this speaks another death, a much sorer condemnation, which is inflicted for the contempt of the remedial law.

(1.) It is a spiritual death. An impenitent soul dies as a soul can die, it lies under the wrath and curse of God, which is killing to the soul, is its death; it is destitute of spiritual life, and of its principles and powers. It is under the dominion of corruption, which is as killing a sickness to the soul as the curse of God is a killing sentence. When Christ threatens concerning those who believe not in him, that they shall die

[a] Jam. 5. 19, 20. [b] Job, 16. 4, 5.
[c] Ps. 19. 11. [d] Ezek. 33. 7, 8.

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die in their sins,[a] or as it is *v.* 21. ὁν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν, *in your sin*, in that sin of unbelief; he means not so much that you shall die the death of the body, in an unconverted state, but you shall die spiritually, in the same sense that we are said to be dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2. 1. Sinners shall die, that is their disease shall be incurable, and consequently mortal; they shall languish of it a while, and die of it at last.

They shall die, that is, they shall be cut off from all communion with God, which is the life of the soul, and from all hope of his loving kindness, which is better than life. They shall die; that is, they shall be dead to God, and to all good; dead to Christ, as branches in the vine that are withered, which have no communication with the root, nor derive any virtue from it.

This spiritual death is a thousand times worse than the death of the body, and more to be dreaded. The body separated from the soul, which is its life, is only made a just and easy prey to the worms, which feed sweetly on it; but a soul separated from God becomes a just and easy prey to the Devils as tempters, tormentors, or both. The death of the body is not to be called death to any but to those who die in their sins, and to them it is followed by the second death: to the saints it is but a sleep, for they die in Christ, and the toil of their works ceases while the comfort and recompense of them remains. Those are dead indeed who are twice dead; the body dying, and the soul dead. O dread this spiritual death; *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from* this death, and *Christ shall give thee light and life.*

(2.) It is an eternal death: this is but the perfection of the former, the sinfulness of man and the wrath of God both immutably fastened. He shall die; that is, he shall perish eternally, he shall die the second death. The learned Mr. Mede observes, that in Solomon's Proverbs, Hell is called the "congregation of the dead," of *Rephaim*, of the *Giants*, so some render it,[b] alluding to the sinners of the old world, who were cut off by the deluge, and died together, which was a figure of the eternal punishment of sin in hell,[c] and he supposes that Solomon has an eye to that future state of torment, when he says, of the strange and foolish woman, that her house inclines to death, and her paths to the dead;[d] and, that the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of Hell.[e] Agreeable to which it is here said of the wilful sinner, that he shall die, he shall die eternally, shall go down to the congregation of the dead and damned.

That misery which those inevitably fall into who live and die in their sins, is fitly called death, because, though it is not the extinguishing of their being, yet, which is equivalent, it is the extinguishing of their bliss, and *non est vivere sed valere Vita,—life consists not in existence but in enjoyment*; they are ever dying, and yet never dead. Death is the most terrible thing we can conceive, especially death by exquisite tortures, when death itself is courted as ease and release;[f] and, therefore, Hell is represented by the most killing tortures to which that period is denied, because it is indeed more terrible than we can conceive: the metaphors are nothing to what the thing itself will be; nothing, to what it is represented to us, when it is stript of the metaphors: it is *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to the soul of man that doeth evil*; it is the wrath of an immortal God, filling the conscience of an immortal soul, that went out of this world unpardoned and unsanctified, and has in that world its faculties vastly enlarged, to receive the impressions of that wrath, and to make bitter reflections upon itself; that has no delights of sense to divert the thoughts of its own misery with, nor any hope of ever having benefit by the rejected Saviour, and the resisted Sanctifier.

This is no pleasing subject, nor is it any pleasure to me to dwell upon it, but we dare not pass by it when it comes in our way; I hope you do not desire we should; that you are not of those who would have only smooth things prophesied to you; you had better hear of it than feel it, especially, when you hear of it for no other end but that for which the rich man in Hell desired his five brethren might have it testified to them, lest they should also come into this place of torment. They who blame ministers for preaching these terrors of the Lord, and with them persuading men, who turn it to their reproach, that they fill their pulpits with Hell and Damnation, forget how frequently our Lord Jesus preached upon this subject, of being cast into utter darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; of the destruction both of soul and body in Hell; of the furnace of fire into which the wicked shall be cast; of the worm that dies not, and the fire that shall not be quenched, the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; of those who cannot escape the damnation of Hell; and many, very many, the like passages we find in Christ's preaching; such are the warnings we have received from his mouth, and we should be false to our Master, and false to your souls, if we did not give you this warning; and we should fall under his curse, and your's too, for our unfaithfulness. Give me leave therefore briefly to tell you,

[1.] That this second death, of which we give you warning, is a real thing, and no fancy. It is undoubtedly true, that there is a state of misery and torment in the other world, which will certainly be the portion of all who live and die ungodly. It is not the product of a crazed or terrified imagination, nor an engine of state wherewith to keep the world in awe: no, Sirs, what we tell you concerning the torments of Hell, as well as concerning the joys of Heaven, are the true sayings of God. This branch of God's wrath is plainly revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.[g] It is so far from being inconsistent with the justice of God to punish sin to this degree, that considering the pomp, pleasure, and prosperity of many wicked people in this world, it is ne-

[a] John 8. 24. [b] Pro. 21. 16. [c] 2 Pet. 2. 18.
[d] Prov. 2. 18. Ch. 9. 18. [e] Rev. 9. 5, 6.

[g] Rom. 1. 18.

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cessary to the maintaining and asserting of the divine justice and holiness: for considering how wickedness seems to be connived at and countenanced in this world, how would it appear that God hates it, and as a governor punishes it, if there were not such a place of torment reserved for it: and, therefore, the day of wrath is called the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.[a] And even natural conscience witnesses to the truth of it, when the terrors of the Lord set themselves in array against it. Some have felt such a hell within them, as has been a plain indication of a hell before them.

O that all our hearts were possessed with the firm belief of this truth, that the wrath of God abides, and will eternally abide upon all those who believe not in Jesus Christ, and submit not to the laws of his holy religion. The Devil drew our first parents in to eat the forbidden fruit, by promising them impunity, and facing down the truth of the threatening; though in in it he gave the lie to eternal truth. God had said, *In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die*; and has said to us as plainly, *He that believes not shall be damned*: yet, as Satan said then to those who ate of the forbidden tree, *Ye shall not die*, he still says to those who persist in unbelief and impenitence, *Ye shall not be damned*: and shall we suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by the same fallacy, or impudent falshood rather, which was so fatal to our first parents, and to us in them? Shall we credit the Father of lies, who seeks our destruction, rather than the God of truth, who desires our welfare?

You who are young, in this age of infidelity, have need to guard against temptations of this kind. Be firmly established in this truth, and hold it fast. The revelation of it plainly comes from God, and, therefore, every suggestion, how plausible soever, that tends to shake your belief of it, must come from Satan, and must be accordingly rejected with abhorrence. Live not a carnal, sensual, wicked life, for then you will be tempted to wish there were no Hell, and so by degrees to believe there is none: but by your belief of it be driven to Christ, be restrained from sin, and kept in the way of your duty, and by such good influence upon your hearts and lives, you will have your belief of it confirmed; and it will be so far from being a terror to you, that it will furnish you with matter of comfort and praise, to think that through grace you are delivered from the wrath to come.

[2.] The second death, as it is a real thing, so it is a fearful thing, inconceivably dreadful; for who knows what is the power of God's anger, either what he can inflict, or what it is possible for a soul to suffer; or what a fearful thing it is for a sinner who has made himself obnoxious to God's justice, and would not come up to the terms of pardoning mercy offered, and has made himself odious to God's holiness, and would not come under the power of sanctifying grace, offered likewise; to fall into the hands of the living God when he comes to take vengeance, not only for his injured holiness and justice, but (which will add greatly to the account) for his despised grace and mercy?

The condition of all those will no doubt be very sad and doleful, who shall be shut out from the vision and fruition of God in Heaven; as all those will be who are not by the grace of God made meet for it: but it is observable, and it is what ought to be observed to you who enjoy the gospel and profess christianity, that the extremities of the torments of Hell are always spoken of as the portion of those who either might have had a place and a name in the Church of Christ, and would not, or have a place and name in it, and do not live up to it. They are the children of the kingdom, the unbelieving Jews who shall be cast into utter darkness,[b] who were invited into the Christian Church, but refused the invitation. They are the tares found in the field of the Church, and the bad fish enclosed by the Gospel net, who shall be cast into the furnace of fire.[c] And hypocrites, who shall not escape the damnation of Hell, even those who come to the wedding-feast without a wedding-garment.[d] It is he who follows Christ, and yet betrays him, whose condition will be so miserable, that it had been better for that man he had never been born.[e] And they are those who had talents but buried them; who had opportunity of relieving Christ's poor, and shut up the bowels of their compassion from them, who shall be most severely reckoned with. So that we for our parts are all concerned to fear the worst, and with the utmost diligence to flee from the wrath to come; for if we fall under it (how charitably soever some may be willing to hope concerning those who never enjoyed the advantages that we enjoy, nor made the profession that we make) it is certain that our condemnation will be more intolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah (so the Judge himself has told us) though their's is no less than the vengeance of eternal fire.[f]

Let our holy faith therefore produce a holy fear, as Noah's did, who by faith being warned of a deluge coming, was moved with fear to prepare an ark.[g] O that the sinners in Sion might hereby be made afraid, because, of all sinners, it will fare worst with the sinners in Sion! O that fearfulness might surprise the hypocrites, whose doom will be the most fearful; that by this fear sinners may be awakened to cast away the filthy rags of their iniquity, and hypocrites to trust no longer to the cloak of their hypocrisy; that sinners may become saints, and hypocrites sincere: for when we preach such terrible doctrine as this, it is not, as we are sometimes told, to frighten you out of your wits, but to frighten you out of your sins.

[3.] This second death is very near to all who are going on still in their trespasses. If Satan cannot prevail to take away the influence of this truth upon men's minds, by denying the reality or eternity of hell-torments, or by diminishing the terror of them, he then endeavours to do it by representing them at a vast distance, that in that view they may appear small and inconsiderable,

a Rom. 2. 5.

b Mat. 8. 12. c Mat. 13. 42. d Mat. 22. 13.
e Mat. 26. 24. f Jude 7. g Heb. 11. 7.

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considerable, in comparison with the things that are present and near. When we tell wicked people that they shall surely die, if they go on in sin, they are ready to tell us, perhaps it may prove so at last: but the vision that we see is for many days to come, and we prophesy of the times that are very far off,[a] as the people said to the prophet. If there be such an evil-day coming, yet they put it as far off from them as they can, and so it makes no impression upon them.

And is it so indeed? No certainly; I am to tell thee, sinner, thou who goest on frowardly in the way of thine heart, that there is but a step between thee and this second death, and it may be a short step, and soon taken. There is but one life between thee and Hell, and that is thine own, which, perhaps, will be shortly at an end: *Behold the Judge standeth before the door.* As the Saviour of the saints, though he tarry, yet will come, and *will not tarry*; so the judgment of sinners, though it seem to linger, seem to slumber, yet now of a long time it lingers not, it slumbers not.[b]

It would amaze us if we could see it with our bodily eyes, but (which is next-door-to-it to a believer) our Saviour has set it before us in two parables, what a sudden change death makes with a secure worldling, whose soul is promised the enjoyment of goods laid up for many years, and yet is this night required! Or with a secure sensualist, who fares sumptuously every day, and the next news that is heard of him is, he is dead and in hell torments![c] In a moment they go down to the grave, from the height of prosperity to the depth of misery.

O that the nearness of this dreadful doom might awaken sinners to a speedy Repentance and Return to God! Believe it, sirs, it is not a time to trifle, or to be dilatory, yet a little, little while, and the vail will be rent. The days of your probation will be numbered and finished, and you will enter upon the state of recompence and retribution. O that you would bethink yourselves in time, now at length in this your day, that you would know and consider the things that belong to your everlasting peace; for though they are not yet hid from your eyes, thanks be to God, they are not, yet you know not how soon they may; when the misery, that might have been in time prevented, must be to eternity rued, but cannot to eternity be remedied.

Those are very awakening words of Mr. Baxter's, in a sermon before the House of Commons, which Dr. Bates quotes in his sermon at his funeral, and which I shall crave leave to transcribe here. "The wretch that is condemned to die to-morrow cannot forget it: and yet poor sinners that continually are uncertain to live an hour, and certain, speedily to see the Majesty of the Lord to their inconceivable joy or terror, as sure as they now live on earth, can forget these things for which they have their memory, and which one would think should drown the matters of this world as the report of a cannon doth a whisper, or as the sun obscures the poorest glow-worm. O wonderful stupidity of an unrenewed soul! O wonderful folly and distractedness of the ungodly! that ever men can forget, I say again, that they can forget eternal joy, eternal woe, and the eternal God, and the place of their eternal unchangeable abodes, when those stand even at the door, and there is but the thin veil of flesh between them and that amazing sight, that eternal gulf, and they are daily dying and stepping in!"

Be convinced of the certainty of these truths; that if we live after the flesh we shall die; that the broad way of sin leads to destruction, and ends in it; that except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; and then tremble to think how miserable the condition of that man is, who has brought himself to this fearful dilemma, that either God must be false, or he must be damned. But I hope better things of you, my brethren, and things that accompany salvation, though it is needful I should thus speak.

2. Here is the sinner's fault and folly, which brings him to this ruin, and which we are here warned against, and that is despising his own ways; and the opening of this is what I chiefly aimed at in the choice of this text. Having yesterday in another place, upon a like occasion, shewed the folly and danger of despising our own souls, as those do who are careless about their spiritual state, I thought this might fitly follow it, to shew the gross absurdity they are guilty of who are careless about their particular actions, and never heed whether what they do be right or wrong, than which nothing can be of more pernicious consequence, especially to young people. And this is that which is here meant by the sinner's despising his own way.—*Qui negligenter instituit vitam & mores—who is careless in the regulation of his life and manners,* so *Piscator: Non curans quo modo vivat—who is heedless how he lives,* so *Mercer.*——The former part of the verse explains it, *He that keepeth the commandment, keepeth his own soul.* Those who walk circumspectly in the way of duty secure all the true interests of their own souls, and will be happy for ever. But those who despise their way, and do not govern themselves according to the commandment, do not keep to that, they ruin their own souls.

So that hence we may gather this doctrine,
That it is a very foolish and dangerous thing for men to despise their own ways. Or thus: Those who despise their own ways are in the high road to utter ruin.

In the prosecution of this, as of the former, I must I. shew when we may be said to despise our own ways; and II. the folly and danger of doing so, and then make application.

I. When may we be said to despise our own ways, our conversation, and the particular actions of it, which we ought to have a very tender and careful regard to: you shall see the crime opened in six particulars.

1. When we are altogether unconcerned about the end of our ways, we may then be truly said to despise our own ways. This inconsideration of the end of our way includes two things, which are both fatal.

(1.) Not designing the great end, which in our way we

[a] Ezek. 12. 27. [b] 2 Pet. 2. 3. [c] Luke 16. 19, 23.

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we should aim at, nor directing our ways towards that end. We know very well, that the God who made us, made us for himself, to shew forth his praise: that the Christ who bought us, bought us for himself, that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but should be a peculiar people to him, should live to him, and be to him for a name and a praise; so that the great end of our being and living is the glory of our Creator and Redeemer; and this end we should at least virtually and habitually aim at in all our ways.

And it is a great honour which the God of Heaven has put upon our ways, that he is pleased to reckon himself glorified by them if they be good, and, if in them our light shine before men, glorified by the fruits of our ways.[a] That not only such a favourable, but such an honourable construction should be put upon any thing we can say or do, that it should be acceptable and serviceable to the Great God of heaven and earth, who is infinitely exalted above all blessing and praise! That the worms of the earth should be capable of doing the work of angels! Man's honour, in being made Lord of the inferior creatures, is very great: the Psalmist, when he observes him to have dominion over the works of God's hands, reckons him, in that, crowned with glory and honour.[b] But his honour in being made the mouth of the inferior creatures in praising God is much greater; that whereas they can only minister matter for praise, man is capable of offering up actual adorations and praises to the Creator, and he is pleased to say, that he who offers praise, glorifies him, and to take it among the titles of his honour, that he "inhabiteth the praises of Israel:" for this we have much more reason to say, *Lord, what is man, that thou magnifiest him, and makest such account of him?* In my eye a man looks more truly great when he is in a right manner worshipping his Creator at the footstool of his throne, and giving glory to him, than when he is domineering over his fellow-creatures, and giving law to them on the highest of the thrones of the Kings of the earth.

Nor is it only in the solemn acts of religious worship that we are to glorify God, but even in our common actions, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we must do it to the glory of God;[c] that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.[d] The general scope and tendency of our conversations must be toward the pleasing and praising of God: his favour must be pursued as our chief good in all we do, and his honour aimed at as our highest end; that we may in all our actions express the honour we have for God, and may excite others to honour him. And when we do thus, to borrow a phrase that commonly passes from man to man, but much more properly from man to God, we do ourselves the greatest honour of subscribing ourselves his "admirers and humble servants."

But, if, instead of directing our ways to this great end, we regard not whether we do so or no: nay, if we direct them to a contrary end, and instead of living to God and to his glory, we live to ourselves, we eat to ourselves, and drink to ourselves,[e] as God complains concerning his people, to please ourselves, and gratify the appetites of sense, that we may enjoy bodily ease and pleasure; if instead of seeking his honour, and the honour that comes from him, we seek our own honour, in the praise and applause of men. If Self be the centre in which the lines of all our actions meet, we may then be said to despise our ways, and to disparage them, when we make them subservient to an end so mean and trifling, when they are capable of being made to serve an end so great and noble. Belshazzar is said to have lifted up himself against the Lord of Heaven, whereas really he debased and diminished himself to the last degree when he served his base and brutish lusts with the wealth and honour and power that God had given him, and praised the gods of wood and stone, which neither hear, nor see, nor know; and must stand mute to that high charge: *But the God in whose hand thy breath is, and in whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified.*[f]

(2.) Not enquiring what will be the last end in which our ways will terminate and have their period. That which makes our way considerable, that is, the course and tenor of our conversation, well worthy our care,—is, that it is either the broad-way that leads down to death and destruction, or the narrow-way that leads up to life and glory. The path we walk in is either the path of life,[g] or the path of the destroyer.[h] It is not only either a right way that will bring us to the happiness we profess to be journeying toward, or a wrong way that will not: the difference is greater than that, it is a way that will end either in Heaven or Hell.

And does it not concern us then to put the question seriously to ourselves, Whither will the way that I walk in lead me? where will it lodge me? that if it be the good way that leads to Heaven, I may press forward in it; if the bad way that leads to Hell, I may hasten back out of it. Whither am I going? what will be in the end hereof? what shall I do in the day of visitation? If I should die to-night, as I am not sure to live till to-morrow morning, whither would death bring me? These are questions which all those who have a concern for their own way will ask themselves frequently; as the pilot who minds his business, often considers what port he is bound for, and then, by inspecting his compass, inquires whether the course he now steers will bring him to it.

But with the most of men this is the last thing in their thoughts; they have not the prudence to foresee the evil, and to hide themselves, but with the simple they pass on, and are punished.[i] We earnestly wish, as God did of Israel, that they would be so wise as to consider their latter end; but, at the same time, we have reason to complain, as God did of Jerusalem, that *because she remembered not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully.*[k]

Those despise their way who look not on it with that concern, which a serious prospect of the end of it would fill them with; and therefore it is, that they go on securely in that way of the ungodly which will perish;

[a] Mat. 5. 16. Joh. 15. 8. [b] Ps. 8. 5, 6. [c] 1 Cor. 10. 31. [d] 1 Pet. 4. 11. [e] Zec. 7. 6. [f] Dan. 5. 23. [g] Ps. 16. 11. [h] Ps. 17. 4. [i] Pro. 22. 3. [k] Lam. 1. 9.

but

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but they consider not the perdition that it will end in, and, therefore, are drawn into it, and drawn on in it, by the allurements of worldly profit and sensual pleasure. That simple unwary youth, whom Solomon speaks of, was made to yield, and in a manner forced, by the flatteries and fair speeches of the adulterous woman, because he considered not what would follow upon it, that it was the direct way to Hell, and to the chambers of death; so that he went as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks; as a bird that hastens to the snare, and knows not that it is for his life. Men would not be brought, as they are, to believe a lie, by which they will all be damned, if they were not given up to strong delusions.

And are there any here who have lived thus many years in this world, and never yet bestowed one serious thought upon this grand question, What will become of them in the other world? who either never put the question to themselves, or, like Pilate, had not patience or courage to stay for an answer; who never yet judged it a matter worth being resolved in? Know then that you are of those who despise their own ways: and can it be a thing of small account with you, whether you are going to Heaven or Hell? Is the difference between them so minute as to justify your indifference in this matter? O that at length you would bring this matter to a trial; and not only so, but bring it to an issue with all the solicitude that a matter of such importance both deserves and requires. Make it to appear that you value your ways, by being inquisitive, as a careful traveller is, whether the way you are in will bring you to your journey's end if you proceed in it, or not, and proceed accordingly. If ye will inquire, inquire ye; and leave not a matter of such moment at uncertainty.

2. When we are indifferent about the rule of our ways, and the measures by which we govern ourselves in them, we despise our own ways. Men's practices will be guided and ruled by their principles, and those who are loose and unfixed in their principles can never be even and steady in their practices. Those certainly despise their way who walk at all adventures, and live at large when they should walk circumspectly, and live by rule.

(1.) We despise our way, if we set aside the rules which God has honoured us and our way with the prescribing of: God has bid us stand in the way and see; consider what is the way appointed you to walk in, ask for the old paths, for God has not put us to seek for new rules to go by, such as were never heard of before, but such as were from the beginning, and he has said, *Walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls*, spiritual rest in your way, and eternal rest at the end of it: but they put contempt upon their way, which God had discovered such a concern for; for they said, *We will not walk therein.*[a]

It is a great honour God has put upon our way, [1.] that he has given us the scriptures to be the guide of our way; has in them shewed us what is good, and what the Lord our God requires of us; has there told us what are the by-paths we should carefully avoid, what the stumbling-stones we should take heed of: his word is *a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths*, not only a discovering but a directing light. Could a greater regard have been had to our actions by the God who made us, than to give us a divine revelation exactly suited to our case, and accommodated to all the steps that we have to take, on purpose to be our guide to Heaven? What an honour did God put upon Israel in the wilderness, though an undeserving people, and upon their passage through it, in that he gave them a pillar of cloud and fire to go before them, and shew the way in which they should go, and to direct all their removals and rests! Such a divine conduct are we under, who have the written word to be our guide and counsellor.

But we despise our way if we make not use of this rule, and conform not our hearts and lives to it; if it be an indifferent thing to us whether we be ruled by the word of God, or no; if we never consult that oracle, never try our ways by that touchstone, nor are in care to walk by the light of the law and the testimony. As presumptuous sinners trample upon the law, and do what they can to make it void, so careless sinners cast the law behind their backs, and keep it as much as they can out of their sight, as if it were not worth while to order their conversation according to it. Those who despise the commandment of the Lord,[b] who despise the word, and fear not the commandment, they despise their own ways, and shall be destroyed:[c] but as many as walk according to this rule, as they put a respect upon it, so they put a respect upon their own way, and peace shall be upon them, and mercy, as it is upon all the Israel of God,[d] who are guided and governed by that rule.

Let young people cleanse their way, and make it pure and pleasant, acceptable to God, comfortable to themselves, and beautiful before men. Let them direct their way to the right end, and in the right paths, by taking heed thereto with a constant care and concern, according to the Word,[e] which we must always have regard to. [See Mr. Nesbit's sermon to *young people* lately, on that text.]

[2.] That he has appointed conscience to be a monitor to us concerning our way, according to the Scriptures. As *the commandment is a lamp*, and *the law a light*, so *the spirit of a man* likewise *is the candle of the Lord.*[f] Conscience, rightly informed, is an excellent guide in subordination to the Scriptures, and God has shewed his care of our actions, by appointing us such a tutor and guardian, such an inspector of our manners, to be always with us, to check us when we do amiss, and to direct and encourage us to do well; to be a voice behind us, saying unto us, *This is the way, walk in it*, when we are ready to turn aside.[g] God, by enduing us with a faculty of reflecting upon our actions, which the beasts have not, of accusing and excusing

[a] Jer. 6. 16.

[b] 2 Sam. 12. 9. [c] Pro. 13. 13. [d] Gal. 6. 16.
[e] Ps. 119. 9. [f] Pro. 20. 27. [g] Isa. 30. 21.

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excusing ourselves, has evidenced the concern he has about our ways, that they be strait and good.

But if we have no regard to the admonitions of conscience, and turn a deaf ear to them; if we say to that seer, *See not;* if we smite our hearts for smiting us, or threaten to do so, as the King of Judah did the Prophet, *Forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten?*[a] If it be all one to us whether our consciences be pleased or displeased, and no care is taken to keep them void of offence; then we despise our own way, as if it were not worth looking into, or looking after. But however conscience may for a time be slighted and silenced, brow-beaten and run down, first or last it will be heard.

O that young people would betimes manifest their concern for their own way, by paying a respect to their own consciences, getting them rightly informed concerning good and evil, sin and duty; hearkening to their dictates, though they be but whispered; keeping them tender and afraid of sin, and keeping up their dominion over appetite and passion, and all the lusts of the flesh and of the eye. Often call upon conscience to do its office, and not only give it leave to deal faithfully with you, but charge it to do so: maintain the honour of the government in your own souls, and the due course of law, and suffer it not to be insulted, obstructed, or made despicable: thus order is kept up in the soul, and its peace secured; and it is the greatest honour you can do yourselves, to maintain a value and veneration for your consciences.

(2.) We despise our way if we set up and follow their rules of walking, in opposition to those which God has appointed us; and such rules as are not only pernicious, but unworthy to be regarded in the conduct of our way.

What mean thoughts have those of their own way, [1.] Who are guided and governed by appetite and passion, fancy and imagination, the sight of their own eyes; who will do just what they have a mind to do, whether right or wrong? *Quicquid libet licet—whatever pleases is right,* that is their principle; if it be grateful to sense, it shall be lawful; they will do what is right in their own eyes, and what pleases them, whether it be right in God's eyes, and please him or no.—*We will certainly do whatsoever thing goes forth out of our own mouth,*[b] is the language of those who *despise their own way.* By this Solomon describes the folly of the young man, That he walks *in the way of his heart,* and *in the sight of his eyes.*[c]

But are those fit to direct a way that leads to eternity? Must the powers that are brutal command a creature that is rational? Must human reason and divine revelation, and the oracles of both, give way to the desires of the flesh, and the more foolish inventions which man has found out since his departure from his God? Nothing is so unseemly as servants on horseback, and princes walking as servants upon the earth:[d] nothing so unsufferable as these servants when they reign, these fools when they are pampered.[e] Can we think that man, who was made to be a subject to his Maker, should be allowed a boundless liberty, and sent out free with the wild ass? No; you mistake yourselves, if you think you may do as you please.

[2.] Those also, who are guided and governed by the course and custom of this vain and foolish world, despise their own way, who think *that* a leader and director wise enough and good enough and safe enough for them. Those matter not much what they do, who resolve to do as the most do, and follow the multitude, though it be to do evil; nor whither they go, who resolve to go down the stream, without asking whither it will carry them. Christ says *Follow me,* and it will be an honour to us and our conversation to have such a leader, and to follow him whithersoever he goes, who is wisdom itself. The world says *Follow me,* and we cannot do ourselves a greater dishonour, than to put ourselves under the conduct of such a leader; yet, thus the children of disobedience do, they walk according to the course of this world.[f] It is all one to them what they do, so they can but recommend themselves to the gay and the great, or to the worldly-wise, on whom that principle has a greater influence than all the principles of their religion, "*As good be out of the world as out of the fashion.*"

What contempt do those put upon their own ways, who are easily drawn aside from their duty into by-paths, by any one who will put up the finger, and flatter them, and speak a few fair words, and tell them every body else does so! It is with them as the Apostle says it was with the Gentiles, they were carried away even as they were led.[g] Those make no account of their way, whose hearts are thus weak, thus easy, thus yielding to the suggestions and solicitations of them who lie in wait to deceive, and make them their rule.

3. When we are wavering and unsettled in the course and tenour of our ways, then we despise them. Those who in the course of their lives are of no consistency with themselves, but halt between two, and are continually contradicting themselves, they make nothing of their way, nor bring any thing to pass in it; these are the double-minded men,[h] whose hearts are divided between God and the world, the Spirit and the flesh, as if they had the art of reconciling contraries; and they are accordingly unstable in all their ways, in a continual struggle between their convictions and their corruptions, and sometimes they yield to the one, and sometimes to the other; and thus they go on from time to time, fed with a fancy as if it would justify the abundance of bad in them, that there is something in them that is good which does condemn it, and witness against it. But this is despising their way, as if it were not worth being entirely submitted to God, but it were enough to be in part so: but those who thus, like Reuben, are as unstable as water, like him shall never excel.[i]

(1.) It is certain that those have not the concern they ought to have for their own ways, who have not

[a] 2 Chron. 25. 16. [b] Jer. 44. 17. [c] Ecc. 11. 9.
[d] Ecc. 10. 6, 7. [e] Pro. 30. 22.
[f] Eph. 2. 2. [g] 1 Cor. 12. 2. [h] Jam. 1. 8.
[i] Gen. 49. 4.

resolution

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resolution enough to persist in good purposes, and to hold to them. You shall have them sometimes in a good mind under the convictions of the word, or the corrections of the rod; or when they are going out into the world, fresh from under the influence of a religious education, they will then promise very fair, *All that the Lord shall say unto us we will do, and be obedient:* and we have reason to think that they mean as they say, and intend no other; but the buds and blossoms are blasted, their good purposes prove to no purpose, and it is for want of resolution; it is because they have not a just value for their own way, otherwise they would stick to a good bargain for it when they have made it.

You who are young, I hope, are ready to engage yourselves to the Lord, to promise that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, but will you adhere to it? Will you abide by it? Having sworn, will you perform it? Will you with purpose of heart cleave to the Lord? This would indeed put a value upon your way; if you had indeed one heart and one way to fear God for ever. This was it that Joshua laboured to bring the people of Israel to, when he put it to their choice, whether they would serve other gods, or the true God only, and laid before them what there was in the service of God that was discouraging: all was to bring them to this fixed resolution, and keep them to it, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*[a]

(2.) Those who have not constancy enough to proceed and persevere in the good practices wherein they have begun, have not the concern they ought to have for their own ways. Those who did run well, but something hindered them, and drove them off; who had a first love, but have left it, even the kindness of their youth, and the love of their espousals, as if they had found some iniquity in God or in his ways, which yet we challenge them to produce and prove any instance of: those despise their way, who having begun in the spirit end in the flesh, whose goodness is as the morning cloud and the early dew, which passeth away.[b]

You who now in the days of your youth are mindful of your Creator, it is a good way in which you set out, make it to appear that you have a value for it, by persevering in it; and take heed lest, having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, you should through carelessness of your way, be again entangled therein and overcome, and so fall from your own stedfastness.[c] I beseech you look to yourselves and your own way, and to every step you take in it, lest ye lose the things ye have wrought and gained, that you may receive a full reward.[d] Notice is taken in the character of Jehoshaphat, that he walked in the first ways of his Father David;[e] it is a pity but those whose first ways are good ways should not have such regard to them, as still to improve, that their last ways may be their best ways.

4. If we do not apply ourselves to God in our ways, and acknowledge him, we despise our own ways. This honour has God been pleased to put upon our ways, that he has undertaken to be our guide and guard in them, if we look up to him as we ought: if, therefore, we have not our eye up to him, if we make light of this privilege, as all those do who do not make use of it, we lose this honour.

(1.) God has promised those who seek him, that he will teach them the way in which they should go, that he will teach sinners in the way,[f] will teach them his way, if they will but meekly attend his conduct, that he will teach them in the way that he shall choose, when otherwise they would be apt to turn aside into the way that a vain mind and a corrupt heart shall chuse, v. 12. He has promised that he will find out some means or other to make their way plain before them, to guide them by his counsel, to guide them with his eye, by some little intimation of his mind, which they with whom his secret is do understand the meaning of: he knows how much depends upon the right ordering of their way, and how much it is his delight when it is a good way, and, therefore, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord,[g] and we are instructed to pray, *Lord, order my steps in thy word.*[h]

But now, if we do not think this divine conduct worth asking, if we think we do not need it, or can do well enough without it; if in the most difficult and doubtful cases we go on leaning to our own understanding, and ask not counsel at the Mouth of the Lord, we despise our way, we put contempt upon it, and bring more contempt. Thus they did who took counsel, but not of God, and covered with a covering, but not of his Spirit; Isa. 30. 1. They who over-value their own wisdom under-value their own way.

(2.) God has promised them that seek him to bear them up and strengthen them in their way, to fortify them against the temptations of their way, to furnish them for the duties and services of it, and to work all their good works in them and for them. What an honour has God hereby put upon our way and work, that he has promised us grace sufficient for us, that as our day is, so shall our strength be! to enlarge our hearts, that we may run the way of his commandments, and work in us both to will and to do! But if we slight this grace which he has offered us and encouraged us to ask, and instead of committing our way to the Lord, go on in it in our own strength, as if we had no need of the divine aids, we then despise our way, and it is just with God to leave us to ourselves; to leave the youths who are confident of their own abilities, to faint and be weary, and the young men utterly to fail,[i] while by renewed strength from him, the lame man is made to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing in the ways of the Lord.

5. When we are careless of our past ways, and take not the account we ought to take of them, we then despise our ways. It is our honour that we can look back; it is our concern to look back, because if we have done amiss, there is a way provided to undo it by

[a] Josh. 24. 21. [b] Hos. 6. 4. [c] 2 Pet. 2. 20.
[d] 2 Joh. 8. [e] 2 Chron. 17. 3.
[f] Ps. 25. 8, 9. [g] Ps. 37. 23. [h] Ps. 119. 133. [i] Isa. 40. 30.

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by repentance, and prevent the fatal consequences of it. If we neglect that, we despise our way.

(1.) If we are not willing that others should reprove us for what they see or hear is amiss in us, we have not the care we ought to have for our own way. So many things there are amiss, and so much is it our concern to have them mended, and yet withal so partial are we in favour of ourselves, that we have need of more eyes than our own to discover us to ourselves: and it is a great advantage to us in our way to have faithful friends about us, to tell us of our faults and of our dangers; This is not well, the other is not safe; this is a blemish to you, and that will be a snare to you.

But there are those who take it as an affront to be thus admonished, are ready to fly in the face of their reprovers, yea, though they be ministers, reprovers in the gate, reprovers by office, yea, though they be their own ministers, who ought to have some care particularly of their souls; though they be their parents and masters, who rebuke with authority; though they be those to whom they have given the right hand of fellowship, with a mutual obligation to watch over one another; yet they are ready to say to them who shew them the false steps they have taken, "What is that to you? Meddle with your own business, we know what we have to do better than you can teach us:" and it is well if they bear them not a grudge for it. Is not this an evidence that they despise their way, though it be a way that leads either to Heaven or Hell? They would not thus despise their way from one part of the city to the other; for there they would thank any one who would shew them where they have missed their way, or are in danger of missing it, and would direct them in the right way.

2. If we are not willing to examine ourselves, and to search and try our own ways, and to call ourselves to an account, and correct ourselves for what we have done amiss, we despise our own ways, and do not make that account of them which God does, and which he expects we should do. He looks upon men when they have sinned, to see what they will do next, whether they will make any sorrowful reflections upon it, and whether their spirits will be grieved for that by which they have grieved his Spirit: and, if there be any who say, *I have sinned, and have perverted that which was right, and it profited me not,*[a] he is pleased with it, and meets such returning souls more than half way with his comforts. But if, on the contrary, when he hearkens and hears they speak not aright;[b] if none of them say, "What have I done? and it is all wrong," still if they be not brought to that, he is disappointed, and is provoked to say, that his Spirit shall not any more strive with them.

Those despise their way, who never remember against themselves their former iniquities, nor inquire wherein they have erred; who never examine their consciences, nor review the records of them; lie down at night, and never ask what they have done amiss that day; enter upon a sabbath, and never look back upon their week's work; perhaps go to the Lord's table every month, and do not examine themselves how their conversation has been ordered since they were last renewing their covenants with God in that ordinance: and is not this a great contempt put upon their own way? They are willing to take it for granted all has been well, as Ephraim, though he had the balances of deceit in his hand, and loved to oppress, yet flattered himself with a conceit that they should find no iniquity in him that were sin,[c] nothing very bad, or at least nothing to be seen.

And while they thus neglect to inquire into their own ways, how can they tell what confession of sin to make, and what to pray particularly for the pardon of? and how can they tell what sin to covenant against, and to stand upon their guard against? You that are great dealers in the world, know of what consequence it is to you to keep your accounts even, and often to review them; and those who are shy of looking into their books, it is to be feared, it is because they are not willing to know the worst of their affairs; they suspect they are going behind hand, and by this means are likely to go more and more so.

And will it not be of dangerous consequence to the prosperity of our souls, if we neglect to look over the books of conscience, that we may renew our repentance, and make our peace with God in Christ? He that is washed needs to wash his feet;[d] the sooner the better, and in order to that to observe what filth he has contracted; if he do not, he despises his way. Consideration of our ways is the first step towards conversion from the errors of them, and, therefore, reckon not that you can safely go forward, till you have first seriously looked back.

6. When we are heedless and inconsiderate as to the way that is before us, and walk at all adventures, we despise our own way, if we think it is all one what we do, that God Almighty is neither pleased nor displeased with any of our thoughts or affections, words or actions, and, therefore, do as we please, and ask no question for conscience sake: if, in doubtful cases, we never consider what is our duty, but what is our inclination and secular interest; if we go on in our callings, and never consider how we may glorify God in the use of them, and keep a good conscience: if, like the men of Laish we dwell carelesly, never look back with any regret, nor forward with any concern, we despise our way.

(1.) If we are in no care to avoid sin, which mars our path, and is a by-path, then we are careless of our way, as a fool upon the road, that never picks his way, but goes, as we say, through thick and thin. The chief, and indeed the only thing we have to dread in our way, is sin, for nothing but that can hurt or hinder us; the sin that most easily besets us, is the weight that must be laid aside; that is it that defiles our way, that disorders and perplexes it; that is the false way which we are to hate.

But those who are careless of their way are not aware

[a] Job 33. 27. [b] Jer. 8. 6. [c] Hos. 12. 8. [d] Joh. 13. 10.

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of their danger of sin, and their danger by sin, and therefore rush into it as the horse in the battle;[a] they consider not that they do evil,[b] nor what a great deal of evil there is in what they do. They have, it may be, deceitful ways of trade, carry it on by a course of lying and fraud, cheating their neighbours, cheating the government, and go on securely in it, not considering what an abomination to the Lord both the lying lips, and the false weights and measures are. They keep up drunken clubs, and in them mispend their time, and unfit themselves for the service of God, not considering that drunkenness and revellings, and such like, are works of the flesh, of which we have been told again and again, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.[c]

All the corruptions of our way arise from the corruptions of our hearts, and if we take no care to mortify and subdue them, and to suppress the first risings of them, to get the habits of sin weakened, and to shame ourselves and frighten ourselves out of those inclinations and dispositions which are so hurtful to us; if we do not thus strike at the root, it is a sign that we have not the concern we ought to have for our own way.

Our own corruptions are excited and drawn out by the temptations of Satan. We are told of our danger from that enemy, but are careless of our way if we do not put on the whole armour of God, and in dependance upon divine grace put on resolution to resist him, and repel all his assaults. He has devices and wiles wherewith to beguile the unwary, *latet Anguis in herba,—there is many a Snake under the green grass,* and, therefore, we have need to look where we tread: and that we may be kept from evil, are concerned to abstain from all the appearances of evil, and to take heed of approaches towards it; if we do not, we are careless of our way.

(2.) If we are in no care to do our duty, to be found in the way of it, and to do it as it ought to be done, we are careless of our way. It is not enough to the making of our way good that we cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well, and must learn to do it well, which will not be done without consideration. We must see to it, that in all the duties of the Christian life we *walk circumspectly, ἀκριβῶς, accurately, exactly;*[d] must do it by rule, and therefore must do it with care.

What we do that is good, must be done from a right principle, for a right end, and in a right manner; and therefore it must be done carefully, because herein it is so easy a thing to miss it; and if we are carried on in a road of religious exercises only by custom, and not by conscience and a due concern, we do but mock God and deceive ourselves, and it will turn to no good account.

Many an opportunity we have of doing good to others, and getting good to our own souls, which, if we do but walk carefully, we might make a good improvement of, but we lose it and let it slip, and it is a sign we despise our way; for the husbandman that has a respect to his business, and a value for it, will not drop his proper time for sowing and reaping.

Whas is done in religion without care, is done accordingly. If we go about solemn exercises without solemn preparation, we commonly come off from them without advantage; and if the commandment be not duly observed, it will not be obeyed as it should be. It is charged upon Jehu, that *he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart.*[e] And it is true of many, that they do not walk surely, are in no care to go upon sure grounds, and to take every step right, which is a sign they do not walk uprightly, nor have any true value for their own way.

II. I am next to shew what a foolish and dangerous thing it is for us to despise our own ways, and what an absurdity they are guilty of who do so. Believe it, sirs, the ways we despise are not so despicable as we would make ourselves believe they are; but a great deal of stress ought to be laid upon what we say and do, yea, upon what we think too; and consequently a great deal of care and concern ought to be about it.

This will appear if we consider these five things:

1. That the God of heaven observes and takes particular notice of all our ways; even the ways of our hearts, even their thoughts and intents are *naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do,*[f] *πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος; with whom there is for us an account running,* and to whom there must be shortly an account given up. God sees our ways, not only as he sees all things, but with a particular observation, as things that must be judged of, and by which judgment must be given justly.

It is a general truth laid down, and comes in as an argument against all secret sins, and those which are most artfully and industriously concealed; that *the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.*[g] But we should each of us apply it to ourselves, and to our own goings. Job does so, *Doth not he see my ways and count all my steps?*[h] *David* does so: *Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.*[i] Now, shall we make a light matter of that which the God of Heaven makes such a great matter of, or let that in us pass allowedly unobserved, which he so carefully observes? It is natural to us to have some regard to ourselves, that we observe a due decorum when we are in the presence of our betters, whose eye we observe to be fixed upon us. Therefore we should have a jealous eye upon ourselves, because God has an eye upon us wherever we are, and whatever we are doing.

Therefore we should be very careful and diligent to avoid sin, because all our evil ways are before God; they can none of them be hid from his piercing eye; he sees all the secret wanderings of our hearts from him, and all the secret risings of our hearts against him, and is much displeased with them. And shall our sins be no provocation to us, when they are such a

[a] Jer. 8. 6. [b] Ecc. 5. 1. [c] Gal. 5. 21. [d] Eph. 5. 15
[e] 2 Kin. 10. 31. [f] Heb. 4. 13. [g] Pro. 5. 21.
[h] Job 31. 4. [i] Ps. 139. 3.

provocation

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provocation to him? Does he complain of his people's bent to backslide from him, and shall not they complain of it? Is he broken with their unfaithful heart, and shall they make light on it?

And therefore we should be very careful and diligent to do our duty, because God takes notice of all we think, or say, or do well, and is pleased with it, and it shall be owned in the great day, even a cup of cold water given to a disciple; which should engage us to wait all opportunities of doing good, because God observes all the good we do, especially if it be done in secret; for that shall with a particular regard be seen, and openly recompensed. *The Lord knows the way of the righteous*, and, therefore, they should themselves take cognizance of it, of every path, and every step.

2. That Satan is a subtile enemy who seeks to pervert our ways, and to draw them into his service and interests. If we despise our ways, yet he does not, but labours with the utmost subtilty and sedulity to draw us aside out of the good and right way, and to seduce us into the paths that lead to ruin. He is represented, and his agents, by the foolish woman, who calls passengers who go right on their way, to come share in the stolen waters. Now if Satan be so watchful and busy to make us turn out of our way, or trifle in it, and lets slip no opportunity of doing us a mischief in our way, we are fools if we be unconcerned, and slip opportunities of doing ourselves a kindness. Our way is beset, and, therefore, we should be never off our guard.

Especially, because then our way is most endangered when it is most despised: when we least consider what we do, our spiritual enemies gain most advantage against us, and make an easy prey of us. Satan's design is more than half accomplished when he has brought men to an indifference as to their own actions, and let things go just as they will without either forecast or review.

This is a good reason therefore why we should be sober and vigilant, and make conscience of what we say and do, because our adversary the devil is seeking to devour us. Therefore St. Paul is jealous over the Corinthians, and has a watchful eye upon all their ways, because there is danger, lest they should be beguiled as Eve was through the subtilty of the serpent: and of the Thessalonians, lest by any means the tempter have tempted them, and his labour should be in vain;[a] and for the same reason we should have a jealousy of ourselves and our own way, lest if we sleep, and neglect our way, we lose our spear and cruse of water, as Saul did when he slept; nay, and our heads and lives, as Sisera did, when he slept in the tent of one who pretended to be his friend.

3. That we have many eyes upon us, that are witnesses to our way. David prays, *Lord lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies*;[b] because of them who observe me; so it is in the original. We have need to look about us, for there are many about us who look upon us, to take notice of what we say and do. Let us walk honestly, εὐσχημόνως,—*decently*, and as becomes our character, (so the word signifies,) as *in the day* when we may be seen, and when we are in the midst of those who will observe us.

Some have their eye upon our way perhaps, to take pattern by it, and that they may learn to do as we do, and then I am sure we ought not to despise our way, because the example of it may have a great influence upon others; so that if we do amiss, others will do amiss too, and so we shall become accessary to their sin, and shall be to answer not only for our ways, but as the Scripture speaks, *for the fruit of our doings*, as Jeroboam for his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin. If it be a good reason why we should not make friendship, nor keep company with an angry man, lest we learn his ways, much more is it a reason why an angry man should moderate his anger, and put on meekness, lest others should learn his ways, and get a snare to their souls,[c] lest by setting his own house on fire, he burn down a whole street. We ought to be very careful what language we speak, whether that of Canaan or that of Ashdod,[d] for those about us will learn our dialect, and be either the better or the worse for it.

Some, perhaps, have their eye upon our way to seek for matter of reproach; they watch for our halting, and if we say or do amiss, religion shall suffer by it, and be evil spoken of; and the enemies of the Lord will have their mouths opened to blasphemy, as in David's case.[e] You who make a greater profession of religion, who attend preaching and catechising more than others, have need to be very strict and regular in your whole conversation; for otherwise, by reason of you the way of truth will be evil spoken of:[f] religion will be struck at, and wounded through your sides. That, which, in others, would be winked at as a small fault, will, in you be magnified and made a great matter of. Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, that you may cut off occasion from them who desire occasion,[g] to reproach the good ways of the Lord, and prejudice people against them.

Some, perhaps, have their eye upon our way, that on the other hand would rejoice to see us do that which becomes us, would have no greater joy than to see us walk in the truth, Our strictness and stedfastness would be their strength and song. *Now we live*, says the apostle, *if ye stand fast*. We have reason to think that the good Angels rejoice, as in the conversion of sinners, so in the even and regular walking of the saints; and, therefore, we are charged to behave ourselves very reverently in the worship (a branch of our way which is by no means to be despised) because of the Angels. Now if our way be compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,[h] it concerns us to have an eye to it ourselves; and to run, and run well, the race that is set before us, especially looking unto Jesus.

[a] 1 Thes. 3. 5. [b] Ps. 5. 8; 27. 11. [c] Prov. 22. 25. [d] Neh. 13. 24. [e] 2 Sam. 12. 14. [f] 2 Pet. 2. 2. [g] 2 Cor. 11. 12. [h] 1 Cor. 11. 10.

4. That

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4. That we must shortly give an account of all our ways. As there is now an account kept of them all in the book of God's omniscience, and of the sinner's own conscience, because we are here in a state of trial and probation; so there must shortly be an account given of them all, and they must all be reviewed, for God requireth that which is past,[a] and will tell thee, *These things thou hast done.*

It is a folly for us to despise our own ways, and make a light matter of them, and to turn off the errors of them with a jest, when so great a matter will be made of them in the Judgment; in the judgment at hand, which follows immediately upon death; in the judgment at last, the public judgment of the Great Day. Therefore, it concerns us to fear God and keep his commandments, and to see that our matters be right and good, for God shall bring every work into judgment, bring it into the account, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.[b] This was known and pressed by an Old Testament Preacher, but is much more clearly revealed in the New Testament, which tells us, *We must all appear,* one as well as another, all without exception, *before the judgment-seat of Christ,* to give an account of *every thing done in the body,* and to *receive according to it, whether it be good or evil.* Brethren, these are the true sayings of God; all we are doing now will be called over again in the day of judgment; as sure as we see this day, we shall see that day, and it will be to us according as we are found.

O what a concern should this fill us with, to think that what we are now doing, every day, has a reference to that day; which methinks should make every day a great day, a judgment day with us: for if we would daily judge ourselves concerning our own way, we should not be judged of the Lord.[c] It would awaken us to consider our ways, if we would but consider how they will appear in that day, when we and they must appear undisguised, in true colours, and with what eye we ourselves shall look upon them, an eye of shame, or an eye of satisfaction, and thankfulness to God. This should especially give check to the looses and extravagancies of youth: thou hast a mind, O young man, to lay the reins on the neck of thine appetites and passions, to indulge thyself in a sensual liberty, to walk in the way of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, and this would be a brave way of living, if thou wast never to hear of it again; *but know thou for all these things God will bring thee into judgment,*[d] for all thy indulgence of thyself in carnal mirth and sensual pleasure, unbounded and uncontrouled; for all those merry days and merry nights of thine, from which every thing was banished that was serious, and when God was not in all, not in any of thy thoughts. Let the thoughts of this take young people off from their inordinate pursuits of the pleasures of sense, and deaden their desires towards them, that they may acquaint themselves with the pleasures of religion, which are spiritual and divine, and as much exceed the other as the richest wine does puddle-water.

5. That according as our ways are now, it is likely to be well or ill with us to eternity. It is the greatest folly imaginable to despise our way in this world, for as our way is, so will our end be in that world which has no end. Those who go upon the water only for pleasure care not what course they steer; but they who go upon business must steer the right course, and secure their point.

Believe it, sirs, and I pray consider it, that you are here upon trial for another world, and it will be to you a world of happiness or misery, according as you pass your trials. As you spend your time, you are likely to spend your eternity. If the prevailing temper of your mind now be vain and carnal, selfish and sensual, earthly and worldly, and you go out of the world under the dominion of such a temper, you are utterly unfit for Heaven, and so is Heaven for you, it would be no Heaven to you. If the general course of your conversation be contrary to the rules of Christianity; if, instead of being constant and devout worshippers of God, you slight and neglect religious exercises, and think meanly of them; if, instead of living by faith in Christ, and in a continual dependance upon him for righteousness and grace, you lay him aside and overlook him in what you have to do with God; if, instead of living a life of self-denial and mortification, you indulge yourselves in all the gratifications of sense, and are in them as in your element; if, instead of bridling your passions, you indulge them upon every provocation, and are impatient of the least instance of contempt and contradiction, as if humility and meekness were no part of the law of Christ, or the livery of Christians; if, instead of loving all men, even your enemies, and forgiving injuries, you have a jealousy of all, an antipathy to some, and bear malice and ill-will to all that you apprehend have been injurious to you, or stand in your light, or in your way; if, instead of being charitable and doing all the good you can to every body, you are selfish, and seek your own things only, and are oppressive and hard with those you have power over or advantage against; if, instead of setting your affections on things above, and having your conversation in Heaven, you are wholly intent upon the world, and the things of it; if that be the subject of your most serious cares, and the object of your most vigorous pursuits, and you go on in such a course as this to the end of your way, you cannot inherit eternal life; if the word of God be true, and there be any weight in the reason of the thing itself, you cannot; you cannot but perish, eternally perish. And can it then be an indifferent thing to us what our way is? Can it be all one whether we live a godly or ungodly life, when our everlasting weal or woe does certainly depend upon it? O that we were wise and understood this, that we would consider our latter end! then we durst not despise, durst not but consider our way.

And those who have good hope through grace that they are in the way that leads to life, are concerned to regard their particular paths, to look well to their goings and every step they take, because they know not how much their vigorous advances in grace and

[a] Ecc. 3. 15. [b] Ecc. 12. 14. [c] 1 Cor. 11. 31. [d] Ecc. 11. 9.

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and holiness, and their careful improvement of all opportunities of doing good, may add to the degrees of their glory and joy in Heaven; nor how much their remissness and the unevenness of their walking may take from them: but this I am sure we all ought to fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into that rest, and we having by faith laid hold on that promise, any of us should so much as seem to come short,[a] should seem either to others or to ourselves, should in the nature of the thing be in danger of it, or should come short of any of that measure to which, if we had been more careful, we might have attained.

Nothing can be more proper to awaken us to put a value upon our own ways, than to lay this to heart, that our present time is seed-time, and as we sow now we shall be reaping to eternity. The husbandman sows his ground with care, because he knows that when what he sows comes up again, it will appear whether it was sown wisely and well or no, Gal. 6. 7, 8. The matter is brought into a little compass, *If we sow to the flesh* in a carnal sensual life, *we shall of the flesh reap corruption; but if we sow to the spirit, we shall of the spirit reap life everlasting:* and then I am sure it is folly for us to despise our own way.

The Application.

The application of this plain and practical discourse lies upon yourselves, brethren, the Lord help us all to apply it!

1. Let it be a caution to us not to be rigid and severe in our censures of other people's ways, for that is none of our business; (we are incompetent judges of our brethren, for we know not their hearts;) nor of their works, for we know not the principles they act from, or the ends they aim at, nor the one-half of what is requisite to be known in order to the passing a right judgment upon them; we can judge at best but by the outward appearance, and, therefore, it is ten to one, but we are deceived in our judgment. And as we have not ability, so we have not authority to judge concerning them, we step into the throne of God if we do: *What have we to do to judge another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.* We are to hope charitably concerning our brethren, and to put the best construction upon their words and actions that they will bear; but as to their way, and the end of it, the Lord only knows that, and to him we must leave it.

And this is another good reason why we should not pretend to judge our brethren and their way, because we have enough to do to judge ourselves and our own way: And here it becomes us as much to be strict and severe, as in judging of our brethren it becomes us to be candid and charitable, and make the best of every thing.

2. Let it be a charge to us to look well to our own ways. Let others, if they be overtaken in a fault, be restored with a spirit of meekness; and let us not be curious in prying into the fault, and examining all the circumstances of it; nor sharp in upbraiding them with their carelessness; but let every man prove his own work, let him bring that to the *touchstone*, and be very critical in trying it, and earnest with God in prayer, to discover him to himself; and if he find his heart upright with God, then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.[b]

O that I could prevail with you who are young, betimes to make conscience of what you say and do, and oblige yourselves to live by rule, and not, as most young people, to despise your own way. When you out into the world, and begin to "be for yourselves," as you say, I beseech you do well for yourselves. When you are gone from under the influence of your parents and masters, yet still continue under the influence of the good education they gave you, and think not when you are set at liberty from them, you may live at large. With what grief have I sometimes heard that vain song put into the mouths of young people, which begins, "From grave lessons and restraints." I cannot repeat it, nor desire to do it, but it is designed to teach them to triumph in having shaken off the shackles of virtue, and laid the reins on the neck of lust. It is time *to warn*, my brethren, and to shew ourselves zealous for the honour of God and conscience, of virtue and serious piety, for that is it I here in the name of my great Master contend for, and not the petty private interests of any party: let them take their lot, despise their way, and spare not; the kingdom of God is not meats and drinks, either the imposition or the opposition of those matters of doubtful disputation; but it is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; it is the great and fundamental law of Christianity, *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;* it is humility and meekness; it is sobriety and temperance; it is chastity and strict modesty; it is justice and equity; it is universal charity and beneficence that I am pressing upon you: these are the ways that you must walk in, if ever you hope to find rest to your souls; these ways must be your ways, and in these you must persevere to the end, and in these and all the acts of devotion, and the instituted exercises of religion, you must live a life of communion with God. In urging these, I say again, it is time to be in earnest, when the enemies of serious godliness are not only so subtle as secretly to weaken its principles, and sap its foundations under ground, but so daring as openly to attack all its strong holds; when you are taught by a celebrated poet to say,

> "Conscience and Heaven's fears, religion's rules,
> Are but state-bells to toll in pious fools."

This is instructing you how to despise your own ways; but *Cease my son to hear the instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge*:[c] and the Lord rebuke those who give such destructive instructions, even the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke them, and snatch those as brands out of the burning who incline their ear to such instruction.

[a] Heb. 4. 1.

[b] Gal. 6. 1, 4. [c] Pro. 19. 27.

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That which I am persuading you all to, both young and old, is, to keep yourselves and all your words and actions under a strict discipline: are you your own masters? Be faithful masters then to yourselves, and not careless ones. (1.) Be strict in your inquiries concerning your present way, and herein deal faithfully with yourselves, and do not despise a matter upon which your all depends. Are you in the broad way that leads to destruction, or in the narrow way that leads to life? among the many who walk in the way of their own hearts, or among the few who walk in the way of God's commandments? Christ is the way, are you in Christ? Holiness is the way, and is it the way of holiness that you are walking in? Be willing to find out the worst of your case, you need not be afraid to do so, while it may be amended, be it ever so bad: and be concerned to find it out; for if it be bad, and not amended in time, it will shortly be past recovery.

Take heed of deceiving yourselves in a matter of such vast moment as this is. The word of God has plainly told you once and again, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man*, and he says I shall have peace, though I go on in it, *but the end thereof are the ways of death*;[a] and will you suffer yourselves to be cheated into your own ruin, when you have such fair warning given you? How bitter will the reflection upon it be hereafter, if you thus put a cheat upon your own souls! Self-deceivers will be self-destroyers, and for that reason to eternity self-tormentors.

For the Lord's sake, sirs, and for your own precious souls' sake, bring this matter to an issue quickly, by making your calling and your election sure, and so making your salvation sure. You are busy to make other things sure, that neither can be made sure, nor are worth making sure: O that you would make this sure which may and must be made sure, and leave it no longer in suspense! You cannot but tremble every step you take, as long as your own consciences tell you, if you give them leave to be faithful, that it is a step forward in the way of sin and death; but if you have good ground to hope that through grace you are walking in the way of good men, that leads to life and happiness, you may go on cheerfully; you may sing in that way: believe this matter therefore worth settling.

(2.) Be strict and impartial in your reflections upon your past ways, and do not despise them because they are past, for they are not past and gone, not gone out of God's remembrance. *Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.*[b] Set your hearts to your ways; so the word is; apply your minds seriously to think of them, and lay the concern of them near your hearts. Compare the temper of your minds, and the tenor of your lives with the rule of God's word, which is right and strait, and therefore of use to shew you the crooked ways into which you have turned aside; as far as you have varied and deviated from that, you have gone wrong. Find out the particular obliquities of your thoughts and affections, your words and actions, that you may know what to sorrow for, as the plague of your own heart, and what to get healed; for a disease that is known is half cured. Be particular in your reviews, that you may be so in your penitential acknowledgments; may be able to say not only, "I have done evil," but "I have done this evil;" and not only so, but "Thus and thus have I done;" as Aaron, who on the day of atonement, (that day to afflict the soul,) was to confess over the scape-goat all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins,[c] the sins themselves and all the aggravations of them. And usually the more particular we are in the confession of sin, the more comfort we have in the sense of the pardon, and the better fortified against temptations to relapse and return to folly: *Dolus versatur in generalibus—Deceit employs general confessions only.*

It is good to be making penitential reflections, every day, upon our sins of daily infirmity; and the more frequently this work is done, the more easy it will be. "Even reckonings make long friends:" if we daily audit accounts with our own consciences, and examine what we have done each day: if in the close of every week we do as God did, look upon the week's work, and behold all that we have done: if, before we attend on the Lord at his table we be particular in censuring ourselves for what has been amiss, and renew our repentance, and fetch in fresh assurances of the divine favour in Christ, we shall shew that we have indeed a value for our way, and the great day of account will be no terror to us.

3. Be very circumspect and considerate as to the particular paths that are before you. Do nothing rashly, but every thing with due care. Let David's resolution be your's, and stick to it, *I said I will take heed to my ways.*[d] He who walks uprightly, walks surely, will see to it that he goes upon sure grounds in opposition to walking at all adventures, and going on frowardly in the way of his heart. You put contempt upon your ways if you do not make conscience of them. Dread that wicked notion, that it is all alike what you do; though you be ever so poor and low in the world, and ever so inconsiderable among men, and your way ever so little taken notice of, yet God's eye is upon it, and, therefore, your's should be so. Do nothing rashly, for fear of doing amiss.

As those who value their own souls cannot but think themselves concerned to keep their hearts with all diligence, so those who value their own ways cannot but see themselves as much concerned to ponder the path of their feet; which direction follows the former, and is given in pursuance of it. Whatever you go about, consider diligently what is before you: stand not gazing about you, and making your remarks upon other people's ways, but let your eyes look right on, and your eyelids look straight before you, for your concern is with your own ways: let not your eyes turn, lest your feet follow them to the right hand or to the left. Let Heaven be the fixed end you walk towards,

[a] Pro. 14. 12; 16. 25. [b] Hag. 1, 5, 7. [c] Lev. 16. 21. [d] Ps. 39. 1.

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and the Scripture the fixed rule you walk by, and then you will walk steadily and with a holy security.

And as those who value their own souls cannot do better for them than to commit the keeping of them to God, as to a faithful Creator, and to Jesus Christ the Bishop of souls, who has taken the oversight of them, not of constraint, but willingly; so those who value their own way cannot do better concerning it, than to commit their way, to commit their works unto the Lord. Having chosen his word for your rule, be led by his Spirit. *I know* (says the Prophet) *that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps.*[a] We ought therefore in all our ways to acknowledge God, and to depend upon the conduct and support of his grace which he has promised to those who seek him, and refer it to him to chuse out their way, and to sit chief; in dependance upon which every good Christian may promise himself the same satisfaction that the Psalmist pleases himself with, *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.*

And, now, Am I leaving you at parting under any serious solicitous concern about your own way, resolving for the future to walk more circumspectly than you have done, in the strength of divine grace? And is this your resolution? The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thought of your heart, and thereby establish your way before him.

[a] Jer. 10. 23.

SOBER-

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SOBER-MINDEDNESS

RECOMMENDED TO

YOUNG PEOPLE,

IN

A DISCOURSE ON TITUS 2. 6.

To the Reader.

IT has been the laudable practice of many good ministers, both in city and country, now about this time of the year, to preach sermons particularly to young people, to awaken them to a sense of their great concern. And it is very seasonable to do it now, not only because in these days of leisure, they have more time to attend on such an opportunity, but because in these days of liberty and recess from business, young people are more exposed to temptations, which they have special need to be guarded against. Nor know I how we can better do honour to Christ, than by endeavouring thus to serve the great intentions of his coming into the world, and to bring in to him a seed to serve him, which shall be accounted to him for a generation; that from the womb of the morning, he may have the dew of their youth.

Upon such an occasion as this, the substance of the following discourse was preached the other day in London: but I could not have persuaded myself to publish it, had I not been requested to do it by a number of very hopeful promising youths, to whom I have lately become related, for the present, as a Catechist; in which service, though it has been looked upon as one of the lowest branches of the ministerial office, yet, it is the top of my ambition to be found, through grace, skilful, faithful, and successful.

To their service I dedicate it, not forgetting my friends in the country, the young ones of whose families I must ever have a deep and tender concern for. My prayer, both for the one and for the other is, that they may betimes know the God of their fathers, so as to serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind; so know him, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, as may be life eternal to them.

MATT. HENRY.

Jan. 3, 1712-13.

Titus 2. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

PAUL the aged is here directing Titus, a young minister, whom he calls *his own son in the common faith*, what subjects to preach upon; in the choice of which ministers have need of wisdom, should pray for wisdom, and take direction from this and other Scripture directions.

In general, he must speak the things which become sound doctrine, v. 1. He must preach the doctrine of Christ, the truth as it is in Jesus, the great mystery of godliness, that is sound, or wholesome doctrine, which is good for food, spiritual food, with which souls are nourished up, 1 Tim. 4. 6. And good for medicine too, it is healing doctrine, as it speaks pardon of sin to those who complain of the terror of guilt, and promises power against sin to those who complain of the strength of corruption; and, blessed be God, this sound, this healing doctrine is preached to you, in its purity, and I hope in its power, in season and out of season.

But this is not all, he must speak other things which become this sound doctrine, opposed to those Jewish fables and commandments of men, with which they of the circumcision corrupted the doctrine of Christ; ch. 1. 10, 14. The best way to guard against them, will be to preach the duties of Christianity with the doctrines of it; the truth which is after godliness, ch. 1. 1. Practical religion, which regulates and governs the heart and life, is that which becomes the doctrine of Christianity; which it becomes the teachers of that doctrine to preach, and both they and the professors of that doctrine to make conscience of. *The Grace of God that brings salvation teacheth us*, and, therefore, the ministers of the word of that grace must teach you, and all who hope for that salvation must learn to *deny ungodliness, and worldly fleshly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*. Right notions will not serve without good morals. Young people saying their catechism,

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techism, if it were the best catechism in the world, saying it ever so well, and saying nothing against it, will not save them, if the temper of their minds, and the tenor of their conversation, be not agreeable to the sound doctrine they converse with, of a piece with it, and such as becomes it.

Titus is here particularly directed to preach upon the duties required from Christians of each sex, and each age of life. He must teach aged men how they ought to carry themselves, so that their hoary head being found in the way of righteousness, might be a *Crown of Glory to them*, v. 2. And the aged women likewise, v. 3. that they may teach the young women, v. 4. And here, in my text, he is directed what application to make to young men. Thus particular should ministers be in their preaching, that they may, as far as may be, reach every one's case, which is the likeliest way to reach every one's conscience. Thus ministers must endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, and as wise and faithful stewards in God's House to *give every one their portion of meat in due season:* and O that every one would take their portion, and feed upon it, and digest it, and instead of saying, "*This was* for such a one," would learn to say, "*This is for me.*"

In dealing with young men;

1. He is here directed to exhort them; παρακάλει. He must *instruct* them what to do, that they might know their duty; he must put them in mind of it, that they might know it, when they had occasion to do it; he must excite and stir them up to it, and urge it upon them with motives and arguments; and he must encourage them in the doing of it, and comfort them that they might go on in it cheerfully; all this is included in the word here used for *exhorting* them; and there is need of all this, and all little enough; for some are ignorant and need to be taught, others are careless and need to be quickened; some think their duty an indifferent thing, and on such we must press the Command which makes it necessary; others think it an impracticable thing, and to such we must preach the Grace that makes it easy.

In urging practical godliness, it is hard to say which is more needful, persuasion or direction; and which will be most serviceable to our end, good rules to shew us what we should do, or good reasons to convince us that it is our duty and interest to do it; perhaps some stand in more need of the one, others of the other, and the Scripture furnishes us with abundant matter for both, enough to furnish the man of God for every good word of this kind.

The original word παρακαλέω, being a compound of καλέω *voco*, might properly be rendered, to *call to*, or *call upon*; and that is the work of ministers, to be your Monitors. We call to you, we call upon you, frequently, and with importunity, and as we see occasion, to mind your duty, and not to trifle in it, to take heed of sin, and not expose yourselves to it. This is the word behind you, which is promised, (Isa. 30. 21.) which shall say, *This is the way, walk in it*, and turn not aside to the right hand or to the left.

Titus must exhort them in his public preaching, and in that must chuse out words to reason with them. The Rulers of the Jewish Synagogue, after the reading of the Law and the Prophets in the Assembly, on the Sabbath, desired of Paul, a word of exhortation for the people, Acts 13. 15. And public exhortations to those of one age, relation, or condition, may be of use to others, who are not to sit by as unconcerned, but some way or other to accommodate it to themselves, for what we say unto some we say unto all.

Yet this was not enough, he must exhort them in his personal conversation with them, must visit them at their houses, and there give them this admonition; must give it in a particular manner to those that he saw needed it, give it with application, "In this and the other instance you must be of a better spirit, and carry it better." When he was in company with young men he must be giving them good advice, and instead of allowing himself to be vain as they were, endeavour to make them grave as he was. Ministers must preach not only in the pulpit, but out of it, their conversation must be a constant sermon, and, in that, they may be more particular in the application, and descend to persons and cases better than they can in their public ministry. Those ministers who complain that they would do this statedly and solemnly, but cannot bring it to bear, yet can have no excuse for not doing it occasionally, when it comes in their way, nor would seek an excuse if they had but a heart to it.

2. That which he must exhort them to, is to be sober-minded; all the law that concerns them in particular, is summed up in this one word; exhort them σωφρονεῖν,—*to be sober-minded.* It is a very significant, comprehensive word; and has in it a check to all the ill habits and ill courses that are so mischievous and ruining to young people. The word speaks the duty of young men, but it is likewise twice used in the directory for young Women, (v. 4.) *that they may teach* the *young Women to be sober*, ἵνα σωφρονίζωσι τὰς νέας,—*that they may sober the young women*, may give them such instructions and examples as may help to make them sober; and again, (v. 5.) that they may teach them to be σώφρονας,—*discreet*; so that it is the duty of young women, as well as young men, to be sober-minded; it is an exhortation proper for both the sexes of that age; and it is my exhortation to all of that age, who are within hearing to-day; I beseech you suffer this word of exhortation, receive it at your peril, for if it come from God it is your utmost peril to refuse it.

Doct. It is the great duty of all young people to be sober-minded.

I shall endeavour to shew you, I. What this sober-mindedness is, which young people must be exhorted to. And, II. What considerations should engage you who are young to be sober-minded. And then, III. make application.

I. Let us see what it is that we urge upon you, when we exhort you to be sober-minded. And I shall keep to the original word used in my text, and the various significations of it. It is the same word that is used to set

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set forth the third part of our Christian duty, and is put first of the three lessons which the grace of God teaches us,—to live soberly, σωφρόνως, v. 12. And in another place it is put last of three excellent Christian graces, God has given us the spirit of power, and of love, and σωφρονισμῦ—*of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. And σωφρόνισμος is put by Plutarch in general, for the education of youth; the sobering of them.

Give this exhortation its full latitude, and it speaks to you who are young these nine things.

1. You must be considerate and thoughtful, and not rash and heedless. To be sober-minded, is to make use of our reason, in reasoning with ourselves, and in communing with our own hearts; to employ those noble powers and capacities, by which we are distinguished from, and dignified above the beasts, for those great ends for which we were endued with them, that we may not receive the Grace of God in them in vain, but being rational creatures, may act rationally, as behoves us, as becomes us.

You learned to talk when you were children, when will you learn to think? to think seriously, to think to the purpose? Floating thoughts your heads are full of, foreign and impertinent ones; when will you be brought to close and fixed thoughts? To think with concern and application of the great things that belong to your everlasting peace and welfare?

Some have recommended the study of the mathematics, as proper to fix the minds of young people, and bring them to think; I wish any thing would do it, but would much rather it were done by a deep concern about the soul and another world, which, if it once prevail, will effectually fix the thoughts, and to the best purpose; for when once you come to see the greatness of that God with whom you have to do, and the weight of that eternity you are standing upon the brink of, you will see it is time to think, high time to look about you.

Learn to think not only of what is just before you, which strikes the senses, and affects the imagination, but of the causes and consequences, and reasons of things; to discover truths, compare them with one another, argue upon them, and apply them to yourselves, and to bring them to maturity; not to fasten upon that which *comes first* into your minds, but upon that which should come first, and which deserves to be first considered.

Multitudes are undone because they are unthinking; inconsideration is the ruin of thousands, and many a precious soul perishes through mere carelessness; *Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways;* retire into your own souls, begin an acquaintance with them; it will be the most profitable acquaintance you can fall into, and will turn to the best account. While you are coveting to see the world, and to be acquainted with it, be not strangers at home.

Take time to think; desire to be alone now and then, and let not solitude and retirement be an uneasiness to you, for you have a heart of your own that you may converse with, and a God nigh unto you, with whom you have a pleasing communion.

Learn to think freely, God invites you to do so; *Come now and let us reason together.* We desire not that you should take things upon trust, but inquire impartially into them, as the noble Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so, which the Apostles told them. Pure Christianity and serious godliness fear not the scrutiny of a free thought, but despise the impotent malice of a prejudiced one.

There are those, I find, who, under the pretence of being free-thinkers, by sly insinuations, endeavour to shake young people's belief of the divine authority of the Scriptures, and undermine all revealed religion, by turning sacred things into jest, and ridicule; but they usurp the honourable character of free-thinkers; it does not belong to them; they are as far from the freedom they pretend to, as they are from the sincerity they protest against; for it is certain, that pride and affectation of singularity, and a spirit of opposition and contradiction, do as much enslave the thoughts on the one hand, as an implicit faith and obedience on the other hand. While they promise men liberty, they do but deceive them, and under colour of being sole masters of reason, and ridiculing all who agree not with them, they as arbitrarily impose upon men's credulity, as ever popes and councils did under colour of being sole masters of faith, and anathematizing all who differ from them.

Learn to think for yourselves, to think of yourselves, to think with application. Think what you are, and what you are capable of; think who made you, and what you were made for; for what end you were endued with the powers of reason, and attended by the inferior creatures; think what you have been doing since you came into the world, of the great work you were sent into the world about; of the vanity of childhood and youth, and how unavoidably the years of them are past away as a tale that is told, and whether, therefore, it be not time, high time for the youngest of you to begin to be religious, and to enter in at the strait gate.

And as to your particular actions, do not walk at all adventures, as those do who despise their own ways; but consider what you do before you do it, that you may not have occasion to repent of it afterwards; do nothing rashly, but always speak and act under the government of the great law of consideration. Ponder the path of your feet, that it may be a straight path.

Some people take a pride in being careless; tell them of such and such a thing that they were warned about, they turn it off with this excuse, that for their parts they never heed; they mind not what is said to them; nor ever thought of it since; and so glory in their shame.

But be not you thus negligent; for then, and not till then, there begin to be hopes of young people, when they begin to set their hearts to all these things that are testified unto them, and to think of them with the reason of men, and the concern they deserve.

2. You must be cautious, and prudent, and not wilful and heady. The word in the text is the same that is

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is rendered, v. 5. to be *discreet; prudenter agere—to behave prudently.* You must not only think rationally, but when you have done so, you must act wisely, and so as will be most for your true interest; walk circumspectly; look before you, look about you, look under your feet, and pick your way; not as fools, but as wise.

David's purpose when he set out in the world was, *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way;* and his prayer was, *Lord, when wilt thou come unto me,* Ps. 101. 2. And accordingly we find, (1 Sam. 18. 14) his purpose performed, and his prayer answered, *He behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him.* Those who govern themselves, God will guide, but will justly leave those who love to wander, to wander endlessly.

Put away childish follies with other childish things, and do not all your days think and speak as children. Espouse principles of wisdom; fix to yourselves rules of wisdom, and be ruled by those rules, and actuated by those principles. It is the wisdom of the prudent to understand his own way, his own business, not to censure other people's; and this wisdom will in all cases be profitable to direct what measures, what steps to take.

Youth is apt to be bold and venturous, and, therefore, resolute and peremptory, to its great prejudice. But be not you so; let reason and conscience, according to the duty of their place, give check to the violence of appetite and passion; let them rectify the mistakes, and over-rule the hasty dictates of humour and fancy, and reduce the arbitrary and exorbitant power of those tyrants.

How often does Solomon press it upon the young man he takes under his tuition; *My Son, be wise, wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, get understanding.* You who are launching out into the world must take wisdom to be your pilot, or you are in danger of splitting upon some rock or other; this must be your pillar of cloud and fire, which you must follow the conduct of through this wilderness.

Be diffident of your own judgments, and jealous of yourselves, that you do not take things right, or not take them intire, and for that reason afraid lest the resolutions, which are the result of your considerations, should prove wrong; and therefore leave room for second thoughts. Say not, "I will do so and so, I am resolved I will walk in the way of my heart, and in the sight of my eyes, whatever it cost me." Never have any will but what is guided by wisdom.

And, therefore, in every case of moment and difficulty, be willing to be advised by your friends, and depend more upon their judgment, who have had longer experience of the world, than upon your own. Consult with those who are wise and good, ask them what they would do, if they were in your case; and you will find that in multitude of counsellors there is safety, and that that oftentimes proves best which was least your own doing; or if it should not prove well, it will be a satisfaction to you that you did not do it without advice, and mature deliberation; and as the thing appeared then, you did it for the best.

What brighter character can be given of a young man, than to say he is wise? Or what blacker, than to say he is stubborn? See the former,—in Solomon who calls himself a child, that *knows not how to go out, or to come in,* (1 Kin. 3. 7.) and yet his father calls him *A wise man,* who knows what he has to do; see the latter,—in the character of the rebellious son who was to be stoned to death, against whom the indictment runs thus, He is *stubborn,* he *will not obey the voice of his father and mother,* Deut. 21. 18, 20. Those are the fools whom there is little hopes of, who despise wisdom and instruction, Pro. 1. 7. He who will not be counselled, cannot be helped.

But would you be wise? not only be thought so, but really be so, study the Scriptures; by them you will get more understanding than the *ancients,* than *all your teachers,* Ps. 119. 99, 100. Make your observations upon the carriage and miscarriage of others, that you may take pattern by those who do well, and take warning by those who do ill, may look upon both and receive instruction. But, especially, be earnest with God in prayer for wisdom, as Solomon was, and the prayer was both pleasing and prevailing in Heaven. *If any man,* if any young man *lack wisdom,* and is sensible that he lacks it, he is directed what to do, his way is plain, let him *ask it of God;* and he is encouraged to do it; for *The Lord giveth wisdom,* he has it to give, Pro. 2. 6. He delights to give it, he gives liberally; he has a particular eye to young people in the dispensing of this gift, for his word was written to give to the young man knowledge and discretion, Pro. 1. 4. And because some are willing to be counselled, yet do not care to be chidden, we are told that he gives, and upbraids not; yet, as if this were not encouragement enough to the beggars at Wisdom's gates, there is an express promise to every one who seeks aright, that he shall not seek in vain, it is not a promise with a peradventure, but with the greatest assurance, *It shall be given him,* Jam. 1. 5. To all true believers, Christ himself is and shall be made of God Wisdom, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

3. You must be humble and modest, and not proud and conceited. The word signifies *Modestè se gerere,—to behave one's self modestly.* Σωφροσύνην ἐκάλεσε τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην. So Chrysostom, *Hom. ad Rom.—Sober-mindedness is the same with lowly-mindedness.* And Theodoret makes it the same with that poverty of spirit, on which Christ pronounces his first blessing, (Mat. 5. 3.) It is recommended to the younger to be clothed with humility, (1 Pet. 5. 5.) that is being sober-minded.

It is an observation that I have made upon the little acquaintance I have had with the world, that I have seen more young people ruined by pride, than perhaps by any one lust whatsoever; and, therefore, let me press this upon you with all earnestness; and it is a caution introduced with more than ordinary solemnity, (Rom. 12. 3.) *I say, through the grace given unto me, unto every man that is among you;* and what is the word that is thus declared to be of divine original, and universal concern? It is this; that *no man think of himself above what he ought to think, but think soberly;* and

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and there is an elegant Paronomasia in the original, which, for the sake of the young scholars, I beg leave to take notice of, μη ὑπερφρονειν παρ' ὁ δει φρονειν, ἀλλα φρονειν εἰς το σωφρονειν; let him think *unto sobriety;* the word used in the text; let him think himself into a sober mind, and always keep in that good mind.

Keep up low thoughts of yourselves, of your endowments, both outward and inward; of your attainments and improvements, and all your performances, and all the things you call merits and excellencies. Boast not of a false gift, of what you have not, nor be puffed up with what you have. What there is in you that is commendable, wink at it yourselves, as most people do at their own faults, and diminish it, and look much at that in others which is more commendable. Let not the handsome glory in their beauty, nor the ingenious in their wit, for there cannot be a greater allay to the glory than to have it said, such and such are comely, and witty, but they know it. Does your face in any respect shine? Be as Moses was, *He wist not that the skin of his face shone;* and do what Moses did, as soon as he perceived it,—put a vail upon it. Delight more to say and do what is praise-worth, than to be praised for it; for what hast thou which thou hast not received, and what hast hou received which thou hast not abused? And why then dost thou boast?

Keep up a quick and constant sense of your own manifold defects and infirmities; how much there is in you, and how much is said and done by you every day, which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for; in how many things you come short of others, and in how many more you come short of the rule; you will find no reason to be proud of what you know, when you see how much you are ignorant of, nor of what you do that is good, when you see how much you do amiss. Dwell much upon humbling considerations, and those that tend to take down your high opinion of yourselves; and keep up a humble sense of your necessary and constant dependance upon Christ and his Grace, without which you are nothing, and will soon be worse than nothing.

Think not yourselves too wise, too good, too old to be reproved for what is amiss, and to be taught to do better. When you are double and treble the age you are, yet you will not be too old to learn, and increase in learning. If any man think that he knows any thing, that he knows every thing, so that he needs no more instruction, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know it, 1 Cor. 8. 2. And therefore he who seems to be wise, seems so to himself, seems so to others, let him become a fool, that he may be wise; let him be sensible of his own folly, that he may be quickened to use the means of wisdom, and prepared to receive the grace of wisdom, 1 Cor. 3. 18.

Be not confident of your own judgment, nor look upon those with contempt, that do not think as you do. Elihu is a great example of humility and modesty to those of your age; he was swift to hear, and very ambitious to learn, for it is the learning age; *I am young and you are old,* and therefore I *waited for your words, I gave ear to your reasons, I attended unto you,* ready to give what you said its due weight, and expecting to hear something that I had not known before; but he was *slow to speak, I was afraid, and durst not shew you my opinion, for I said, days should speak,* Job 32. 6, 7, 11, 12. Be not forward to say, "I hold, so and so," for (as a grave divine once told a novice, that was laying down the law with great assurance) "It best becomes you to hold your peace."

Take heed of thinking yourselves above your business; you that are apprentices, think not yourselves above your service; humility will make the yoke you are under easy to you, which will gall the proud and stiff neck. You who are set up for yourselves, think it no disparagement to you to confine yourselves to your business, and to make a business of it, to see to it, with your own eyes, no, nor to put your own hands to it. Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

It will be yet much worse, if you think yourselves above your religion; above the restraints of it, as if it were a thing below you to be afraid of sin, and to make conscience of your words and actions, whereas there cannot be a greater disgrace to you than loose walking. Nor above the exercises of religion, as if it were a thing below you to pray, and hear the word, and join in acts of devotion, for it is really the greatest honour that you can do yourselves, thus to honour God.

Let this branch of sober-mindedness appear in your looks, and carriage; let the shew of your countenance witness for you, that you are not confident and conceited, but that you keep up a due diffidence of yourselves, and a due deference to all about you, especially those above you. Be not pert in your carriage, nor fantastical in your dress; if there be any thing in the garb and carriage, that young people may be innocently proud of, because those about them will be justly pleased with it, it is the gravity of it; when it is an indication of humility and modesty reigning in the heart, for those are the best ornaments, and in the sight of God, and all wise men, of great price. And you will find, that *better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud;* for when *men's pride shall bring them low, honour shall uphold the humble in spirit,* and they shall be upheld, borne up, and borne out, in that honour.

4. You must be temperate and self denying, and not indulgent of your appetites. It is the same word in the text, that, v. 2. is translated temperate, and is one of the lessons that the aged men must learn; and some think it properly signifies a moderate use of meat and drink: so as to keep the mean, and in the use of them σώειν τὴν φρένην, or τὴν φρόνησιν, to save our mind from being clouded, and our wisdom from being corrupted, that is, our hearts from being *overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness;* we commonly put a "sober man," in opposition to one that is drunk, or addicted to drunkenness.

Let me therefore warn young men to dread the sin of drunkenness, keep at a distance from it, avoid all appearances of it, and approaches towards it. It has slain its thousands, its ten thousands of young people;

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has ruined their health, brought diseases upon them, and cut them off in the flower of their days; how many fall unpitied sacrifices to this base lust! It has ruined their estates and trades, at their first setting out; when the time that should have been spent in the shop and warehouse, is spent in the tavern and ale-house; when the money they should buy goods with, and pay their debts with, is thrown away in the gratification of an inordinate love of wine and strong drink, no wonder if they soon break and run their country.

Take heed of the beginnings of this sin, for the way of it is down-hill; and many under pretence of an innocent entertainment, and passing the evening in a pleasant conversation, are drawn in to drink to excess, and to make beasts of themselves: and you should tremble to think how fatal the consequences of it are; how unfit it renders you for the service of God at night, yea, and for your own business the next morning; how many are thus besotted, and sunk into that drowsiness, which clothes a man with rags; and yet that is not the worst, it extinguishes convictions, and sparks of devotion, and provokes the Spirit of Grace to withdraw, and it will be the sinner's eternal ruin if it be not repented of, and forsaken in time; for the word of God has said, and it shall not be unsaid, it cannot be gain-said, *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Look not then upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup, is charming, is tempting, be not overcome with its allurements, for at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. If you saw the Devil putting the cup of drunkenness into your hand, I dare say you would not take it out of his; you may be sure the temptation to it comes from him, and, therefore, ought to dread it as much as if you saw it. If you saw poison put into the glass you would not drink it; and if it be provoking to God, and ruining to your souls, it is worse than poison: there is worse than death, there is hell in the cup, and will you not then refuse it?

How many ways may you spend your evening, when you are fatigued with the business of the day, better than in drinking, in immoderate drinking! I am sorry we cannot urge against you, so much as gladly we would, the scandal of it, it is grown so fashionable. But whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, we will insist upon the sin of it, and its prejudice to the soul both here and for ever, and beg of you in consideration of this to frighten yourselves from it; we will insist likewise upon the real disgrace, that it is a reasonable creature who is, hereby, spoiled of his crown, and levelled with the brutes, and beg of you in consideration of this to shame yourselves out of it before God and your own conscience.

It is a sin that is in a special manner shameful and hurtful to those who profess religion. You who have been well educated, who have been bred up in sober families, have had examples of sobriety set you, and have known what the honours and pleasures of a sober conversation are; if, when you set up for yourselves, you think yourselves happy in getting clear from the restraints of a sober regimen, and take the liberty of the drunkards, what a reproach will it be to you! what a degeneracy! what a fall from your first love! and where will it stop? Perhaps you have given up your names to the Lord Jesus at his table, and dare you partake of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils? Let Christians who are made to our God Kings and Priests, take to themselves the lesson which Solomon's mother taught him, *It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings.* So it is not for Christians to drink wine, but with great moderation, lest they drink and forget the law, forget the gospel, Pro. 31. 4. 5.

Yet this is not all I have to warn you against, under this head: let not young people be nice and curious in their diet, nor solicitous to have all the delights of sense wound up to the height of pleasurableness; be not desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat; Pro. 23. 3. It is true that the use of them is lawful, but it is as true, that the love of them is dangerous; and the indulging of the appetites of the body to them is often prejudicial to the soul and its true interests. Learn betimes to relish the delights that are rational and spiritual, and then your mouths will be out of taste with those pleasures that are brutal, and belong only to the animal life; and be afraid lest by indulging the body and the lusts of it, you come by degrees to the black character of those that were φιλήδονοι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι,—*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God,* 2 Tim. 3. 4.

The body is made to be a servant to the soul, and it must be treated accordingly; we must give it, as we must to our servants, that which is just and equal, let it have what is fitting; but let it not be suffered to domineer, for nothing is so insufferable as a servant when he reigneth, (Pro. 30. 22.) nor let it be pampered, for for he who *delicately brings up his servant from a child, shall have him become his son at the length,* Pro. 29. 21. Be dead, therefore, to the delights of sense; mortify the love of ease and pleasure; learn betimes to endure hardness; use yourselves to deny yourselves, and so you will make it easy to yourselves, and will the better bear the common calamities of human life, as well as sufferings for righteousness' sake. Those who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ, must endure hardness, must enure themselves to it, 2 Tim. 2. 3.

5. You must be mild and gentle, and not indulgent of your passions. The word here used signifies moderation, such a soundness of mind as is opposed to frenzy and violence. We have need of sobriety to restrain and repress, not only, our inordinate appetites toward those things that are pleasing to sense, but, our irregular resentment of those things that are displeasing; for such a vexatious knowledge of good and evil has mankind got by eating of the forbidden tree.

Young people are especially apt to be hot and furious, to resent injuries, and to study revenge, like Simeon and Levi, whose anger was cursed, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; and, therefore, the passion is ungoverned, because the pride is unmortified

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tified. They are fond of liberty, and therefore cannot bear controul, and wedded to their own opinion, and, therefore cannot bear contradiction, but are all in a flame presently, if any one cross them; and reckon that an honour, which is really their shame, to lay the reins on the neck of their passions, not caring what indecencies they are transported into by them, nor considering how mischievous the consequences may be.

Learn betimes to bridle your anger; to guard against the sparks of provocation, that they may not fall into the tinder; or if the fire be kindled, put it out presently, by commanding the peace in your own souls, and setting a watch before the door of your lips. And when, at any time, you are affronted, or think yourselves so, aim not at the wit of a sharp answer, which will stir up anger, but at the wisdom and grace of a soft answer, which will turn away wrath, Pro. 15. 1.

You are setting out in the world, and would have your passage through it comfortable. Now there is nothing will contribute more to that than a quiet spirit: *The meek shall inherit the earth*, was God's promise, by David first, (Ps. 37. 11.) and afterwards by the Son of David, (Mat. 5. 5.) and, that if they possess not an abundance of wealth, yet they shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. By the good government of your passions, you will make yourselves easy, and easy to those about you; and a great deal of mischief both to others and to yourselves will be prevented.

The moral philosophers valued themselves very much upon the power which their instructions had upon young people, to soften and sweeten their temper, and teach them to govern their passions, and keep a strict hand upon them. And shall Christianity; which, to all the arguments which reason suggests for meekness, adds the authority of the God who made us, forbidding rash anger, as heart-murder,—the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who bought us, and bid us learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart,—and the consolations of the Spirit, which have a direct tendency to make us pleasant to ourselves and others,—and our experience of God's mercy and grace, in forbearing and forgiving us; shall this divine and heavenly institution come short of their instructions, in plucking up this root of bitterness which bears gall and wormwood, and making us peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, which are the bright and blessed characters of the Wisdom from above, Jam. 3. 17.

If you suffer your passions to get head now you are young, they will be in danger of growing more and more head-strong, and of making you perpetually uneasy; but if you get dominion over them now, you will easily keep dominion, and so keep the peace in your hearts and houses, and through the grace of God, it will not be in the power even of sickness or old age to make you peevish, to sour your temper, or embitter your spirits. Put on therefore among the ornaments of your youth, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering*. Your age is made for love; let holy love therefore be a law to you.

6. You must be chaste and reserved, and not wanton and impure. Both the Greek Fathers and Philosophers use the word σωφροσύνη for Chastity; *Continentiam & castitatem significat—It signifies continence and chastity.* Isidore Pelus. And when it is here made the particular duty of young men, this signification of the word must certainly be taken in, for the lusts of the flesh which are manifest, *adultery, fornication, uncleanness lasciviousness,* (Gal. 5. 19.) are particularly called youthful lusts.

And against those, in Christ's name, I am here to warn all you who are young; for God's sake, and for your own precious souls' take, flee these youthful lusts; dread them as you would a devouring fire, or a destroying plague, and keep at a distance from them; abstain from all appearances of these sins; hating even the garment spotted with the flesh, even the attire of an harlot. Covet not to know these depths of Satan, but take a pride in being ignorant of the way of the adulterous woman. See all temptations to uncleanness coming from the unclean spirit, that roaring Lion who goes about continually, thus seeking to devour young people. O that you would betimes conceive a detestation and abhorrence of this sin, as much below you, and more against you? and put on a firm and steady resolution in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ never to defile yourselves with it; remembering what the Apostle prescribes, as that which ought to be the constant care of the unmarried, to be holy both in body and spirit, and so to please the Lord, 1 Cor. 7. 34.

Take heed of the beginnings of this sin, lest Satan in any thing get advantage against you, and the little thief, stolen in insensibly at the window, open the door to the great one. How earnestly does Solomon warn his young man to take heed of the baits, lest he be taken in the snares of the evil woman, *Remove thy way far from her,* says he, for he that would be kept from harm, must keep out of harm's way; *Come not nigh the door of her house,* but go on the other side of the street, as thou wouldest, if it were a house infected; *lest thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof,* Prov. 5. 8. 11, 12.

Pray earnestly to God for his grace to keep you from this sin, and that it may be sufficient for you; so that be the temptation ever so sudden, it may find you awake, and aware of it, that you may not be surprised into it; and be it ever so strong, it may find you armed against it, with the whole armour of God, that you may not be overpowered, and overcome by it.

Get your hearts purified by the word of God, and sanctified by divine love, for how else shall young people cleanse their way, but by taking heed thereto, according to the word. Keep up the authority of conscience, and keep it always tender, and void of offence. Make a covenant with your eyes, that they may not be the inlets of any impure thoughts, or the outlet of any impure desires; and pray David's prayer, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;* that you may never look and lust.

Modesty is the hedge of chastity, and it is the orna-

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ment of your age, therefore, be sure to keep that up. Let your dress and carriage be very modest, and such as denotes a chaste conversation coupled with fear. Make it to appear that you know how to be pleasant and cheerful, without transgressing even the strictest rules of modesty; nay, that you know not how to be so, when any thing is said or done against those rules.

I would especially charge you who are young, to take heed that no corrupt filthy communication proceed out of your mouth. Never dare to speak, nor delight to hear any thing that is immodest; *Fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you;* it is foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient, which is very unbecoming the professors of such a pure and undefiled religion as Christianity is. It is that evil communication which corrupts good manners; it is, as some think, that idle word, for which our Saviour says, we must give account in the great day. Think what a great dishonour lascivious talk is to God, what a reproach to yourselves, and what mischief it does to those you converse with; how great a matter a spark of this fire from Hell may kindle; and how much of the sin and ruin of souls you may hereby have to answer for. God turns those to a pure language, whom he brings to call upon his name.

7. You must be steady and composed, and not giddy and unsettled. This we commonly take to be signified by a sober mind, a mind that acts and moves steadily, and is one with itself; in opposition to a roving wandering heart, a heart divided, which cannot but be found faulty. Be *sober-minded,* that is, let your hearts be *fixed,* Ps. 108. 1. Establish your hearts, and be not like Reuben, unstable as water, for those who are so will never *excel.*

Fix now in the days of your youth, for God and Christ, and serious godliness; fix for Heaven as your end, and holiness as your way. Halt no longer, hover no longer between two, but be at a point; you have often been bid to chuse whom you will serve, stand no longer deliberating, but bring this matter at length to the issue you will abide by, and abide by it, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

Fix to that, whatever it is, that you are designed for in the world; fix to your business, fix to your book, if that is to be your business. *Dum quid sis dubitas, jam potes esse nihil—while you are doubting what to be, you can do nothing.* Whatever it is that you are employed in, let your application to it be close and constant, and do not upon every slight and trivial pretence start aside from it; and say you are weary of it, or you hope to mend yourselves, when the same volatile humour that makes you uneasy in the place and work you are in, will soon make you so in another.

Learn to fix your thoughts, and be not wandering; let them not run from one thing to another, as the bird in wandering, and the swallow in flying, for thus they run at length with the fool's eyes into the ends of the earth; but what thy hand finds to do, and thy heart to think of, which is to the purpose, do it, and think of it with all thy might, and pursue it close, till thou bring it to an issue, and then it is done and thought to purpose indeed; whatever thou doest, *Hoc age—do this,* mind thy business.

Learn to fix your aims, and act with a single eye; for the double-minded man, who is far from being sober-minded, cannot but be unstable in all his ways, and turns himself as the wind turns, and *he that wavers is as a wave of the sea,* Jam. 1. 6, 8. Act considerately, that is, consistently with yourselves; and as those who understand your own ways; and have not your ear open to every whisper and suggestion that would turn you out of it. Be no more children tossed to and fro with every wind, enticed to and fro with every bait, Eph. 4. 14. But in understanding be ye men, be ye fixed; let your foot stand in an even place, and then let your hearts be established, be not moved, be not removed.

8. You must be content and easy, and not ambitious and aspiring. Some make the word to signify *Animi demissio—the bringing of the mind down to the condition,* when the condition will not in every thing be brought up to the mind. A sober mind is that which accommodates itself to every estate of life, and every event of Providence, so that whatever changes happen, it preserves the possession and enjoyment of itself.

You who are young must learn betimes to reconcile yourselves to your lot, and make the best of that which is, because it is the will of God it should be as it is, and what pleases him ought to please us; for he knows what is fit to be done, and fit for us to have, better than we do. Let this check all disquieting discontented thoughts. *Should it be according to thy mind?* Shalt thou who art but of yesterday controul him, quarrel with him, or prescribe to him, whose counsels were of old from everlasting? It is folly to direct the divine disposals, but wisdom to acquiesce in them.

He who *determineth the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitation,* ordered what our rank and station should be in the world, what parents we should be born of, what lot we should be born to, and what our make and capacity of mind and body should be; and in these respects there is a great variety ordained by Providence between some and others, who yet are made of one blood; some are born to wealth and honour, others to poverty and obscurity. Some seem made and marked by nature (that is, the God of nature) to be great and considerable, while others seem doomed to be all their days little and low; you see many above you, who make a figure in the world, and are likely to do so yet more, while you are but as cyphers; yet do not envy them, nor fret at the place God's Providence has put you in, but make yourselves easy in it, and make the best of it, as those who are satisfied—not only in general that all is well that God does; but in particular, all is well that he does with you.

Possess your minds now you are young with a reverence for the divine Providence, its sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness: and bring your minds unto a cheerful reference of yourselves to all its arbitrations; *Here I am, let the Lord do with me,* and all mine affairs, *as seemeth good in his sight.* This would have a mighty influence upon the conduct of your affairs, and the evenness of your spirits, all your days. Whatever you are dispossessed

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sessed of, or disturbed in the enjoyment of, resolve to be easy, not because you cannot help it: "This is an evil, and I must bear it," that is but a poor reason; but because it is the will of God, whose will is his wisdom; "This is an evil, but it is designed for my good, and I will bear it."

Lay your expectations low from this world, and promise not yourselves great matters in it. It is God's command, (Rom. 12. 16.) *Mind not high things*, set not your eyes and hearts upon them, as if they were the best things, and as if they would make you happy, and you could not be happy without them; but condescend to them of low estate, and take as much pleasure in conversation with them, as if they were company for princes and peers; or, as the margin reads it, *Be content with mean things*, with a mean habitation, mean diet, mean cloaths, mean employments, if such be your lot, and instead of blaming it, bless God for it, that it is not worse, and believe that it is fittest for you.

Not that I would have young people mean-spirited, or cramped in their aims and endeavours; whatever your business is, strive to be excellent and eminent in it; whatever your substance is, be diligent, that by the blessing of God upon it, it may, like Job's, be *increased in the land.* A good man leaves an inheritance, honestly got, to his children's children. But I would not have you ambitious of great things; covet not by taking thought to add cubits to your stature; let it suffice to thrive by inches, with the increases of the sober-minded; who do not make haste to be rich, for "Soft and fair goes far."

We commonly say of you who are young, that you are upon your preferment; shall I persuade you to reckon it your best preferment to be eminently pious, and serviceable to the glory of God, and the interests of his kingdom in the world; that is the way to have the best reputation among men, which wise men reckon no despicable preferment, for *A good name is better than precious ointment.* Aim at advancing yourselves, not that you may live in so much the more pomp and ease, but that you may be in so much the better capacity to do good, and that is true preferment.

We commonly say of you who are young, that now is your time to make your fortune; it is a heathenish expression, for it is not blind fortune, but an all-seeing Providence that we are governed by; but that is not all; it is not in your power to make your own lot; *Every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord*, every creature is that to you, and no more, than he makes it to be; and, therefore, you must seek his favour; and reckon your lot best made when you have the Lord to be the portion of your inheritance and your cup, and then say, *The lines are fallen to you in pleasant places*; that is best for you, which is best for your souls, and in that you must soberly rest satisfied.

Jacob was setting out in the world, and going to take him a wife, when all he desired and aimed at, and if I may so say, indented for in his marriage articles, was bread to eat, and raiment to put on, to be kept in his way, and brought at length to his father's house in peace, and why should any of the spiritual seed of Jacob look higher in this world, who knows and hopes he has eternal riches in reversion after *one* life? Let young people be modest and moderate, and sober-minded, in their desires and expectations of temporal good things, as becomes those who see through them, and look above, and beyond them, to the things not seen that are eternal.

9. You must be grave and serious, and not frothy and vain. This signification we commonly give to the word here used. Him that is serious we call a sober man; and I put this, last, of the ingredients of this sober-mindedness, because it will have a very great influence upon all the rest; we should gain our point entirely with young people, if we could but prevail with them to be serious. It is serious piety we would bring them to, and to live in good earnest.

Not that we would oblige young people never to be merry, or have any ill-natured design upon them to make them melancholy; no, religion allows them to be cheerful; it is your time, make your best of it; evil days will come, of which you will say you have *no pleasure in them*, when the cares and sorrows of this world increase upon you, and we would not have you to anticipate those evil days; it is mentioned as an instance of the promised prosperity, and flourishing state of Jerusalem, that *the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof*, Zech. 8. 5. Nay, religion prescribes cheerfulness to all those who are sincere and hearty in it; *Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God now accepteth thy works*, Ecc. 9. 7. God expects to be served by us with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of all things, Deut. 28. 47.

And it is certain, that none have such good reason to be cheerful, as godly people have, none can be so upon better grounds, or with a better grace; so justly or so safely; I have often said, and I must take all occasions to repeat it, that a holy heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is without doubt the most pleasant comfortable life that any one can live in this world.

But that which I would caution you against under this head, is vain and carnal mirth, that mirth, that laughter of the fool, of which Solomon says, *It is mad*, and *What doeth it?* Innocent mirth is of good use in its time, and place, it will revive the spirit, and fit you for business, a merry heart does good like a medicine; but then it must be used like a medicine, must be taken physically, only when there is occasion for it, and not constantly, like our daily bread; and like physic it must be taken *sub regimine—by rule*; as not too often, so not too much at a time, like opiates, which are taken by drops, and with great caution; when you make use of these medicines, it must be with due correctives, and you must take great care of yourselves, lest that turn to your prejudice, and become a snare and a trap, which was intended for your health and welfare.

Allow yourselves in mirth as far as will consist with sober-mindedness, and no further; be merry and wise; never let your mirth transgress the laws of piety, charity, or modesty, nor intrench upon your time for devotion.

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devotion and the service of God. Wise men will always reckon him over-fond of his mirth, who will rather lose his friend than his jest; much more may he be reckoned so, who will rather lose his God and a good conscience. Never make sport with the Scripture and sacred things, but let that which is serious always be spoken of with seriousness; for it is dangerous playing with *edge-tools*.

Take heed lest your mirth exceed due bounds, and transport you into any indecencies; that you give not yourselves too great a liberty, and then think to excuse it by saying, *Am not I in sport?* Pro. 26. 19. Set a double guard at such a time before the door of your lips, lest you offend with your tongues; and especially keep your hearts with all diligence. Let the inward thought still be serious; and in the midst of your greatest mirth, retain a disposition habitually serious; and a reigning affection to spiritual and divine things; such as will make you indifferent to all vain mirth and pleasure, and set you above it, and enable you to look upon that with a holy contempt, which many spend so much of their time in with so great a complacency. A serious Christian, though to relax himself, and entertain his friends, he may allow himself a little mirth and recreation, yet he will make it to appear that he is not in his element, that he knows better pleasures, and has given them the preference. A believing foretaste of the milk and honey of Canaan is enough to put the mouth quite out of taste with the garlic and onions of Egypt.

But while I am pressing you who are young to be always serious, habitually so, always well affected to serious work, what shall we think of those who are never serious? who are always merry, always jesting, always bantering, so that you never know when they speak in earnest; who are always in pursuit of some sensual pleasure or other, and never know what it is to be one quarter of an hour serious, from the beginning of the year to the end of it? Certainly they forget that *for all these things God shall bring them into judgment*, and they know not how soon. O that this laughter might be turned into the mourning of true penitents, and this joy into the heaviness of sincere converts, that it may not be turned, as otherwise it certainly will be, into the weeping and wailing of damned sinners. The same Jesus who said, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*, has said also, *Wo unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep*, Luke 6. 25.

Shall I now prevail with you who are young, to value wisdom above wit, and that which helps to make you serious above that which helps to make you merry; and to take as much pleasure in gravity, as others do in vanity. It will be the honour of your youth, will arm you against the temptations you are surrounded with, and will not only mark you for something considerable in this world, but for something infinitely more so in the other world. And, if you understand yourselves aright, I dare say, one hour spent in the employments and enjoyments of a sober, serious mind, will afford you more true comfort in the reflection, than many spent in mirth and gaiety, because it will certainly pass so much better in the account another day.

If you take the world for your guide, you will be bid to "laugh and be fat;" will be told that "an ounce of mirth is worth a pound of sorrow;" but if you will attend to the dictates of the word of God, (and it is fit that the word that must judge us hereafter should rule us now) that will tell you, that *Sorrow is better than laughter;* and that it is *better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better;* it is made *serious*.

And thus you see what it is to be sober-minded, and how much of your duty it takes in; but are you content that it should take in all this? Can you say, that though in many things you come short, yet you esteem all these precepts, and all the things contained in them to be right, and, therefore, hate every false way? You will then be very willing to have this sober-mindedness further pressed upon you.

II. Let us see what considerations are proper, and may be powerful to make young people in all these respects sober-minded; and will you who are young, apply your minds a little to these things?

1. You are all reasonable creatures, and therefore ought to be sober-minded. Consider how noble and excellent that rank of beings is that you are of; how far advanced above that of the beasts, and consequently how unjust you are both to God and to yourselves, if by incogitancy, inconsideration, or the indulgence of any brutish appetite or passion, you level yourselves with the beasts that perish.

What have you your reason for, if you do not make use of it? your mind, if you do not take care to keep yourselves of a sound mind? or, if you mind not that for the sake of which you had your minds given you; *Shew yourselves men* therefore, by *bringing to mind, O ye transgressors*, Isa. 46. 8. Sinners would become saints, if they would but shew themselves men, for the service of Christ is a reasonable service, and those who are wicked are unreasonable men: be persuaded therefore to act rationally; and to save the nobler powers of reason from being tied up and overpowered by this, and the other, rebellious lust and passion.

You brought rational souls with you into the world; but think how long the seeds of reason lay buried under the clods before they began to spring up; how long those sparks of a divine fire seemed lost in the embers, during the years of infancy, when you were not capable of the consideration we are persuading you to. Yet then God took care of you, provided for you, and did you good, when you were not able to do him any service: study, therefore, now you are come to the use of reason, what honours, and what dignities shall be done to him, who was then careful for you with all that care. Study how you shall redeem the time that was then unavoidably lost, by making so much the more use of your reason now.

Think likewise how much time runs to waste in sleep, how many hours pass every day, during which the operations of reason are suspended, and fancy is all that while busy at work in a thousand foolish dreams; yet then God preserves us, and gives his Angels a charge

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charge over us. Let us, therefore, when we are awake, set reason on work, find it employment, and support its authority by sober-mindedness; and let not the conversation of the day be as idle and impertinent as the dreams of the night are; as I fear with many it is, both young and old.

Think, likewise, how piteous the case of those is who are deprived of the use of their reason, who are born idiots, or are fallen into deep melancholy, or into distraction and frenzy; who are incapable of thinking, speaking, and acting rationally, and are put out of the possession, government, and enjoyment of themselves; this might have been your case; it is God's great mercy to you that it is not so; nor can you be secure, but that some time or other it may be so; you would dread it as the greatest affliction, not to be able to use your reason, and will you not dread as a great sin not to use it well, and as it should be used now you are able.

When St. Paul would prove to the most noble Festus, that he was not beside himself, that he was not mad; his plea is, *I speak the words of truth and soberness:* as if those that do not speak the words of truth and soberness, all whose talk is banter and vanity, were no better than mad, and beside themselves; O that such young people as are thus taken in the snare of carnal mirth, and are in effect made delirious by it, as you may perceive by the rambles of their talk, would at length recover their senses, return to their wits, and be sober-minded! That they would, like the Prodigal Son, come to themselves, and come to a resolution to stay no longer in the Devil's fields, to feed the swine of their own sinful lusts—— but to return to their Father's house, where they will be happy, and shall be welcome.

When Christ was here upon earth, healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease, there was no one sort of patients that he had greater numbers of than such as were lunatic, and their lunacy was the effect of their being possessed with the Devil; it was the miserable case of many young people; we find parents making complaints of this kind concerning their children; one has a daughter, another has a son, grievously vexed with the Devil; but Christ healed them all, dispossessed Satan, and so restored them to the possession of their own souls; and it is said of some whom he thus relieved, that they sat at the feet of Jesus cloathed, and in their right mind, it is the word used in the text, Luke 8. 35. As far as sin reigns in you, Satan reigns; and your souls are in his possession; Christ by casting out Devils, gave a specimen and indication of the great design of his gospel and grace, which was to cure men of their spiritual frenzy, by breaking the power of Satan in them. O that you would therefore apply yourselves to him! Submit to the word of his grace, pray for the Spirit of his grace; and by this it will appear, that both these have had their due influence upon you, if you sit at the feet of Jesus in your right mind; in a sober mind. And, indeed, you never come to your right mind, till you do sit down at the feet of Jesus, to learn of him, and be ruled by him; you never are truly rational creatures, till in Christ you become new creatures.

2. You are all sinners, and guilty before God; conceived in iniquity, born in sin, you are by nature children of disobedience, and children of wrath, whether you have ever thought of it, or no, certainly it is so, the Scripture hath concluded you all under sin, and consequently under a sentence of death, like that of a physician upon his patient, when he pronounces his disease mortal; nay, like that of a judge upon the prisoner, when he pronounces his crime capital, so that both ways your danger is imminent and extreme. And shall not the consideration of this prevail to make you sober.

Were your bodies under some threatening disease, which, in all probability, would in a little time cut off the thread of your life, I believe that would make you serious: that would make you look solemn; were you condemned to die shortly by the hand of justice, that would sober you: and is not the death and ruin of an immortal soul more to be dreaded than that of a mortal body? and should not the danger of that give a louder alarm to the most secure, and cast a greater damp upon the most jovial, than of the other.

And when you are told, that though the disease is mortal, it is not incurable, though the crime is capital, it is not unpardonable, how should that yet further prevail to make you serious; to make you very solicitous, very industrious to get the disease healed, and the crime forgiven? Your case will not allow any of your time or thoughts to run waste, or to be trifled away, but you have need by sober-mindedness to employ both in a due attendance to the things that belong to your everlasting peace.

You are sinners, and, therefore have reason to think very meanly and humbly of yourselves, not to expect applauses, or resent contempts, nor to aim at great things in the world. What have such vile wretches as we are to be proud of, or to promise ourselves in this world, who owe our lives, which we have a thousand times forfeited, to the divine patience?

You are sinners, and if yet you are in a state of sin, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, the misery of your state is enough to give an effectual check to your vain mirth, and would do it if you knew and considered it. *Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God,* Hos. 9. 1. Joy is forbidden fruit to wicked people. There cannot be a more monstrous absurdity, than that which they are guilty of, who say to the Almighty, *Depart from us,* who set him at a distance, set him at defiance, and yet *take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ,* and *spend their days in mirth,* Job 21. 12, 13, 14.

If, through grace, the power of sin is broken in you, and you are delivered from the wrath to come, and being in Christ, there is no condemnation to you, yet the very remembrance of the misery and danger you were in, and are delivered from, how near you were

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to the pit's brink, and how you were snatched as brands out of the burning, should make you serious. You still carry a body of death about with you, which should make you cry out, *O wretched creatures that we are!* You are compassed about with enemies who war against your souls; you have not yet put off the harness, but have reason still to fear, lest a promise being left you of entering into rest, any of you should seem to come short, and this is enough to make you considerate and cautious, and sober-minded.

In short, till you have by faith in Christ made your peace with God, and are become sincere Christians, you have no reason to rejoice at all; and when you have done it, and have some comfortable evidence of a blessed change, through grace, wrought in you, you will then have better things to rejoice in, than this world can furnish you with; and having tasted spiritual pleasures, will be dead to all the delights of sense; and you will say, Offer them to those who know no better.

3. You are setting out in a world of sorrows and snares, of troubles and temptations, and therefore are concerned to be sober-minded, that you may be armed accordingly, so that the troubles of the world may not rob you of your peace, nor the temptations of it rob you of your purity. Your way lies through a wilderness, a land of darkness and drought, and nothing but sober-mindedness will carry you safe through it to Canaan.

Now you are young, and have the world before you, you are apt to flatter yourselves with a conceit that every thing will be safe and pleasant, your mountain you think stands so strong, that it cannot be moved; that nothing can shake either your integrity, or your prosperity; but you little know what this world is, and what snares there are in every condition of life, and every company: in all employments, in all enjoyments. And if you be careless and vain, and live at large, you make yourselves an easy prey to the tempter, and are in danger of being carried away by the course of this world; you have need therefore to take heed to yourselves, and to keep your souls diligently, that is, to be sober-minded; for considering the corruption that is in the world through lust, and the corruption that is in your own hearts, what may we not fear when they come together?

When the restraints of education are taken off, and you begin to find yourselves at liberty, you will meet with so many enticing sins and sinners, that you will be in danger of falling into licentiousness, and being undone, unless the impressions of your education still abide, unless by this sober-mindedness you still be your own parents, your own masters, your own tutors, and by an established virtue, through the Grace of God, a *Law to yourselves?*

You know not what trials and troubles you may be reserved for, but you know that man who is born of a woman, is but of few days, and full of trouble; his crosses certain, more or less; a cross to be taken up daily; his comforts uncertain: and should not this make you sober, that when afflictions come, they may not be so terrible as they are to those, who by indulging themselves in mirth and pleasure, have made themselves like the tender and delicate woman, that would not set so much as the sole of her foot to the ground, for tenderness and delicacy, Deut. 28. 56. Even the common calamities of human life press hard upon such, and wound deep; whereas, those who live a sober, serious, self-denying life, are, like Christ, acquainted with grief, have made it familiar to them, and can the easier reconcile themselves to it.

Some of you, perhaps, are sickly, and often out of health; you carry distempers about with you, which tell you what you are, and you are inexcusable if you be not thereby made sober; if they do not deaden you to the delights of sense, and lower your expectations from the creature, and dispose you to serious work. By the sickness of the body the heart should be made better,—many a one's has been; the uncertainty of whose bodily health has conduced very much to the health of their souls. Those do indeed walk contrary to God who allow themselves in vanity, while they carry about with them sensible tokens of their mortality.

But even the most strong and healthful may die in their full strength, and must die at last; we are all dying daily, death is working in us, and we are walking toward it, and shall not that make us sober? Theirs was an unpardonable crime who said, *Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die,* Isa. 22. 13, 14. Who when they were minded by the Prophet of the near approach of death, as a reason why they should repent and reform speedily, turned it quite a contrary way, and argued, if we must have a short life, let it be a merry one; surely, says God, *this iniquity shall not be purged from you.*

The end of all things is at hand, is near at hand with us, be ye therefore sober; that whenever our Lord shall come, we may be in a good frame to meet him. When we consider what our bodies will be shortly, how near a-kin they are to corruption and the worms, we shall see little reason to pamper them, and to bring them up delicately, for we are hastening to the house of darkness, where the voice of mirth is no more heard.

> "When th' hair grows sweet with pride and lust,
> The powder doth forget the dust."
>
> Mr. Herbert.

You see many young people about you ruined and undone, and it was for want of being sober-minded. Many, perhaps, you have known or might have observed, who were born of good parents, had a religious education, set out well, were for some time hopeful, and promised fair with buds and blossoms, but ended in the flesh, after they had begun in the spirit, and it was for want of consideration; they could not be persuaded to think soberly; they were drawn away of their own lust and enticed; and those enticements were hearkened to, when a deaf ear was turned to wisdom's calls, and to all the dictates of reason and conscience, they would not hearken to the voice of these charmers charming ever so wisely.

Some

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Some have outrun their apprenticeships, others have foolishly thrown themselves away in marriage, others have set up and made a flourish a while, but have soon broke and become bankrupts, either by living high, or by grasping at more business than they could secure; some have been carried away by atheistical and profane notions, and others by a loose and vain conversation, all which would have been happily prevented, if they had been humble and discreet, and duly governed their appetites and passions.

Others' harms should be your warnings, to take heed of the rocks they split upon. Sir Richard Blackmore, in his Heroic Poem of Job, thus gives the reason of Job's pious care concerning his sons, after the days of their feasting were gone about.

> "For he with mournful eyes had often spy'd,
> Scatter'd on pleasure's smooth, but treacherous tide,
> The spoils of virtue overpower'd by sense,
> And floating wrecks of ruin'd innocence."

5. You are here in this world upon your trial for heaven. O that you would firmly believe this, not only that you are hastening apace into eternity, but that it will certainly be to you a comfortable or a miserable eternity, according to what you are and do, while you are in the body; and this consideration, one would think, should make you sober.

Eternal life is set before you, eternal happiness in the vision and fruition of God; you may make it sure, if it be not your own fault; may lay hold on it, if you look about you now. There are substantial honours, satisfying pleasures, and true riches, in comparison with which all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are empty names, and shadows; these may be your portion for ever, they shall be so, if by a patient continuance in well-doing, through Christ, you seek for this glory, honour, and immortality; you are here probationers for the best preferment, for a place in the New Jerusalem; you stand candidates for a crown, a kingdom, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, you stand fair for it; and is it not time to think then? To think seriously? And soberly to apply yourselves to that business for which you were sent into this world, and from which, if it be done faithfully, you may remove with comfort to another world; but if not, your removal to that world will be terrible; you ought to be serious and circumspect now, because as you spend your time so you are likely to spend your eternity; and a great deal of work you have to do, and but little time to do it in.

Let me put the case to you, as to this world; if a wise and wealthy man should take one of you who had but little, and tell you that you should come into his family, and he would provide food and cloathing for you for one year, and if you carried yourself well for that year, would submit to the prudent discipline of his family, would be observant of him, and take care to please him, that then at the year's end he would give you ten thousand pounds; but if you were rude and ungovernable, he would turn you out of doors; would not this put you upon considering? Would it not make you sober? Would you not deny yourselves in the gratification of many a desire, for fear of displeasing such a benefactor? If he were ever so humoursome you would humour him, when it were so much your interest. This is your case; the time of your probation is but short; the terms are easy and reasonable, the God you are to please is not hard to be pleased; nor will impose any thing upon you but what becomes you, and will be pleasant to you; the happiness he proposes is infinitely more worth than thousands of gold and silver, and the security he gives, is the inviolable promise of one who cannot lie nor deceive; the misery, if you come short of it, is worse than being turned out of doors, it is to be cast into utter darkness. Life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before you, and will you not then set your hearts to all the words which we testify unto you; will you not think soberly, that you may make sure work in a matter of such vast importance, on which your lives, and the lives of your souls depend? You are here upon your good behaviour, and therefore are concerned to behave yourselves well; for if you do not, *Son remember* will be a dreadful peal rung in your ears shortly, remember how fair thou stoodest for happiness, and what the morsel of meat was, for which, like profane Esau, thou soldest that birth-right.

Lastly, You must shortly go to judgment; with the consideration of this, Solomon endeavours to make his young man sober, that is for walking in the way of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes; *Know thou that for all these things, God shall bring thee into judgment.* And thou who makest a jest of every thing, shalt not be able to turn that off with a jest hereafter, however thou mayest think to do it now, Ecc. 11. 9. This likewise he urges upon his pupil in the close of that book, as a reason why he should be religious; *By these, my son, be admonished, to fear God and keep his commandments, for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing*, Ecc. 12. 12, 13, 14.

Young men who have strict masters, who will call them to an account how they spend their time, and how they go on with their business, are thereby obliged to be industrious and careful; whereas, if the master be careless, the servant is in temptation to be so too; but you know that you have a Master in Heaven, whose eye is always upon you, and follows you closer than the eye of any master on earth can; he knows and observes all you do, all you say, all you think, and an account is kept of it in the book of his omniscience, and your own conscience. These books will shortly be opened, and not only all reviewed, but you will be judged accordingly; and are you not then concerned to think, and speak, and act accordingly? When you are vain and frothy, and your conversation loose and profane, should not this be a check upon you, and make you sober to think, How will this look, when it comes to be looked over again? How will it pass, when I pass my trials for eternity?

Your bodies are mortal, your souls are immortal, therefore, let not sin reign either in the one, or in the other;

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you are dying, are dying daily; "In the midst of life," nay, in the beginning of it, "we are in death;" you may die this day; may die in youth, and the number of your months be cut off in the midst; and you know, that after death is the judgment; and as your state is fixed in the particular judgment at death, so it will be found in the general judgment at the end of time, and so it will remain to eternity. How awful, how dreadful the appearance of the judge will be in the Great Day, the word of God has again and again told us; *Knowing therefore those terrors of the Lord*, the terrors of that day, *we persuade men*, we persuade young men to be sober-minded, and, therefore, to let their moderation, that is, their sober-mindedness, their good government and management of themselves, be known unto all men, because the Lord is at hand. *The Judge standeth before the door.*

The Application.

You see now what is expected from you who are young, and how justly it is expected: you see both from the Word of God; and now shall I intreat you to make use of what I have said, to make it useful to yourselves, that this discourse may not be lost upon you.

1. Shall I desire you to examine yourselves, that you may know your ownselves; and take heed of being mistaken in your judgment concerning yourselves. Can your hearts witness for you, that through the grace of God, by remembering yourselves and your Creator in the days of your youth, you are become in some measure sober-minded, and answer this beautiful character of young people; I hope I speak to many such; and the misery is, that those who most need these instructions and warnings, come least in the way of them; they will not hear them, will not read them, because they resolve they will not heed them, or be ruled by them.

But to you who are sober-minded, I say as Christ did to the faithful ones in Thyatira, *I will lay upon you no other burthen, but that which you have already*, and I am sure you will agree to call it a light burthen, Hold fast till Christ comes; hold fast your integrity, hold fast your sober-mindedness.

Some are more inclined to soberness in their natural temper than others are, to them these laws of sober-mindedness will be easier than to others; but to them who are not so, though it be more difficult, yet it is withal more necessary. Wisdom, and grace, and consideration, are intended for the checking of the disorders of the natural temper.

But take heed lest you deceive yourselves, and be more forward, than there is cause, to rank yourselves among the sober-minded, and to think that you need not these admonitions. It is not a sober look that will serve, though that is graceful enough, if it be not affected and forced; but it is the sober mind that we are pressing earnestly upon you; examine that now, for God will examine that, and judge of you by it; when you shall find that to be *carnally minded is death*, but to be *spiritually minded is life and peace.*

2. Shall I desire you to exhort yourselves; so some read that which we translate, *Exhort one another;* preach to your own hearts, preach over this sermon to them. Let all young people charge and admonish and encourage themselves to be sober-minded.

Let those who have loose notions in religion, and are fond of suggestions, though ever so absurd, which derogate from the authority and honour of the Scriptures and revealed religion, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, and not to be carried about with every wind, nor carried away from the great principles of Christianity, by the craft of them who lie in wait to deceive, and bring them to downright atheism.

Let those who are drawn in, or are in danger of being drawn into the ruining sins of drunkenness or uncleanness, which have been so fatal to multitudes of young people, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, to sit down and consider seriously what will be in the end thereof, and how dreadful that destruction is which these vicious courses certainly lead to. Except you repent and reform, you must perish, must eternally perish, if the word of God be true, you must; and how miserable will your case be if you bring it to this dilemma, that either God must be false; or you must be damned!

Let those who spend their time in carnal mirth, and sensual pleasures, whose business is nothing but sport and pastime, and their conversation nothing but banter, and buffoonery; exhort themselves to be sober-minded; sometimes to be serious, and consider themselves; and try if they can make it as pleasant to themselves to think in earnest, as it is now to talk in jest; for I am sure it will be abundantly more profitable.

Let those young people who are addicted to gaming, and flatter themselves with hopes of getting that easily and quickly, which they love above any thing, but are not willing to be at the pains of getting honestly, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, and to consider what a sinful way this is of trading with what they have, and which they cannot in faith pray to God to bless and prosper them in; to consider that whether they win or lose, they can have no true comfort; no joy of their gains, for it is wealth gotten by vanity, that has a curse attending it; nor any support under their losses, for they are owing to their own sin and folly. How many apprentices have been brought by their love of gaming to rob their masters, and so to ruin themselves! And how many young gentlemen have sunk their estates, and young tradesmen their stocks and business by it; and will you for want of one sober thought, split upon the same rock? Let those who are allured into this snare, into the beginning of it, dread it, and keep at the utmost distance from it; and let those who are taken in it break out of it immediately, with resolution; *Do this now, my son, deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter.*

Let young dealers in the world who are entering into business, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, to set out under the conduct of religion and true wisdom; to love their business, to apply themselves, and accommodate themselves to it. Let them learn betimes

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to take care; for nothing will be done to purpose without it; to attend the work of their callings with diligence, and order the affairs of them with discretion, and in all their ways to acknowledge God, then are they likely to prosper, and to have good success.

Let young professors of religion, who by the grace of God have escaped the corruption that is in the world, and given up their names to Jesus Christ, exhort themselves to be sober-minded in their profession. Let them take heed of conceitedness, and spiritual pride, of confidence in themselves, and their own judgment and ability; let them aim to be best rather than to be greatest in the kingdom of God among men. Let them take heed of running into extremes, and of falling into bigotry, and censoriousness; let them be sober in their opinions of truth and falsehood, good and evil, of others and of themselves; expecting that age and experience will rectify many of their present mistakes.

Let young scholars, whose genius leads to books and learning, exhort themselves to be sober-minded; you soon find that you must be serious, must be much so, must learn to think, and to think closely, or you will never make any thing of it; it is not enough to read, but you must study and digest what you read. But that is not all, in your pursuits of knowledge you must be sober, not exercising yourselves in things too high for you, nor boasting yourselves of your attainments; be humble in the use of what you do know, using it for edification, not for ostentation; it is but unprofitable knowledge that *puffeth up*, that only is good for something that doeth good, 1 Cor. 8. 1. Be humble likewise in your inquiries after what you would know; not coveting to be wise above what is written, or to intrude into those things which you have not seen, as many who are vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind; but be wise unto sobriety. Be willing to be in the dark about that which God has not thought fit to reveal, and in doubt about that which he has not thought fit to determine. This is very well expressed by the learned Grotius, in a poem of his.

Nescire velle quæ Magister Maximus,
Docere non vult, erudita insciția est.—

Where Revelation ends,—to check rash thought,
Were shade illum'd, and ignorance well-taught.

To recommend this sober-mindedness to all of you who are young: This seriousness and sedateness of spirit, and an aptness to consider, are so much the more necessary if you consider of what great advantage they will be to you every way.

(1.) Thus you will escape the vanity that childhood and youth is subject to, and rescue those precious years from it. It will keep them from running waste, as commonly they do, like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, and will do much towards the filling up of the empty spaces, even of th se years. When Solomon had observed that *childhood and youth is vanity*, he immediately adds for the cure of that vanity, *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth*, that is, in one word, "*Be serious.*"

By using yourselves to consideration, you will come to be aware of the snares that your spiritual enemies lay for you, of the snake under the green grass, and will not be imposed upon so easily as many are by the wiles of Satan; and by habituating yourselves to self-denial and mortification of the flesh, and a holy contempt of this world, you will wrest the most dangerous weapons out of the hand of the strong man armed, and will take from him that part of his armour, in which he most trusted, for it is by the world and the flesh that he mostly fights against us: nay, and this sober-mindedness will put upon you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day; and so to resist the Devil, that he may flee from you.

This sober-mindedness will prevent many a temptation which a vain mind invites, and courts, and throws men into the way of; and will shut and lock the door against the tempter, who when he finds it so will give it up; and his agents will be apt to do so too; concluding it in vain to tempt the sober mind; they will do as Naomi, who, when she saw that Ruth was *stedfastly minded*, left off speaking to her.

(2.) Thus you will recommend yourselves to the favour of God, and of all wise and good men; will obtain that good name which is better than precious ointment, and more fragrant; a name for good things with God and good people.

God will love those who love him and seek him early; and will never forget this *kindness of your youth* for serious godliness. If you thus give him the first of your first fruits, it will be an acceptable offering to him. The beloved disciple was the youngest. And it is said of that young man, who asked that serious question, and asked it soberly, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life;* that *Jesus beholding him loved him*, Mark 10. 21. And as he was likewise well pleased with another, that answered *discreetly*, νουνεχῶς, like one who had a *sober mind*, Mark 12. 34. And that humility and quietness of spirit, which is one branch of this sober mind, is an ornament, which, wherever it is found, especially in young people, *is in the sight of God of great price;* and that is valuable indeed which he values, and by it we ought to value ourselves.

Nor is it an argument to be despised by you, that all sober people who know you, will love you, and will have no greater joy than to see you live soberly; but it is an argument the rather to be insisted upon by us, because young people are commonly very much influenced by reputation, and have an eye to that more than any thing in the government of themselves, and the choice of their way; now it is certain that reputation is on religion's side, and if the matter be rightly understood, will help to turn the scale for sober-mindedness. It is true there are some, there are many, to whom a young man will recommend himself by being loose and extravagant, and talking at random against that which is serious; but what kind of people are they? Are they not the *fools in Israel?* Are they not sots or fops, whose valuation of persons and things is not at all to be regarded? But do not all discreet and considerate people

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esteem a young man who is sober, and shew him respect, and converse with him, and put a confidence in him; it is the character of a citizen of Zion, that *in his eyes a vile person is contemned*, though he set up for a wit, or a beau, yet if he be loose and profane, he despises him as a fool, and a flash, but he honours them who fear the Lord, and live conscientiously. Now to which of these would you recommend yourselves? Whose opinion would you covet to stand right in, to stand high in? Would you not chuse to have credit with men of virtue and probity, and who are themselves in reputation for wisdom and honour, and to be laid in their bosoms, rather than to be hugged, and caressed, and cried up by those who being slaves to their pleasures, can never be masters of true reason? Especially considering, that these young people who are truly sober, serious, and conscientious, provided they take care to avoid affectation and superciliousness, will be loved and respected even by those who are themselves loose and vain; and will be manifested in their consciences one time or other, that they are the most valuable young men. And I think it is worth considering, and would bear a debate, whether ordinarily sober serious people do not love their friends and companions better than vain loose people do theirs, and are not more ready to do them true service?

(3.) Thus you will prepare for a useful life, if it please God you live long, and for a comfortable one. Those who are sober-minded when they are young, as they are thereby fortified against every evil word and work, so they are furnished for every good word and work, and are likely to be in their day vessels of honour fit for our Master's use, while the ludicrous and unthinking live to be at the best the unprofitable burthens of the earth, and good for nothing.

Young people who are sober, are likely to be good, and to do good in every relation, and condition of life; who are sober when they are children and servants; who do the duties, and improve the advantages of their learning age, and behave themselves prudently then, are preparing hereafter to have the charge of families themselves, to which they are likely to be great blessings, and to the places in which they live. They will not only be the joy of their parents' hearts while they live, but an honour to their memories when they are gone, and thus the children will rise up and call the discreet and virtuous mother blessed by treading in her steps, and producing the good fruits of their prudent and religious education.

Young men who are sober-minded are likely to be in time serviceable to the communities they are members of, civil or sacred, in a higher or lower sphere. They may be called to the magistracy or ministry to serve the state, or to serve the church, but few ever come to do real service or credit to either, or to be of account in either of those posts of honour, unless they be sober-minded when they are young. Lose the morning, and you lose the day. But though they may not arrive to such a public station, yet they may in a private capacity be eminently useful to their neighbours, in the things of the world, and to their fellow Christians in divine things, and so be instruments of glory to God. They who are sober-minded when they are young, if they go on as they begin, what will the wisdom be which the multitude of their years will teach? Obadiah, who feared the Lord from his youth, came to *fear him greatly*. Young saints, we hope, will be eminent ones.

(4.) Thus you will prepare for a happy death, if it please God you should die quickly, and may then die cheerfully. O that young people were so wise as to consider their latter end, not only as sure, but as near; for it is folly for the youngest, and strongest, and most healthful, to put far from them the day of death; when death is every day working in us.

Now the best preparation you can make for it, if you should die in youth, is to live soberly. Then the sting of it will be taken out, through Christ, and consequently the terror of it taken off; and therefore though you may pray with the Psalmist, *O my God take me not away in the midst of my days*, yet if the cup may not pass away you need not dread it, you know the worst that death can do you, if it shorten your life on earth, that will be abundantly made up in a better life. Abijah, that sober youth, in whom was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam, dies in the flower of his age, but there is no harm done him, he *comes to his grave in peace*, and goes to heaven triumphantly, 1 Kings 14. 13. Whereas those who are loose and extravagant, if they die in youth, (as Elihu speaks, Job 36. 14.) *their soul dieth*, so it is in the original, they are spiritually dead, *twice dead;* while they lived in pleasure, they were dead though they lived; and therefore when they die in sin they are *twice dead*, and their life, their life on the other side death, *is among the unclean*, among the Sodomites (so the Margin reads it) who *suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*, Jude 7, 12.

Let me now close with some general directions to young people, which may be of use to them, in order to the making of them sober-minded.

[1.] Espouse sober principles; for men are, as their principles are: in these avoid extremes, and in the less weighty matters of the law, keep the mean, that you may reserve your zeal for the great things of God, the things that belong to your everlasting peace. Take heed on the one hand of bigotry in the circumstantials of religion, and on the other hand of lukewarmness and indifference in the essentials of it.

Fix such principles as these to yourselves with reference to the main matter; that God's favour is better than life, and his displeasure worse than death; that sin is the greatest evil; that the soul is the man, and that that is best for us that is best for our souls. That Jesus Christ is all in all to us, and we are undone without an interest in him. That it is as much our wisdom, as it is our duty to be religious. That the world has not that in it, which will make us happy. That time, and the things of time, are nothing in comparison with eternity, and the things of eternity. These and such as these are principles of eternal truth, and our firm belief of them, and adherence to them, will be to us of eternal consequence. And as to other things, let your principle be, that *God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him;*

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him; and therefore ought to be so of us, that *the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.* By such principles as these keep up moderation and sober-mindedness in your profession of religion, which will contribute much to the promoting of it in every thing else.

[2.] Dwell much upon such considerations, as are proper to make you sober-minded. Be frequent in meditation upon serious things, the great things of the Law and Gospel, and let not them be looked upon as foreign things. As you think in your hearts, so you are. If the imagination of the thought of the heart be vain and corrupt, if that eye be evil, the whole man will be accordingly; but if that be serious, the affections and aims will be sober too. However you may allow the outward thoughts to be sometimes diverting, the inward thoughts must be reserved for that which is directing.

Think much of the eye of God which is always upon you, that you may be careful to approve yourselves to him in every thing; of the glory of God which you ought always to have your eye upon, that you may answer the end of your creation; think much of the many sins you have committed against God, that you may give diligence to make sure the pardon of them; and of the many mercies you have received from God, that you may study what returns you shall make for his favour; think much of the opportunities you enjoy, that you may be busy to improve them. And of the spiritual enemies you are compassed about with, that you may be sober and vigilant in guarding against them.

The four last things, Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell; are commonly recommended as proper subjects of meditation, in order to the making of the mind serious. Because the end of all things is at hand, and that end an entrance upon a state without end. Be ye therefore sober; and check vanity with that consideration.

I have somewhere read of one who had been a great courtier and statesman in Queen Elizabeth's time, I think it was Secretary Walsingham, who in his advanced years retired into privacy in the country, whither some of his pleasant companions came to see him, and told him he was melancholy; "No," says he, "I am serious, and it is fit I should be so; for all are serious round about me, and why then should not you and I be serious?" God is serious in observing us, Christ is serious in interceding for us, the Spirit is serious in striving with us; the truths of God are serious truths, his laws, his promises, his threatenings, all serious; angels are serious in their administrations to us, and our spiritual enemies serious in their attempts against us; glorified saints are serious in the embraces of Divine Love, poor damned sinners cannot but be serious under the pourings-out of divine wrath; and we ourselves shall be serious shortly.

[3.] Chuse sober company. Nothing is of greater consequence to young people than what company they keep, for we insensibly grow like those with whom we converse, especially with whom we delight to converse. Many who were thought to be very soberly inclined, have had their good inclinations turned the contrary way, by keeping vain and loose company, which, perhaps, at first they were not aware of any danger by, but thought their conversation innocent enough. Though bad company, perhaps, bears more blame sometimes than it deserves, from those who think to excuse themselves by laying the fault on their companions, yet it is agreed to have been of most pernicious consequence to multitudes that set out well.

If, therefore, you would be wise and good, chuse such for your associates and bosom-friends as will give you good advice, and set you good examples. He who walketh with wise men, is wise, or would be wise, and he shall be wise, when a companion of fools is deceived, and shall be destroyed. Keep at a distance from loose and vain company, for who can touch pitch and not be defiled? Who can converse familiarly with those who are wicked and profane, and not contract guilt, or grief, or both? If you resolve, as David did, to keep the commandments of your God, you must say to evil-doers as he did, *Depart from me*, (Ps. 119. 115.) and be as he was, the companion of all those that fear God, (v. 63.) and let your delight be in the excellent ones of the earth; the sober ones.

[4.] Read sober books. Those who are given to reading, are as much under the influence of the books they read, as of the persons they converse with, and therefore in the choice of them you need to be very cautious, and take advice. Nothing more promotes vanity, especially among the refined part of mankind, than romances, and plays, and loose poems; and thus even their solitude and retirement, which we hope might contribute to their seriousness, are lost, and make them more vain; and more ingeniously so.

Let us, therefore, take the same method to make us sober, more sober; converse with those books which are substantial and judicious, out of which we may learn wisdom. The book of God is given us on purpose to make us wise to salvation, make it familiar to you, and let it dwell in you richly. Let it lead you, let it talk with you, and do you follow it, and talk with it, Pro. 6. 22. And many other good books we have, to help us to understand and apply the Scripture, which we should be conversant with. Inquire not for merry books, songs and jests, but serious books, which will help to put you into, and keep you in a serious frame.

[5.] Abound much in sober work. Habits are contracted by frequent acts; if therefore you would have a sober mind, employ yourselves much in meditation and prayer, and other devout and holy exercises. And in these let your hearts be fixed, and let all that is within you be employed. Be much in secret worship, as well as diligent and constant in your attendance on public ordinances; those who neglect these cannot but lose their seriousness.

And see to it that you be very serious when you are about serious work, that you profane not the holy things. I look upon it to be in young people as happy an indi-

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cation of a serious mind, and as hopeful an omen of a serious life, as any other, to be reverent and serious in the worship of God. For it is a sign that the vanity of the mind runs high and strong indeed, when even there it will not be restrained from indecencies; and he is loose indeed that is *almost in all evil, in the midst of the congregation and assembly*, Pro. 5. 14. The greatness of the God with whom you have to do, and the greatness of the concern you have to do with him in, when you are engaged in his worship, should strike an awe upon you, and make you serious.

And have this in your eye in all religious exercises, that by them you may be made more serious; and that the impressions of other holy exercises may be the deeper, and take the faster hold, let me advise young people who are sober-minded, to come betimes to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Let me press it upon them, not only as a duty they owe to Christ, but as that which will be of great advantage to themselves to strengthen their resolutions, with purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord.

Those who keep off from it, it is either because they know they are not sober-minded, or because they are not determined to continue so; but none of you will own either of those reasons. Delay not therefore by that most sacred solemn bond, to join yourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten.

And how do you like this sober serious work you have now been about in hearing, or reading this discourse? Have you been in it as in your element? or as a fish upon dry ground? Have you suffered this word of exhortation, and bidden it welcome? Shall I leave you all resolved in the strength of God's Grace, that now in the days of your youth you will be sober-minded; if so, *The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thought of your heart*, and by writing the law of sobriety there, *establish your way before him!*

A SERMON

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A

SERMON

CONCERNING THE

RIGHT MANAGEMENT OF FRIENDLY VISITS.

PREACHED IN LONDON, APRIL 14, 1704.

Acts 15. 36.

Let us go again, and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

THIS was a good motion which St. Paul made to Barnabas, his brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, inviting his company and assistance in watering those churches among the Gentiles which they had together lately planted. Blessed Paul, that prime Minister of State in Christ's Kingdom, was not only thoroughly furnished for every good word and work, but was always forward to put forth himself to both; not only a *chief speaker*, (Acts 14. 12.) but a *chief doer*. Many will be content to follow, who do not care to lead in those services that are difficult and hazardous: but those who by the grace of God are spirited προϊστασθαι, to *go before in good works*, as the word is, (Tit. 3. 8.) are worthy of double honour: such a one was Paul; witness this instance here.

Though Paul and Barnabas had an extraordinary call to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles at first, the Holy Ghost, by special designation, separating them to that great work, (Acts 13. 2.) yet in the prosecution of that service, they were not to expect immediate direction from Heaven at every turn, but much was left to their own prudence and zeal, that their example might be the more imitable, in after-times: and this, particularly, of visiting those to whom they had preached.

Antioch was now a safe and quiet harbour, into which Paul and Barnabas, after a troublesome but successful voyage, were lately retired to refresh themselves a little: there they were easy, and yet not idle; for while they continued there (though not many days) they were teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, Acts 15. 35. And they had reason to say, It is good to be here, better be here than in those cities, where bonds and afflictions continually awaited them. But St. Paul's active spirit could not long be reconciled to rest; and, therefore, he has soon thoughts of putting to sea again; he is not unmindful of, nor will he be disobedient to that heavenly vision which appointed him his work *afar off among the Gentiles*, Acts 22. 21. Among them, therefore, he is here meditating a second expedition. Against this it was easy to object, as the disciples did against Christ's going into Judea, (Joh. 11. 8.) *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?* The Gentiles had of late actually stoned Paul, (ch. 14. 19.) and yet like a stout soldier of Jesus Christ, that he might make full proof of his ministry, he resolves to go thither again.

Those who have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, will prefer the service of God and their generation before their own ease and safety; and will consult the honour of Christ, and the good of souls, more than any secular interest, or satisfaction of their own. If we would approve ourselves the servants of Christ, we must be willing both to labour for him, for this is the day of our work, it will be time enough to rest, when we come to Heaven; and to venture for him, for this is the day of our combat: and we must not expect our crown, till our warfare is accomplished. Nay, and those who have laboured much, and ventured far, must be willing with St. Paul here to labour more, and venture further; Let us go again to do the same work, and encounter the same difficulties: if we would finish our course with joy, we must, like the sun, be constant to it, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, according as our work is renewed upon our hands, and as the duty of every day requires.

That which St. Paul here designs is a visit, a circular visit; and as one who neither presumed that he was able himself alone for the work that was to be done, nor was ambitious himself alone to receive the respects that would be paid, he urges Barnabas to go along with him, as a sharer in both: for we are members one of another, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee. Christ sent forth his disciples two and two.

Now observe in this project of Paul's,

1. Who they were whom he designed a visit to: *Let us visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord.* Note here,

(1.) That he called them *Brethren*; not, only *the Brethren*

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Brethren: he means not only the ministers, the elders they had ordained in every Church, (ch. 14. 23.) but all the believers. Though St. Paul was an eminent Apostle, the greatest favourite of Heaven, and the greatest blesssing to this earth that (for aught I know) ever any mere man was, yet he stiles himself brother to the least and meanest of the disciples of Christ: so setting us a copy of humility and condescension, and giving us an example to Christ's rule, with an eye to its reason, (Mat. 23. 8.) *Be not ye called Rabbi, for all ye are brethren.* If our Master be not ashamed to call us all brethren, we must not be ashamed to call one another so; not in formality, but in sincerity, and in token of brotherly love.

(2.) That he takes it for granted, that they had brethren in every city where they had preached the word of the Lord; for the word of the Gospel, though in every place it met with a fierce opposition from some, yet others gave it a kind reception: though to some it was a savour of death unto death, to others it was a savour of life unto life. In *every* city where the Gospel was preached, there was some good done; some lost sheep brought home, some lost silver found. This caused the Apostles always to triumph, that by them Christ made manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place, 2 Cor. 2. 14. Even in those cities out of which the Apostles were driven in seeming weakness and disgrace, yet they left behind them some lasting trophies of the Redeemer's victories, and seed under the clods, which sprung up and grew by degrees to a plentiful harvest.

They who are acquainted with the true principles and pleasures of the communion of saints, have a kind and tender concern, not only for their brethren in their own city, but for their brethren in every city, even those whom they never saw, nor are ever likely to see in this world: they love, esteem, pray for, and are one with all that in every place call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's, and have room for them all in their enlarged hearts; and when perhaps not many serious Christians fall within the lines of their own communication, which occasions them some melancholy thoughts, they comfort themselves with this, that they have brethren in every city; who all belong to that one city of the living God, the Jerusalem, which is above, which is free, and is the mother of us all.

(3.) That he speaks with a particular concern for their brethren, in those cities where they had preached the word of the Lord. Those whom he had preached to, were in a special manner dear to him, dearer than others. To them he had imparted the Gospel of Christ, and was ready to impart even *his own soul* also, as he speaks, 1 Thes. 2. 8. They who truly love Christ and his Gospel, cannot but dearly love those to whom they preach Christ and his Gospel, especially those who, through grace, have by their ministry received them. Spiritual fathers naturally care for the state of those who are born again by the word they have preached to them; and it is a pity that there should be any love lost between them.

These were they whom St. Paul would visit, though they lay remote and scattered: he did not think it enough to send some of his attendants to wait upon them, and bring him an account of their state; much less did he summon them to come and attend him with their several reports, but he undertook a perilous and expensive journey to visit them, for he was in journeying often; and yet all the toil and fatigue of them was nothing compared with that which put him upon them, even that which came upon him daily, the *care of all the churches*, 2 Cor. 11. 26, 28.

2. On what errand he would visit them. Let us *see how they do*, πῶς ἔχουσι,—*how it is with them; quid faciunt,—what they do*; so some: *Quid facti sunt,—what they have done*; so others; and both from the Syriac. It was not merely a compliment that he designed, nor did he take such a journey with a bare "How do ye?" No, he made this visit to his brethren, that he might acquaint himself with their case, and impart unto them such spiritual gifts as were suited to it. He visited them as the physician visits his recovering patient, that he may prescribe what is proper for him, for the perfecting of his cure, and the preventing of a relapse.

Let us see how they do; that is, Let us see what spirit they are of, and what state they are in.

(1.) Let us see what their temper and conversation are; how they stand affected, and how they behave themselves. They received the word of the Lord, which we preached to them, with all readiness of mind; let us see whether they hold fast that which they received or no, and what is become of the blessedness they then spake of: a good work was begun among them; let us see how it goes on, and what advances are made in the building which we laid the foundation of. They embraced the Gospel of Christ, and professed a subjection to it; let us see whether they stand firm or are shaken, whether they get ground or lose it, whether they are an ornament to that worthy name by which they are called, or a reproach to it.

This enquiry was the fruit of his godly jealousy over them, which he expresses in many of his epistles with a great deal of tenderness, and true affection: he was afraid concerning those among whom he had laboured, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain, and lest Satan's emissaries had disordered and undone that good work which had been done with so much care and pains by Christ's ambassadors. See 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3. *I fear lest your minds should be corrupted.* Gal. 4. 11. *I am afraid of you*— 1 Thes. 3. 5. *lest by some means the tempter have tempted you.* This was the language, not of his ill opinion of them, but of his good affection to them: and from this jealousy proceeded a diligent endeavour to recal them if he found them straying, to confirm them if he found them wavering, and to comfort them if he found them stedfast. Let those suspicions which are the bane of friendship be banished, and then let not these jealousies which are the fruits of friendship, be misinterpreted.

(2.) Let us see what condition they are in, and what their present circumstances are; whether the churches have rest and liberty, and their door of opportunity open

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open, or whether they are not in trouble and distress, scattered and broken up. When they had last taken leave of them, they gave them notice of approaching trouble, (ch. 14. 22.) that *through much tribulation they must enter into the Kingdom of God.* Now, says he, let us go see whether the clouds which were then gathering, be dispersed, or no? Whether the wrath of their enemies be cooled and restrained, or no? Come, let us go see how it is with them, that however it is, we may be some way helpful to them; that we may rejoice with them if they rejoice, and caution them against security; that we may mourn with them if they mourn, and comfort them under the cross.

Now this visit here designed may be considered two ways; either,

1. As an apostolical visit to the churches. Or,
2. As a friendly visit to their friends.

1. This visit was an apostolical visit to the churches, those particularly to whom they themselves had preached the word of the Lord; not building upon another man's foundation, as St. Paul speaks, (Rom. 15. 20.) but cultivating their own husbandry. The persons visited must be considered as those who had been within hearing of the joyful sound of the gospel, and to whom the word of this salvation was sent, as St. Paul had told them, Acts 13. 26. Now he would go and see *how they do.* Whence we may observe,

> That it is needful to inquire into the spiritual state of those, to whom the word of the Lord is preached.

I know I speak to those who have the word of the Lord preached to them in as much purity and power, as, perhaps, any people under the sun; you have precept upon precept, and line upon line, in season and out of season. Now I would, as a friend to your souls, suggest to you a necessary inquiry, whether the intention of all this good preaching you have here, be answered, and the ends of it in some measure attained, or whether it be not lost upon you, and the grace of God therein received in vain.

(1.) Every man is most concerned to inquire into the state of his own soul, while he sits under the ministry of the Gospel. It is the work and office of conscience to visit the soul with this interrogation, and to give in a true answer to it. O that I could prevail with you to deal faithfully with yourselves in this matter, and to try and judge yourselves, because the day is coming when the righteous God will try and judge us all.

So long the word of the Lord has been preached to me, "How do I do" with it? It is a word of life, has it quickened me? or am not I to this day dead in trespasses and sins? It is light, has it enlightened me, or am not I still sitting in darkness? Is it spiritual food, has it nourished me? Is it spiritual physic, has it healed me? What am I the better for all the sermons I have heard, and all the acquaintance I have got with the Holy Scriptures? What state am I in, a state of sin, or a state of grace? What frame am I in? am I habitually serious and heavenly, or vain and worldly? Is my soul in health? Does not some spiritual disease hang upon me, which is both weakening and threatening? What appetite have I to spiritual delights? What digestion of spiritual food? What strength for spiritual labour? How do I breathe in prayer? How do I walk in a religious conversation? Does my soul prosper, as the soul of Gaius did, 3 John 2? Do I thrive in my spiritual merchandise, and increase my stock of wisdom, grace and comfort, or do I decline and go behind-hand? Am I getting nearer to God, and fitter for heaven, or am I not cleaving to this earth, and setting my heart upon it as much as ever?

According as we find the case to be upon enquiry, let us proceed in dealing with ourselves; if we find no improvement by the word, we ought to take the shame of it; if our profiting does through grace appear, we ought to take the comfort of it.

(2.) Every minister is next concerned, to inquire into the state of his own hearers; they who dispense God's word and sacraments should sometimes with Paul and Barnabas here, visit those to whom they dispense them, and see *how they do,* how their souls do. These are the visits which the text would in a special manner lead us to discourse of.

Ministers should not think it enough to preach sound doctrine to their congregations in the lump, which is like the shepherd's turning all his flock together into a good pasture, but they must search the particular sheep, and seek them out, (as it is expressed, Ezek. 34. 11.) that they may strengthen the diseased, heal the sick, bind up that which is broken, and bring again that which is driven away, v. 4, 16. As we must look after our prayers to hear what answer God gives to them, (Hab. 2. 1.) so we must look after our preaching, to see what success it has among those we preach to, that we may return answer to him who sent us, (2 Sam. 24. 13.) and like the servant who invited the guests, may shew our Lord all these things, (Luke 14. 21.) Blessed Paul, that prince and pattern of preachers, taught not only publicly, but from house to house; *warning every one night and day with tears,* (Acts 20. 20, 31.) *exhorting, comforting,* and *charging every one, as a father doth his children.* (1 Thes. 2. 11.) Let us go and do likewise, as those who naturally care for the state of souls.

In the most humble, tender and obliging manner that may be, let us visit our brethren to whom we have preached the word of the Lord, and inquire what improvements they have made in knowledge by the means of knowledge, that where we find them defective, we may instruct them, mistaken, we may rectify their mistakes. Inquire also what progress they make in practical godliness, that what is amiss may be amended, and what is good may be encouraged; that their doubts may be removed, and they may be helped over their difficulties, and discouragements. "Come (my friend) you are a constant hearer of the word of the Lord, and you seem to heed it, and to be attentive to it, I am come to ask you *how you do?* The soul is the man, if it be well with the soul it is well with the man, How does your soul? Have you understood all these things? If

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any of the sayings you have heard be hard sayings, let me know, and I will endeavour to make them more easy. Are you affected with what you hear? And does your heart burn within you while we reason with you? Do you relish good truths, and experience the power and influence of them upon your heart? If so, it is well, go on and prosper, the Lord is with you while you be with him; that is a good sermon indeed that does you good; that convinces you of sin, and humbles you for it; shews you your duty, and quickens you to it. But if you find yourself cold and unaffected with the things of God, dull and unactive in the work of God, dark and unacquainted with the life of God, inquire into the cause of it. Whence it is that the things which remain are ready to die? It may be there is some secret sin indulged and harboured, the love of the world perhaps, or some lust of the flesh; and this is the worm at the root of your profession, which withers its leaves, and dries up all its fruit; if you love your soul,—whatever it is, mortify it, crucify it, and suppress the first risings of it. It may be that you are not so close and constant to your secret devotions as you should be, or careless and lifeless in them, and the soul cannot prosper while that work of the Lord is neglected or done deceitfully. Perhaps family worship is not kept up as it should be, and therefore God has withholden the dews of his grace from you. You let your place be empty perhaps at the table of the Lord, and deprive yourself of the benefit of that ordinance; the communion of saints is slighted, and it is well if the society of evil doers be not chosen rather. Come, let me beg of you, as a friend who wishes well to your soul, that you will walk more circumspectly, and keep more close to God and your duty, and you will soon find the comfort of it in your own breast."

How to adapt the enquiries and counsels to the case of each person visited, young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong, careless and careful, I cannot undertake here to give particular rules: but *Wisdom is profitable to direct.* And many excellent books we are furnished with, both ancient and modern, for our assistance herein. Mr. Baxter's *Gildas Salnianus, or Reformed Pastor,* will either quicken us or shame us. And cause for shame, I doubt, we all have for our woeful neglect of this part of our duty. God by his grace revive this good work!

But if ministers have not the opportunity they would have to visit their brethren, it would come all to one if their brethren would sometimes visit them as their spiritual physicians, to consult them, and converse with them about their spiritual state. If the *Priest's lips should keep knowledge,* the people should *seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts,* Mal. 2. 7. And the spiritual help thus sought is likely to be given most cheerfully, and received most thankfully.

2. This visit may be considered as a friendly visit made to their friends, with a pious design, and to very good purposes. The brethren they speak of were such as they had some knowledge of, and concern for, and and whose welfare they were desirous of; Let us go, (says St. Paul) and visit them, thereby to testify the kindness we retain for them, now we are at a distance, and that though they are out of sight, they are not out of mind; And let us see *how they do,* that we may sympathize with them according as their condition is, and contribute what we can to their holiness and comfort. This was that which St. Paul had in his eye, and thought worth his while, in undertaking this circuit.

Hence observe, that friendly visits, and kind enquiries into each other's state, are very good things, if they be managed in a right manner, and intended for good purposes.

There are two sorts of commendable visits to be made to our brethren.

(1.) There are visits, that are properly called Christian visits, I mean visits of pure charity, designed for the succour, help, and comfort of those who are in sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. Few consider what stress the Scripture lays on this part of our duty. When the Apostle undertakes to give a description of religion, and to shew wherein it consists, this is the first thing he describes it by, Jam. 1. 27. *Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this;* one would think it should follow,—It is wholly to retire from the world and all communication with it, and to spend the whole time in acts of devotion, in prayer and pious contemplations, or at least to fast twice in the week, and to attend all the public performances of divine service; sure, this is the principal part of pure religion, and which must stand first in its description: No, *it is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;* that by owning them and sympathizing with them, we may comfort and encourage them; and by enquiring into their state, may learn which way we may shew them real kindness.

Nor does this act of charity make a less figure in our Saviour's description of the processes of the judgment-day, wherein this will be published to the praise, and honour, and glory of the saved remnant, *I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me,* (Mat. 25. 36.) therefore, *Come inherit the kingdom,* v. 34. as if all the happiness of heaven were not too much to be the return of these visits. Probably St. Paul had an eye of faith to that word of Christ, when upon the mention of the kind visits which Onesiphorus had made to him in his bonds at Rome, he prayed, *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day,* (2 Tim. 1. 18.) that day when such visits shall be remembered, and abundantly recompensed, and accounted as visits made to Christ himself.

Among all your visits therefore, I pray, let not these charitable ones be omitted: the poor, the sick, the prisoners, you have always with you; the widows and the fatherless you have always with you; and whenever you will, you may thus do them good, Mark 14. 7. You do not want objects of this charity, if you do not want a heart to it. Look after your poor neighbours, visit them, either yourselves or by your servants, and *see how they do,* Inquire into the necessities of those who are not themselves forward to make them known. *Deep poverty* (as the Apostle calls it, 2 Cor. 8. 2.) like deep waters, commonly

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monly make the least noise, while counterfeit poverty is clamorous. What our Saviour directs in making feasts (Luk. 14. 12, 13, 14.) may be applied to the making of visits, visit not thy friends and thy rich neighbours, not them only who will visit thee again, and so a recompense will be made thee; but visit *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,* who *cannot recompense thee,* and *thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* The liberal should devise liberal things; and since by works of charity we sow upon the best soil, let out what we have to the best interest, and upon the best securities, and send our effects upon the most advantageous voyages, contrivances of doing good will turn to a better account at last, than the most celebrated projects of worldly wisdom. God presents us with the blessings of his goodness, gives before we ask, and is found of those who seek him not: therefore, we must be merciful, *as our Father in heaven is merciful.* We must seek opportunities of doing good, by visiting our poor brethren, and inquiring into their wants. If our proud hearts be sometimes ready to ask what are such and such poor people, that we should visit them and regard them? we may soon answer them with another question, What is man then that God should visit him? Man who is a worm, and the son of man who is a worm? What are we that he should visit us, so visit and regard us? That he should regard us, who are so mean and vile, *according to the estate of a man of high degree,* 1 Chr. 17. 17. If we think much to visit the sick and poor often, and to be liberal to them in our visits, let us remember that God visits us *every morning,* (Job 7. 18.) and that his *visitation preserves our spirits,* Job 10. 12.

(2.) Our common visits, which we make to our relations, friends and neighbours as such, should be so managed that they may be truly Christian visits. These and the like—polite actions of life, as well as natural ones,—are in themselves, morally neither good nor evil, but according to the principle we are actuated by, and the rule we are governed by in the doing of them. Whatever we do, even in our calling and common conversation, we must do it to the glory of God; and then it is sanctified, it is dignified, *Holiness to the Lord* is written upon it, and it will be fruit abounding to our account. It is a common piece of civility to bring our friends forward on their journey, and few look further therein than the obliging of their friends, and the diverting of themselves; and yet, even this is capable of being done *after a godly sort,* as we find, 3 John 6.—*Whom if thou bring forward on their journey, after a godly sort,* ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ, as becomes one that belongs to God to respect those who belong to him likewise, *thou shalt do well.* And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, wherein lies much of its life and power, the doing of common actions after a godly sort, with an eye to God's honour as our end, his word as our rule, and his providence as our guide and disposer. Believe it, Christians, religion is not a thing to be confined to our churches and closets; no, wherever we are we must have it with us: *Bind it continually upon thine heart, tie it about thy neck: When thou goest, let it lead thee: when thou sleepest, let it keep thee; when thou wakest, let it talk with thee,* Pro. 6. 21, 22. Let it sit down with thee at thy table, lie down with thee in thy bed, go out with thee about thy business, come in with thee to thy repose; let it be at thy right hand in buying and selling, in reading and writing, alone and in company. *As the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man,* so let it cleave to thee: by this let it appear that religion has renewed thy heart, let it regulate thy life; and abide always under the commanding power and influence of it.

Among other common actions of life, let this of visiting our friends be done after a godly sort. To assist you herein is what I principally designed in the choice of this text, and what will take up the remainder of our time. And I shall offer something by way of caution against those things which corrupt our visits, and turn them into sin to us; and by way of direction to those things which will sanctify our visits, and make them to turn to a very good purpose.

I. Suffer, I beseech you, a word of caution; and take heed that your visits of your friends, and your enquiries into their state be not so mismanaged, as to turn to some ill purpose. This we must not judge of by the common sentiment or fashion of a vain world; for our Saviour has told us, that there is *that which is highly esteemed among men,* perhaps as a mighty accomplishment, and a piece of very good breeding, which yet *is an abomination in the sight of God,* Luk. 16. 15. Let us, therefore, have recourse to the law and to the testimony, and take admonition thence in this case.

1. Let us take heed, that our friendly visits be not the waste and consumption of our precious time. We are intrusted with time as a talent to be traded with for eternity: as we spend our time well or ill, so will our eternity be spent, comfortably or miserably. Every good Christian will therefore endeavour to approve himself a good husband of his time; and that is a piece of *good husbandry,* which is indeed *good divinity.* It is not only necessary that some part of our time be spent in actual preparation for another world, but all our time must be spent with an habitual regard to it. Every hour of the hireling's day must be at the disposal of him who hired him into his vineyard: our time is not our own, for we know in whose hands our times are, and must always live to him, by whom we always live.

The wisdom which is from above will therefore direct us, what proportion of time is to be allotted to every service, both of our general and particular calling, so that the several duties we have to perform, and the several enjoyments we have to take the comfort of, may not interfere with or intrench upon one another. *Every thing is beautiful in its season, and to every purpose there is a time,* which the *wise man's heart discerns.* Now if that time be spent in visits, which should be spent in any needful duties relating to life or godliness, then they are not Christian visits. If, under colour of visiting our friends, and seeing how they do, we indulge ourselves in sloth and laziness, and the careless neglect of business and labour, we shall give but a bad account

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of so many of our hours mis-spent. We may justly say to many, as Pharaoh unjustly said to Moses and the Israelites, *Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, let us go* and visit our brethren; nay, it is perhaps pretended, *let us go and do sacrifice*, Exod. 5. 17. Such as these the Apostle describes, (1 Tim. 5. 13.) who *learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house*, under pretence of friendly visits; and not only idle (for few who are idle are only idle, usually they have other faults; when they have nothing to do, the Devil will find them something to do) they are tatlers also and busy-bodies; idle in good, but busy in evil. But what will they do when God rises up, and shall bring them into judgment, for all their idle visits, and idle frolics, and every idle word?

Learn, therefore, to adjust and limit the expense of your time, and be not prodigal of such a talent. When you say that you will go and visit a friend, ask, Can I afford time for it? Is there not some greater good to be done at the same time, which cannot so well be deferred till another time? Will not the calling be neglected, or some religious duties be prevented by it? And let that be done first, which, all things considered, is most needful,—and every thing in its own order. And where a visit, which must be made, we fear intrenches too much upon some more necessary business, it will be our wisdom to improve it the more carefully for some very good purpose, that so at least we may effectually save it from being an idle visit.

2. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not the gratifications of pride and vain curiosity. They who desire to make a fair shew in the flesh (as the Apostle speaks, Gal. 6. 12.) visit their friends only that they may see and be seen; that they may shew themselves in their best ornaments and accomplishments, and that they may observe what figure other people make, and what they set themselves off by. They go abroad only to learn fashions, and to see how the world goes; like the Athenians, who spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing, (Acts 17. 21.) or like Dinah, who went out *to see the daughters of the land*, (Gen. 34. 1.) to see how they were dressed, what entertainments they gave, and how they lived; only that she might have something to talk of when she came home, either by way of praise or censure. This was all her business; and the sequel of the story shews, that the journey was not for her honour. Yet it is to be feared that many of our visits are made from no better a principle.

Decency indeed is duty: civility must be paid and returned in that which is the current coin of our country. Religion was never intended to destroy good manners, or to make men rude and unfashionable: in matters of common conversation, it is a rule of direction, not a rule of contraries. But in our compliances with the customs and usages of the place we live in, and the persons we converse with, we have need to look well to our spirits, and to keep our hearts with all diligence, lest that which is not only innocent but commendable in itself, arise from a corrupt principle, and so become sin to us. Hezekiah's shewing his house and furniture, his armory and jewels to the King of Babylon's embassadors, seemed but a piece of common respect, and what is usually done among friends; and yet, because he did it in the pride of his heart, wrath came upon him, and on Judah and Jerusalem for it, (2 Chro. 32. 25.) and it is upon record for warning to all, even to those who have escaped the grosser corruptions that are in the world through lust, to take heed lest foolish pride, that root of bitterness, which bears so much gall and wormwood, make their visits, dress, and compliments, a snare to them. Pride is a subtle sin, a sin that most easily besets us, a sin that is apt to mingle itself with our best actions, and like a dead fly it spoils many a pot of precious ointment; we have therefore need to keep a jealous eye, and a strict hand upon the motions of our own souls, as in other instances, so in this of making and receiving visits, *lest being lifted up with pride we fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*

If in our common conversation we are more solicitous to approve ourselves to men, by appearing gay and agreeable, than to approve ourselves to God, either by doing or getting good, surely we forget that fundamental law of our Christianity, *not to live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again.* That common principle (which too many govern themselves by more than by the principles of religion) "As good be out of the world as out of the fashion," ought to be of no force with them who know that they are called out of the world, and are not to be conformed to it, nor to walk according to the course of it.

Let us always endeavour, while we accommodate ourselves to the fashions of our country, and of our place in it, yet to be *dead to them*, and observe them with a holy indifferency, as those who seek a better country, that is a heavenly, and belong to it: so we may do what others do, and yet not as the most do it. Let the visits we make daily to our God by prayer, be more our care, and more our delight, than any visits we have to make to our friends.

3. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not the cloak and cover of hypocrisy: that they be not such visits as David's enemies made to him, (Ps. 41. 6.) *If he come to see me he speaketh vanity*, that is, what he says by way of compassion and condolence is all counterfeit and pretended: *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself, when he goeth abroad he telleth it.* A base practice, and that which all, who have any sense of virtue and honour, will cry out shame on. Next to hypocrisy in religion, nothing is worse than hypocrisy in friendship.

It is bad enough if kindness be not designed in our visits, and if we do not truly respect those whom we thus profess a respect for; for love ought to be without dissimulation, (Rom. 12. 9.) but it is much worse if mischief and unkindness be intended to those whom we pretend to make visits of friendship to; and we go to see them, that we may find some occasion against them, and pick up something to make the matter of their reproach in the next company. Thus to make the shews and ceremonies of friendship serve the designs of malice and ill-will, is to involve ourselves in a double

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double guilt, both the want of charity, and the want of sincerity.

Not that therefore, when we have conceived a displeasure against any, whom upon the account of relation, communion, neighbourhood, or former acquaintance, we owe respect to, we must presently break off all intercourse and conversation with them, and deny due civilities to them, for fear of hypocrisy in paying them; no, that is to make ill, worse: but we must mortify that corrupt passion which is working in us; *not let the sun go down upon our wrath;* forgive the injury whether real or imaginary; be reconciled to our friend, cordially reconciled, and then come and offer our gift to God, and our respects to our friend. We ought carefully to avoid every thing that tends to the alienating of the affections of Christians one from another, and the cooling of love; and to devise all means possible for the preserving of true friendship where it is, and the reparation and retrieval of it where it is withering and ready to die.

4. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not made the opportunities of slandering and tale-bearing. Our rule is, *Speak evil of no man,* not only that evil which is false and altogether groundless; but not that which is true, when our speaking of it will do more hurt than good. If we have not wherewithal to speak well of those we speak of, we had better not say any thing of them than say ill: the general law of justice obliges to do as we would be done by; we would not have our own faults and follies, our own miscarriages and mismanagements proclaimed in all companies, and made the subject of discourse and remark; let us then treat other people's good name with the same tenderness that we expect and desire our own should be treated with: there is also a particular law of charity, which obliges us to cover even a multitude of sins; to keep that secret which is secret, for we need not make scandals, by divulging that which might be concealed: and to speak of that which cannot be hid, as those who mourn, and not as those who are puffed up; as those who are willing to make the best, and hope the best of every person, and every action, and not as if we were of counsel against the delinquent, and thought ourselves obliged to aggravate the crime, and press for judgment against the criminal.

Nothing is more destructive to love and friendship than tale-bearing is: we have in the Scripture, laws against it, (Lev. 19. 16.) *Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.* The word רכיל here and elswhere used for a tale-bearer, properly signifies a pedlar or petty chapman, who buys goods, (stolen ones it may be) at one place, and sells them at another, taking care to make his own markets of them; so a tale-bearer makes his visits to pick up at one place, and utter at another, that which he thinks will lessen his neighbour's reputation, that he may build his own upon the ruin of it. Another law to the same effect we have, (Exod. 23. 1.) *Thou shalt not raise a false report.* The margins read it, *Thou shalt not receive a false report:* for many times, the receiver in this case is as bad as the thief. We have also Proverbs against it, (Pro. 20. 19.) *He that goes about* (making visits suppose) *as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets;* and (Pro. 26. 20, 22.) *Where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth*—and *The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds.* They who make it their business in their visits to carry peevish ill-natured stories and characters from place to place, to the wounding of their neighbours' good name secretly, the propagating of contempts and jealousies, and the sowing of discord, do the Devil's work, and serve his interests more than they are aware of. That great and good man St. Austin ordered the law of his house to be written over his table which forbad all tale-bearers any room there.

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere fa mam,
Hanc Mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.—
Be it known that this table is forbidden the man, who delights in injuring the reputation of absent persons.

As a greater than he had done before him, (Ps. 101. 5.) *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off,* and I heartily wish that not the persons but the thing might be cut off from all conversation.

You will do me the justice (my brethren) to think that what I say in these cautions is intended not as an accusation of any, I know the faces of but few of you, much less do I know your faults; but as an admonition to you all, to take heed of those sins, which I know most easily beset us: for *as in water face answers face, so doth the heart of man to man.*

II. Suffer, I beseech you, a word of counsel, and direction, and let us all endeavour that our visits of our friends, and our inquiries into their state may be made to serve some good purpose; that they may not only be rectified, and made innocent, but sanctified, and made excellent; and may be so managed as to rescue that from being lost time, which we cannot but be sensible has been too much so, and to make it pass well in our account. Even acts of civility may be so improved as to become acts of piety; and the common salutation of a "How do you," may by a good intention be advanced to the rank of those good words, which they that fear the Lord speak often one to another, and which the Lord hearkens and hears, and of which he writes a book of remembrance, Mal. 3. 16. As the sincere sacred words of "God be with you," and "God bless you," when they are used carelessly and lightly, degenerate, and turn into the sin of taking the name of the Lord our God in vain, so this common word, "How do you do?" and "How does your family?" may be consecrated by a principle of Christian friendship, and we may even therein glorify God.

This, which I say concerning the personal visits of our friends, may also be much of it accommodated to paper visits, by letter. The keeping up of our friendly correspondences, which is the chief intention of most of the letters which we write, who are not men of business in the world, ought to arise from a good principle, and to be managed by us as becomes Christians, that we may not have to answer for waste paper, as well as lost time.

Let us then be governed in this matter by the following directions.

1. Let

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1. Let our friendly visits be the proofs and preservatives of brotherly love. Brotherly love is the law of Christ's kingdom, the livery of his family, the great lesson to be learned in his school; nothing is more the beauty and strength of the Christian Church, nor a brighter ornament to that holy religion which we make profession of: it is maintained and kept up by reciprocal kindnesses, and particularly by mutual visits: this, therefore, we must intend, both in giving and receiving them, and manage them accordingly, to testify our affection to those whom we are obliged by nature, providence, or grace, in a particular manner to respect, and so to shew the proof of our love, as the Apostle speaks, (2 Cor. 8. 24.) and thereby to confirm and improve that unity wherein brethren ought to dwell together. We must therefore visit one another, that we may the better love one another, with a pure heart and more fervently.

Mutual strangeness and affected distance, is both the effect and the cause of the decay of love: it is an evidence that it it is cooled, and it cools it yet more, and perhaps by degrees kills it, and gives Satan room to sow his tares. When relations and neighbours, and those who are under some particular ties of friendship, yet are as shy one of another, and as much on the reserve, as if they never had seen one another before in this world, and never expected to see one another in a better world, it is easy to say, contrary to what was said of the primitive Christians, *See how* little these people *love one another:* but when they visit each other with mutual freeness and openness, embrace each other with a cordial endearedness, and concern themselves for each other with all possible tenderness, by this it will appear that they are taught of God to love one another; and hereby the holy fire is kept burning upon the altar.

Now since our lot is cast in those latter days wherein it is foretold, that iniquity should abound, and the love of many wax cold, (Mat. 24. 12.) those perilous times in which men shall be lovers of their ownselves only, (2 Tim. 3. 1, 2.) it is a good service to the public by all means possible to cultivate true and hearty friendship, and bring it into reputation. Why should we be strange one to another, who hope to be together for ever with the Lord?

But if the diseases of selfishness and deceit should prove still obstinate to the methods of cure among most people; yet if we approve ourselves warm and cordial in our love, we shall have the comfort of having done our duty, and delivered our souls: and perhaps they who are more loving than others, will have the further comfort of being better beloved than others; for he who watereth shall be watered also himself.

2. Let our friendly visits be the helps and occasions of Christian sympathy. Christian sympathy is one branch of Christian love. As it is in the natural body, it ought to be in the mystical body, *If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it,* and *if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it,* 1 Cor. 12. 26. What is love but a union of souls, and a twisting of interests? And where these are, there will be sympathy, according to that law of our religion, *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep,* Rom. 12. 15.

We must therefore visit our friends, and *see how they do,* that we may rejoice with them in those things which are the matter of their rejoicing: that when we find them and their families in health and peace, their employments successful, their substance increased, their relations agreeable, the vine by the side of the house fruitful, and the olive plants round about the table green and flourishing, we may be comforted in their comfort, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 7. 13. God takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants, and so should we, Ps. 35. 27. And we should be the more studious to shew ourselves pleased in the prosperity of our friends, because most seek their own, and few another's weal; and thence arise envy, and emulation, and mutual jealousies.

We must likewise desire to know the state of our friends, that we may mourn with them for their afflictions, and mingle our tears with theirs: that if the hand of the Lord be gone out against them, and breaches are made on them and their comforts, we may give them some relief, by putting a respect upon them in their sorrows, and assuring them of our continued friendship, when they are most apt to be discouraged, and to think themselves slighted: also by giving them an opportunity of making their complaints to such as will hear them, not only with patience, but with tenderness and compassion, and this is some ease to a burdened spirit. And perhaps we may then speak some word in season, which God may bless for the strengthening of the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees.

On this errand Job's friends came to visit him, when they heard of all the evil that was come upon him, that they might *mourn with him,* and *comfort him,* (Job 2. 11.) and it is some comfort to the mourners, to have their friends mourn with them. Thus Nehemiah inquired after the condition of his friends with a tender concern; as appears by his deep resentment of the evil tidings brought him: *He sat down and wept, and mourned certain days,* Neh. 1. 3, 4. Let us learn in this manner to bear one another's burthens, by a compassionate sorrow for others' griefs; and this suffering at second-hand, will either prevent our own afflictions, or prepare us for them.

3. Let our friendly visits furnish us with matter for prayer and praise. Besides the plain intimation which our Master has given us, in teaching us to address ourselves to God as *Our Father,* we have an express command *Pray one for another,* (Jam. 5. 16.) which supposes it our duty likewise to give thanks for one another: for whatever mercy we pray for, when it is given we ought to return thanks for it. We find St. Paul in most of his Epistles, both to churches and particular friends, speaking of the prayers and thanksgivings he offered up to God daily upon their account. And it could not but be an unspeakable comfort to them, to think of the interest they had in the prayers of so great an intercessor as he was. It is written also for our learning,

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learning, that we may in like manner give thanks to God for our friends, making mention of them always in our prayers; that thus we may testify our affection to them, and may be really serviceable to their comfort, when perhaps we are not in a capacity of being so any other way; and that we may thus keep up the communion of saints in faith, hope, and love.

Now that we may do this the more particularly, and the more sensibly, it is of good use to visit our brethren, and to *see how they do*; that, whatever is the matter of their rejoicing, and our's with them, we may make the matter of our thanksgiving to God: and whatever just complaint they make to us, we may with them spread it before the Lord, and beg relief and comfort for them. When we visit our friends, we have an opportunity of praying with them; and I heartily wish it were more practised, especially by ministers: this would indeed sanctify our visits, and turn them to a very good account. When you are sick and in trouble, you desire us to pray with you; and why should you not desire us to pray with you when you are in health and peace? that your prosperity may be continued and sanctified; and that you may be kept from the snares and temptations of it. Help likewise in returning thanks, is as necessary as help in prayer: and they who know how to value aright the privilege of communion with God, will reckon this as good an entertainment as they can either give or receive.

But besides the opportunity it gives of praying together, it gives us much assistance in praying for one another when we are alone. When we have seen our friends, and talked with them, or heard from them, we can pray the more affectionately for them. And perhaps we shall find it a furtherance to us in this part of our work, if we would make it a rule to ourselves (not to *bind* conscience, but to *mind* it) that those friends whom in the day we have visited, or have visited us, whom we have written to, or heard from, we will at night in our closets particularly pray for, and give thanks for, as there is occasion. I know not why we may not as well spread the letter of a friend before the Lord, as Hezekiah did the letter of an enemy. And some have observed, that they have had most comfort in those relations and friends which they have prayed most for: or if herein we should be disappointed, as holy David was, and those we pray for should prove unkind to us, it will be our satisfaction as it was his, that our prayers will return into our own bosom, and we ourselves shall have the comfort of them, Ps. 35. 13.

It is a pious request which serious Christians commonly make one to another, both by word and letter. "Pray, remember me in your prayers;" and it is good to use it, provided it do not degenerate into a formality, and that we request this kindness from a deep sense of our own wants and unworthiness, and a real value both for the duty of prayer in general, and for our friends, and their prayers in particular, whom we suppose to have an interest in Heaven. And being separated from each other in this scattering world, a world we cannot expect to be always together in, by those mutual requests for a share in each other's prayers, we make appointments of meeting often at the same throne of grace, in hopes of meeting shortly at the right hand of the throne of glory to part no more.

4. Let our friendly visits be improved as opportunities of doing good to the souls of our friends. Spiritual charity, though it must begin at home in teaching ourselves and our families, yet it must not end there; we must contribute what we can to the edification of others in knowledge, faith, holiness and joy. This is mutual duty to be studied and done, in giving and receiving visits; that *as iron sharpens iron*, so our pious affections and resolutions may be sharpened by conversation with one another, Pro. 27. 17. We are often commanded to exhort one another, admonish one another, teach one another, comfort one another, and stir up one another to that which is good, Heb. 3. 13; 10. 25. 1 Thes. 5. 11. And when can this be better done than when we come together, for mutual society? Then we have a price put into our hands, if we have but a heart to it, that is,—skill, and will, and courage to improve it, Pro. 17. 16.

Much has been said, and much written to promote pious discourse among Christians, but I fear to little purpose. We have all reason to lament it, that so much corrupt communication proceeds out of our mouths, and so little of that which is good, and to the use of edifying; which might either manifest grace in him who speaks, or minister grace to them who hear. *And shall vain words never have an end?* Job 16. 3. *Shall we reason always with unprofitable talk, and with speeches wherewith we can do no good,* but are in danger of doing hurt? Job. 15. 3. Shall we never learn the art of introducing and keeping up profitable discourse in our conversation with our friends, such as we may hear of with comfort in that day, when by our words we must be justified, and by our words we must be condemned? Mat. 12. 37. A visit thus improved will be fruit abounding to a good account: *What knowest thou,* but that thou mayest thus *save a soul from death,* eternal death, or at least further a soul toward life, eternal life? Thus we must confess Christ before men, as those who are not ashamed of him or of his words: reproach for it we must not fear, but say, *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile;* nay, we need not fear it, for perhaps even of them whose reproach we fear, if we manage it with meekness and humility, and without affectation, we may be had in honour. Serious godliness is an awful thing, and will command respect.

We grant that our discourses with our friends, cannot be turned intirely into this channel; allowance must be made for a great deal of common talk, yet even upon that there should appear an air of religion and godliness. Though a foreigner may speak English, yet ordinarily we can discern by his pronunciation, that he is a foreigner; so, though a good Christian, who belongs to another world, while he is here cannot avoid speaking much of the things of this world, yet he ought to do it in such a manner that those

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those he converses with may take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus, (Acts 4. 13.) and may say unto him, *Thou art a Christian, and thy speech bewrays thee.*

If it appear that we make conscience of our words, and are afraid of offending with our lips: if in our tongue be the law of kindness: if we always speak of God and his Providence, with reverence and a holy awe, like the great Mr. Boyle, who, in discourse was observed never to mention the name of God without a discerning pause, or stop, leaving room for a pious thought: if we speak of common things after a godly sort, as those who accustom themselves to the language of Canaan, and not the language of Ashdod; God will hereby be honoured, our profession will be beautified, those we converse with will be edified, and say that God is with us of a truth. Our speech, though it be not always of grace, should be always with grace, seasoned with it as with salt, which gives it its own relish and savour, Col. 4. 6.

5. Let our friendly visits be improved as opportunities of getting good to our own souls. By doing good, we do indeed get good; our own lamp will burn the brighter for its lighting others; but those who are not in a capacity of doing much good in conversation, and can say little to edify others, may yet hear that which will edify themselves. They who cannot be teachers, must be glad to be learners: and should visit those who are knowing and gracious with this design, that they may improve themselves in knowledge and grace by conversation with them, and that by walking with wise men, they may be wise. When St. Paul designed a visit to his friends at Rome, he aimed both at their spiritual benefit, and at his own, Rom. 1. 11, 12. *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift*—and, *that I may be comforted together with you.*

What we hear from our friends we visit that is instructive, and what we see in them that is exemplary and praise-worthy, we should take notice of and treasure up, that it may be ready for our use when there is occasion. By conversing with those who are wise and good, we should strive to be made wiser and better. Some rules either of prudence, or piety, or both, we should gather up for our own use out of every visit, that in every thing we may order our conversation aright. As vain people make visits chiefly to see fashions, so serious people should make visits chiefly to learn wisdom. *A wise man will thus hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will* by this means *attain to wise counsels,* Pro. 1. 5.

Nay, even from what we hear and see, which is foolish and blame-worthy, we may learn that which will be profitable to us. Solomon received instruction, even from the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding. What we observe indecent in others, we must learn to avoid; and take warning by others' harms. Thus out of the eater may come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.

But it is now time to conclude, with a word or two of exhortation, upon the whole matter.

1. Let us all remember our faults this day, and be humbled before God for the guilt we have contracted by our mismanaged visits of our friends. In our common conversation, as well as in our common business, it is hard to keep ourselves unspotted. Think, how much time we have lost in needless and unprofitable visits, which might have been better bestowed, and cannot now be recalled! What mean and low ends we have proposed to ourselves in making our visits, and how we have in them walked after the course of a vain and foolish world, and not after the conduct of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. *Are we not carnal, and do we not walk as men?* as the Apostle speaks, (1 Cor. 3. 3.) far short of the spirit of Christianity, that high and holy calling wherewith we are called.

Think, how little good we have done in the visits we have made and received! How few have been the better for us: it is well if many have not been the worse for us, and for our corrupt communication. When the company has fallen into vain discourse, that foolish talking and jesting which the word of God expressly condemns, (Eph. 5. 4.) have we not been as forward as any to promote it and keep it up, and shewed ourselves well pleased with it? Have we not provoked one another's lusts and passions, instead of provoking one another to love and to good works? Have we not given offence, and put an occasion of stumbling in our brother's way, by taking too great a liberty of speech in our conversation with our friends, encouraging the hearts of the licentious in their looseness, and grieving the hearts of those who are serious themselves, and expect we should be so too? Let us for these things *judge ourselves* this day, that we *may not be judged of the Lord.*

2. Let us be so wise as to chuse those for our intimate friends, who will concur with us in a serious endeavour to get this matter mended. For the truth is, in this as in a trade, we have the making but of one side of the bargain; we can do but little toward the rectifying of what is ordinarily amiss in conversation, and the improving of it to some good purposes, unless those we converse with will do their part: those therefore we should desire to associate ourselves with, who will edify us and be edified by us, whom we may either do good to, or get good by, or both.

It is our wisdom to avoid that company which we find corrupts our minds, and makes them vain, and indisposes them for serious exercises: what good there is in us is apt enough to dwindle and decay of itself, we need not the help of others to quench it. Therefore take Solomon's counsel, *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge,* Prov. 14. 7.

But since the communion of saints is intended to be the furtherance of our holiness and comfort, and the earnest of our future bliss, and we are taught by the pattern of that truly primitive Church (Acts 2. 42.) to continue stedfast, not only in the Apostle's doctrine, but in fellowship, let us acquaint ourselves with some who appear to be serious Christians, without distinction of parties, and converse with them; let such only be our bosom-friends: and let us say to them, as the neighbour nations did to God's Israel, (Zech. 8. 23.)

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We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you. Let God's People be our People, and David's resolution ours, (Ps. 119. 63.) *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.*

3. Let us all resolve, by the grace of God, to look well to ourselves, and to the frame of our own spirits, in giving and receiving visits. If we cannot reform the world, yet I hope we may reform our own hearts and lives, and every man prove his own work, so shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, though perhaps not in another; so shall his praise be of God, though perhaps not of men.

Christians, I am not persuading you to any thing that is rude or morose; or looks like an affectation of singularity: nor am I declaiming against the innocent diversions and entertainments of conversation, which make it pleasant to yourselves and your friends, and are a relief to the fatigue of business: but I am only to remind you, that you be very careful not to lose your religion in them. Remember that you are Christians, and you must speak and act in every thing as becomes saints, Eph. 5. 3. Remember that you are hastening into eternity, the days of your probation will shortly be numbered and finished; you are therefore concerned to spend your time on earth as those who are candidates, and probationers for heaven, so that you may not *seem to come short*. Converse with this world of sense, as those who know—You must shortly remove to the world of spirits; and let this thought give a check to every thing that is vain and frothy, and put you upon considering, seeing you look for such things, *What manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness*, 2 Pet. 3. 11.

Lay before you (my brethren) the example of the Lord Jesus, and as he was so let us be in this world; walking as he walked,—as in other things, so in this: let us make visits as he did, with a design to do good, according as the sphere of our activity is. His lips dropt as a honey-comb, and fed many; let our's do so too, as we are able. Wherever he was, still he was about his Father's business; and let us, though unworthy such an honour, still endeavour to be so employed. When he visited his friends, he sympathized with them in their griefs, comforted them under their afflictions, reproved them for what was amiss, and entertained them with edifying and instructive discourse, taking rise for it usually by an admirable yet imitable art from common occurrences; and these things are written for our learning: *Go thou and do likewise.*

And that we may be thoroughly furnished, like the good householder, who brings out of his treasury things new and old, let us daily pray to God for that wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand his way in every thing. There is no one grace that we are more particularly directed and encouraged to pray for than this; (Jam. 1. 5.) *If any man lack wisdom* (and which of us is there that does not?) *let him ask it of God*, who *gives liberally* and *upbraids us not* with our former follies, our present necessity, or the frequency of our addresses and applications to him. Solomon, who in his youth made wisdom his choice, wisdom his request, had that granted him, and abundance of other good things added thereto. In putting up this petition, let us, therefore, be not only constant and earnest, but very particular: Lord give me wisdom to direct me in such a case that is difficult and doubtful! Lord enable me to behave myself wisely in a perfect way towards my family, and my friends and neighbours whom I visit, and to walk in wisdom also toward them that are without, that my profession of religion and relation to Christ, may never suffer damage or reproach through any imprudence or indiscretion of mine; in any visit, given or received.

And lest this wisdom should degenerate into that which is worldly, and err by an excess of caution, let us pray to God for a spirit of holy boldness and courage also, that we may be enabled to appear and act for God and godliness in all companies, and upon all occasions, with that pious zeal which becomes the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, that all we converse with may see, that we serve a master whom we are neither ashamed nor afraid to own; and that we have ventured all our credit with men, upon the security of that promise of God, *Them that honour me I will honour.*

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A CHURCH IN THE HOUSE.

A

SERMON

CONCERNING

FAMILY RELIGION.

Preached in LONDON, April 16, 1704.

1 Cor. 16. 19.

——*With the Church that is in their House.*

SOME very good interpreters (I know) understand this of a settled, stated, solemn meeting of Christians at the house of Aquil a and Priscilla, for public worship; and they were glad of *houses* to meet in, where they wanted those better conveniences, which the Church was afterwards in her prosperous days accommodated with. When they had not such places as they could wish, they thankfully made use of such as they could get.

But others think it is meant only of their own family, and the strangers within their gates, among whom there was so much piety and devotion, that it might well be called a Church, or religious house. Thus the ancients generally understand it. Nor was it only Aquila and Priscilla, whose house was thus celebrated for religion, (here and Rom. 16. 5.) but Nymphas also had a Church in his house, (Col. 4. 15,) and Philemon, v. 2. Not but that others, to whom and from whom salutations are sent in St. Paul's epistles, made conscience of keeping up religion in their families; but these are mentioned, probably because their families were more numerous than most of those other families were; which made their family-devotions more solemn, and consequently more taken notice of.

In this sense I shall chuse to take it; hence to recommend family religion to you, under a notion of a Church in the house. When we see your public assemblies so well filled, so well frequented, we cannot but thank God, and take courage; your diligent attendance on the ministry of the word and prayers, is your praise, and I trust, through grace, it redounds to your spiritual comfort and benefit. But my subject at this time will lead me to inquire into the state of religion in your private houses, whether it flourish or wither there? Whether it be on the throne, or under foot there? Herein I desire to deal plainly and faithfully with your consciences, and I beg you will give them leave to deal so with you.

The pious and zealous endeavours both of magistrates and ministers for the reformation of manners, and the suppression of vice and profaneness, are the joy and encouragement of all good people in the land, and a happy indication that God has yet mercy in store for us: *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us such things as these.* Now I know not any thing that will contribute more to the furtherance of this good work than the bringing of family-religion more into practice and reputation. Here the reformation must begin. Other methods may check the disease we complain of, but this, if it might universally obtain, would cure it. Salt must be cast into these springs, and then the waters would be healed.

Many a time, no doubt, you have been urged to this part of your duty; many a good sermon perhaps you have heard, and many a good book has been put into your hands with this design, to persuade you to keep up religion in your families, and to assist you therein: but I hope a further attempt to advance this good work, by one who is a hearty well-wisher to it, and to the prosperity of your souls and families, will not be thought altogether needless, and that by the grace of God it will not be wholly fruitless: at least it will serve to remind you of what you have received and heard to this purpose, that you may hold fast what is good, and repent of what is amiss, Rev. 3. 3.

The lesson then which I would recommend to you from this text, is this;

That the families of Christians should be little Churches: or thus, *That wherever we have a house, God should have a Church in it.*

Unhappy

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Unhappy contests there have been, and still are, among wise and good men about the constitution, order, and government, of churches; God by his grace heal these breaches, lead us into all truth, and dispose our minds to love and peace; that while we endeavour herein to walk according to the light God has given us, we may charitably believe that others do so too; longing to be there where we shall be all of a mind.

But I am now speaking, of churches concerning which there is no controversy. All agree that masters of families, who profess religion, and the fear of God themselves, should, according to the talents they are intrusted with, maintain and keep up religion and the fear of God in their families, as those who must give account: and that families, as such, should contribute to the support of Christianity in a nation, whose honour and happiness it is to be a Christian nation. As nature makes families little kingdoms; (and perhaps œconomics were the first and most ancient politics;) so grace makes families little churches; and those were the primitive churches of the Old Testament, before *men began to call upon the name of the Lord* in solemn assemblies, and *the sons of God came together to present themselves* before him.

Not that I would have these family-churches set up and kept up in competition with, much less in contradiction to public religious assemblies, which ought always to have the preference: *The Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,* (Ps. 87. 2.) and so must we; and must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, under colour of exhorting one another daily at home. Far be it from us to offer any thing that may countenance the invading of the office of the ministry, or laying it in common, and the usurping or superseding of the administration of sacraments. No, but these family-churches (which are but figuratively so) must be erected and maintained in subordination to those more sacred and solemn establishments.

Now that I may the more distinctly open to you, and press upon you, this great duty of family-religion, from the example of this and other texts of a "church in the house," I shall endeavour, I. To shew what this church in the house is, and when our families may be called churches. And, II. To persuade you by some motives, thus to turn your families into churches. And then, III. To address you upon the whole matter by way of application.

I. I am in the first place to tell you what that family-religion is which will be as a church in the house, and wherein it consists, that you may see what it is we are persuading you to.

Churches are sacred societies, incorporated for the honour and service of God in Christ; devoted to God, and employed for him; so should our families be.

1. Churches are societies devoted to God, called out of the world, taken in out of the common to be inclosures for God: he has set them apart for himself; and because he hath chosen them, they also have chosen him, and set themselves apart for him. The Jewish church was separated to God for a *peculiar people, a kingdom of priests.*

Thus our houses must be churches; with ourselves we must give up our houses to the Lord, to be to him for a name and a people. All the interest we have, both in our relations, and in our possessions, must be consecrated to God; as under the law all that the servant had was his master's for ever, after he had consented to have his ear bored to the door-post. When God effectually called Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, his family assumed the appearance of a particular church; for in obedience to God's precept, and in dependance on God's promise, they took all the substance they had gathered, and the souls they had gotten, and put themselves and their all under a divine conduct and government, Gen. 12. 5. His was a great family, not only numerous, but very considerable; the father of it was the father of all them that believe; but even little families, jointly and entirely given up to God, so become churches. When all the members of the family yield themselves to God, subscribe with their hands to be the Lord's, and surname themselves by the name of Israel,—and the master of the family, with himself, gives up all his right, title, and interest, in his house, and all that belongs to it, unto God, to be used for him, and disposed of by him; here is a church in the house.

Baptism was ordained for the discipline of nations, (Mat. 28. 19.) that the kingdoms of the world, as such, might, by the conversion of their people to the faith of Christ, and the consecration of their powers and governments to the honour of Christ, become his kingdoms, Rev. 11. 15. Thus by baptism households likewise are discipled, as Lydia's and the Jailor's, (Acts 16. 15, 33.) and in their family-capacity are given up to him, who is in a particular manner the God of all the families of Israel, Jer. 31. 1. Circumcision was at first a family-ordinance, and in that particular, as well as others, baptism somewhat symbolizes with it: when the children of Christian parents are by baptism admitted members of the universal church, as their right to baptism is grounded upon, so their communion with the universal church is, during their infancy, maintained and kept up chiefly by their immediate relation to these "churches in the house;" to them, therefore, they are, first, given back, and in them they are deposited,—under the tuition of them, to be trained up till they become capable of a place and a name in particular churches of larger figure and extent. So that baptized families, who own their baptism and adhere to it, and in their joint and relative capacity make profession of the Christian faith, may so far be called little churches.

More than once in the Old Testament we read of the dedication of private houses. It is spoken of as a common practice, (Deut. 20. 5.) *What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it?* that is, taken possession of it; in the doing of which it was usual to dedicate it to God by some solemn acts of religious worship. The 30th Psalm is entitled,

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A psalm or song at the dedication of the house of David. It is a good thing when a man has a house of his own, thus to convert it into a church, by dedicating it to the service and honour of God, that it may be a Bethel, a House of God, and not a Bethaven, a house of vanity and iniquity. Every good Christian who is a housholder no doubt does this habitually and virtually; having first given his ownself to the Lord, he freely surrenders all he has to him: but it may be of good use to do it actually and expressly, and often to repeat this act of resignation; *This stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house,* Gen. 28. 22. Let all I have in my house, and all I do in it, be for the glory of God; I own him to be my great Landlord, and I hold all from and under him: to him I promise to pay the rents (the quit-rents) of daily praises and thanksgivings; and to do the services, the easy services of gospel obedience. Let *holiness to the Lord* be written upon the house, and all the furniture of it, according to the word which God has spoken, (Zech. 14. 20, 21.) That *every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be Holiness to the Lord of Hosts.* Let God by his providence dispose of the affairs of my family, and by his grace dispose the affections of all in my family, according to his will, to his own praise. Let me and mine be only, wholly, and for ever his.

Be persuaded (brethren) thus to dedicate your houses to God, and beg of him to come and take possession of them. If you never did it, do it to night with all possible seriousness and sincerity. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.* Bring the ark of the Lord into the tent you have pitched, and oblige yourselves, and all yours to attend it. Look upon your houses as temples for God, places for worship, and all your possessions as dedicated things, to be used for God's honour, and not to be alienated or profaned.

2. Churches are societies employed for God, pursuant to the true intent and meaning of this dedication.

There are three things necessary to the well-being of a church, and which are most considerable in the constitution of it. Those are doctrine, worship, and discipline; where the truths of Christ are professed and taught, the ordinances of Christ administered and observed, and due care taken to put the laws of Christ in execution among all who profess themselves his subjects, and this under the conduct and inspection of a gospel-ministry; there is a church: and something answerable hereunto there must be in our families, to denominate them little churches.

Masters of families, who preside in the other affairs of the house, must go before their housholds in the things of God. They must be as Prophets, Priests, and Kings, in their own families; and as such they must keep up family-doctrine, family-worship, and family-discipline: then is there a church in the house, and this is the family-religion that I am persuading you to.

(1.) Keep up family-doctrine. It is not enough that you and your's are baptized into the Christian faith, and profess to own the truth as it is in Jesus, but care must be taken, and means used that you and your's be well acquainted with that truth, and that you grow in that acquaintance, to the honour of Christ and his holy religion, and the improvement of your own minds, and their's who are under your charge. You must deal with your families *as men of knowledge,* (1 Pet. 3. 7.) that is, as men who desire to grow in knowledge yourselves, and to communicate your knowledge for the benefit of others, which are the two good properties of those who deserve to be called *men of knowledge.*

That you may keep up family-doctrine,

[1.] You must read the Scriptures to your families, in a solemn manner, requiring their attendance on your reading, and their attention to it; and inquiring sometimes whether they understand what you read? I hope you are none of you without bibles in your houses, store of bibles, every one a bible: thanks be to God we have them cheap and common in a language that we understand. The book of the law is not such a rarity with us as it was in Josiah's time. We need not fetch this knowledge from afar, nor send from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to seek the word of God; no, the Word is nigh us. When Popery reigned in our land, English bibles were scarce things; a load of hay (it is said) was once given for one torn leaf of a bible. But now bibles are every one's money. You know where to buy them; or if not able to do that, perhaps in this charitable city you may know where to beg them. It is better to be without bread in your houses than without bibles, for the words of God's mouth are and should be to you more than your necessary food.

But what will it avail you to have bibles in your houses, if you do not use them? To have the great things of God's law and gospel written to you, if you count them as a *strange thing?* You look daily into your shop-books, and perhaps converse much with the news-books, and shall your bibles be thrown by as an almanack out of date? It is not now penal to read the Scriptures in your families, as it was in the dawning of the Day of Reformation from Popery, when there were those who were accused and prosecuted for reading in a certain great heretical book, called An English Bible. The Philistines do not now stop up these wells, (as Gen. 26. 18.) nor do the shepherds drive away your flocks from them, (as Exod. 2. 17.) nor are they as a spring shut up, or a fountain sealed: but the gifts given to men have been happily employed in rolling away the stone from the mouth of these wells. You have great encouragements to read the Scripture; for notwithstanding the malicious endeavours of atheists to vilify sacred things, the knowledge of the Scripture is still in reputation with all wise and good men. You have also a variety of excellent helps to understand the Scripture, and to improve your reading of it; so that if you or your's perish for lack

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lack of this knowledge, as you certainly will if you persist in the neglect of it, you may thank yourselves, the guilt will lie wholly at your own doors.

Let me, therefore, with all earnestness press it upon you to make the solemn reading of the Scripture a part of your daily worship in your families. When you speak to God by prayer, be willing to hear him speak to you in his word, that there may be a complete communion between you and God. This will add much to the solemnity of your family-worship, and will make the transaction the more awful and serious, if it be done in a right manner; which will conduce much to the honour of God, and your own and your family's edification. It will help to make the word of God familiar to yourselves, and your children and servants, that you may be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and may thence be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work. It will likewise furnish you with matter and words for prayer, and so be helpful to you in other parts of the service. If some parts of Scripture seem less edifying, let those be most frequently read that are most so. David's Psalms are of daily use in devotion, and Solomon's Proverbs in conversation; it will be greatly to your advantage to be well versed in them. And I hope I need not press any Christian to the study of the New Testament, nor any Christian parents to the frequent instructing of their children in the pleasant and profitable histories of the Old Testament. When *you* only hear your children read the bible, they are tempted to look upon it as no more than a school-book; but when *they* hear you read it to them in a solemn, religious manner, it comes, as it ought, with more authority. Those masters of families who make conscience of doing this daily, morning and evening, reckoning it part of that which the duty of every day requires; I am sure they have comfort and satisfaction in so doing, and find it contributes much to their own improvement in Christian knowledge, and the edification of those who dwell under their shadow; and the more,—if those who are ministers expound, themselves,—and other masters of families read some plain and profitable exposition of what is read, or of some part of it.

It is easy to add under this head, that the seasonable reading of other good books will contribute very much to family-instruction. In helps of this kind we are as happy as any people under the sun, if we have but hearts to use the helps we have, as those who must give an account shortly of them among other talents which we are intrusted with.

[2.] You must also catechize your children and servants, so long as they continue in that age of life which needs this *milk*. Oblige them to learn some good catechism by heart, and to keep it in remembrance; and by familiar discourse with them help them to understand it, as they become capable. It is an excellent method of catechising, which God himself directs us to, (Deut. 6. 7.) To teach our children the things of God, by talking of them as we sit in the house, and go by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up. It is good to keep up stated times for this service, and be constant to them, as those who know how industrious the enemy is to sow tares, while men sleep. If this good work be not kept going forward, it will of itself go backward. Wisdom also will direct you to manage your catechising, as well as the other branches of family-religion, so as not to make it a task and burthen, but as much as may be a pleasure to those under your charge, that the blame may lie wholly upon their own impiety, and not at all upon your imprudence, if they should say, *Behold what a weariness is it!*

This way of instruction by catechising does in a special manner belong to the "church in the house;" for that is the nursery in which the trees of righteousness are reared, that afterwards are planted in the courts of our God. Public catechising will turn to little account without family catechising. The labour of ministers in instructing youth, and feeding the lambs of the flock, therefore proves to many labour in vain, because masters of families do not do their duty, in preparing them for public instruction, and examining their improvement by it. As mothers are children's best nurses, so parents are or should be their best teachers. Solomon's father was his tutor, (Pro. 4. 3, 4.) and he never forgot the lessons his mother taught him, Pro. 31. 1.

The baptism of your children, as it laid a strong and lasting obligation upon them to live in the fear of God, so it brought you under the most powerful engagements imaginable to bring them up in that fear. The child you gave up to God to be dedicated to him, and admitted a member of Christ's visible church, was in God's name given back to you, with the same charge that Pharaoh's daughter gave to Moses's mother, *Take this child and nurse it for me;* and in nursing it for God, you nurse it for better preferment than that of being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. It is worth observing, that he to whom God first did the honour of entailing the seal of the covenant upon his seed, was eminent for this part of family-religion: *I know Abraham* (says God) *that he will command his children and his houshold after him to keep the way of the Lord,* Gen. 18. 19. Those, therefore, who would have the comfort of God's covenant with them and their seed, and would share in that blessing of Abraham which comes upon the Gentiles, must herein follow the example of faithful Abraham. The entail of the covenant of grace is forfeited and cut off, if care be not taken, with it, to transmit the means of grace. To what purpose were they discipled if they be not taught? Why did you give them a Christian-name, if you will not give them the knowledge of Christ and Christianity? God has owned them as his children, and born unto him, (Ezek. 16. 20.) and therefore he expects that they should be brought up for him; you are unjust to your God, unkind to your children, and unfaithful to your trust, if, having by baptism entered your children in Christ's school, and enlisted them under his banner, you do not make conscience of training them up in the

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the learning of Christ's scholars, and under the discipline of his soldiers.

Consider what your children are now capable of, even in the days of their childhood. They are capable of receiving impressions now which may abide upon them while they live; they are turned as clay to the seal, and now is the time to apply to them the seal of the Living God. They are capable of honouring God now, if they be well taught; and by their joining, as they can, in religious services with so much reverence and application as their age will admit, God is honoured, and you in them present to him living sacrifices, holy and acceptable. The Hosannas even of children well taught will be the perfecting of praise, and highly pleasing to the Lord Jesus.

Consider what your children are designed for (we hope) in this world; they must be a seed to serve the Lord, which shall be accounted to him for a generation. They are to bear up the name of Christ in their day, and into their hands must be transmitted that good thing which is committed to us. They are to be praising God on earth, when we are praising him in Heaven. Let them then be brought up accordingly, that they may answer the end of their birth and being. They are designed for the service of their generation, and to do good in their day. Consult the public welfare then, and let nothing be wanting on your parts to qualify them for usefulness, according as their place and capacity is.

Consider especially what they are designed for in another world: they are made for eternity. Every child thou hast has a precious and immortal soul, that must be for ever either in Heaven or Hell, according as it is prepared in this present state; and, perhaps, it must remove to that world of spirits very shortly: and will it not be very mournful, if through your carelessness and neglect, your children should learn the ways of sin, and perish eternally in those ways? Give them warning, that, if possible, you may deliver their souls, at least that you may deliver your own, and may not bring their curse and God's too, their blood and your own too, upon your heads.

I know you cannot give grace to your children, nor is a religious conversation the constant consequent of a religious education; *The race is not* always *to the swift, nor the battle to the strong:* but if you make conscience of doing your duty, by keeping up family-doctrine, if you teach them the good and the right way, and warn them of by-paths; if you reprove, exhort, and encourage them as there is occasion; if you pray with them, and for them, and set them a good example, and at last consult their souls' welfare in the disposal of them, you have done your part, and may comfortably leave the issue and success with God.

(2.) Keep up family-worship. You must not only as Prophets teach your families, but as Priests must go before them, in offering the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise. Herein likewise you must tread in the steps of faithful Abraham, (whose sons you are while thus you do well;) you must not only like him instruct your houshold, but like him you must with them call on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God, Gen. 21. 33. Wherever he pitched his tent, there he built an altar unto the Lord, (Gen. 12. 7, 8.; 13. 4, 18.) though he was yet in an unsettled state, but a stranger and a sojourner; though he was among jealous and envious neighbours, for the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land, yet, wherever Abraham had a tent God had an altar in it, and he himself served at that altar. Herein he has left us an example.

Families, as such, have many errands at the throne of grace, which furnish them with matter and occasion for family-prayer every day; errands which cannot be done so well, in secret,—or, public,—but are fittest to be done by the family, in consort, and apart from other families. And it is good for those who go before the rest in family-devotions, ordinarily to dwell most upon the concerns of those who join in their family-capacity, that it may be indeed a family-prayer, not only offered up in and by the family, but suited to it. In this and other services we should endeavour not only to say something, but something to the purpose.

Five things especially you should have upon your heart in your family-prayer, and should endeavour to bring something of each, more or less, into every prayer with your families.

[1.] You ought to make family-acknowledgments of your dependance upon God and his providence, as you are a family. Our great business in all acts of religious worship, is to give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; and this we must do in our family-worship. Give honour to God as the founder of families by his ordinance, because "it was not good for man to be alone;" as the founder of your families by his providence, for he it is "who buildeth the house, and setteth the solitary in families." Give honour to him as the Owner and Ruler of families; acknowledge that you and your's are his, under his government, and at his disposal, "as the sheep of his pasture." Especially adore him as the "God of all the families of Israel," in covenant relation to them, and having a particular concern for them above others, Jer. 31. 1. Give honour to the Great Redeemer as the head of all the churches, even those in your houses; call him the Master of the family, and the great upholder and benefactor of it; for he it is in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, Gen. 12. 3. All family-blessings are owing to Christ, and come to us through his hand by his blood. Own your dependance upon God, and your obligations to Christ for all good things pertaining both to life and godliness; and make conscience of paying homage to your chief Lord, and never set up a title to any of your enjoyments in competition with his.

[2.] You ought to make family-confessions of your sins against God; those sins you have contracted the guilt of in your family-capacity. We read in Scripture of the *iniquity of the house*, as of Eli's, 1 Sam. 3. 13, 14. Iniquity visited upon the children; sins that bring wrath upon families, and a curse that enters into the house to consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, Zech. 5. 4. How sad is the condition of those families who *sin together*, and never *pray together!* who by concurring in frauds, quarrels, and excesses, by strengthening

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strengthening one another's hands in impiety and profaneness, fill the measure of family-guilt, and never agree together to do any thing to empty it.

And even religious families, that are not polluted with gross and scandalous sins, yet have need to join every day in solemn acts and expressions of repentance before God for their sins of daily infirmity. Their vain words and unprofitable conversation among themselves; their manifold defects in relative duties, provoking one another's lusts and passions, instead of provoking one another to love and to good works: these ought to be confessed and bewailed by the family together, that God may be glorified, and what has been amiss may be amended for the future. It was not only in a time of great and extraordinary repentance that families mourned apart, (Zech. 12. 11.) but in the stated returns of the day of expiation the Priest was particularly to make atonement for his houshold, Lev. 16. 17. In many things we, all, offend God, and one another; and a penitent confession of it in prayer together, will be the most effectual way of reconciling ourselves both to God, and to one another. The best families, and those in which piety and love prevail most, yet in many things come short, and do enough every day to bring them upon their knees at night.

[3.] You ought to offer up family-thanksgivings for the blessings which you, with your families, receive from God. Many are the mercies which you enjoy the sweetness and benefit of in common; which, if wanting to one, all the family would be sensible of it. Has not God made a hedge of protection about you and your houses, and all that you have? Job 1. 10. Has he not created a defence upon every "dwelling-place" of Mount Zion, as well as upon her assemblies? Isa. 4. 5. The dreadful alarms of a storm, and the desolations made, as by a fire, once in an age, should make us sensible of our obligations to the divine Providence for our preservation from tempests and fire every day and every night. *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,* and buried in the ruins of our houses. When the whole family comes together safe in the morning from their respective retirements, and when they return safe at night from their respective employments, there having been no disaster, no "adversary," no evil occurrence,—it is so reasonable, and (as I may say) so natural for them to join together in solemn thanksgivings to their great Protector, that I wonder how any who believe in a God, and a Providence, can omit it. Have you not health in your family, sickness kept or taken from the midst of you? Does not God bring plentifully into your hands, and increase your substance? Have you not your table spread, and your cup running over, and manna rained about your tents? and does not the whole family share in the comfort of all this? Shall not then the voice of thanksgiving be in those tabernacles where the voice of rejoicing is? Ps. 118. 15. Is the vine by the house-side fruitful and flourishing, and the olive plants round the table green and growing? Are family-relations comfortable and agreeable, not broken nor imbittered, and shall not that God be acknowledged herein who makes every creature to be that to us that it is? Shall not the God of your mercies, your family-mercies, be the God of your praises, your family-praises, and that daily?

The benefit and honour of your being Christian families, your having in God's house, and within his walls, a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters, and the salvation this brings to your house, furnishes you with abundant matter for joint thanksgivings. *You hath he known above all the families of the earth,* and, therefore, he expects in a special manner to be owned by you. Of all houses, the house of Israel, the house of Aaron, and the house of Levi, have most reason to bless the Lord, and to say, *His mercy endureth for ever.*

[4.] You ought to present your family-petitions for the mercy and grace which your families stand in need of. Daily bread is received by families together, and we are taught not only to pray for it every day, but to pray together for it, saying, *Our Father,* give it *us.* There are affairs and employments which the family is jointly concerned in the success of, and, therefore, should jointly ask of God wisdom for the management of them, and prosperity therein. There are family-cares to be cast upon God by prayer, family-comforts to be sought for, and family-crosses which they should together beg for the sanctification and removal of. Hereby your children will be more effectually possessed with a belief of, and regard to the divine Providence, than by all the instructions you can give them; which will look best in their eye, when thus reduced to practice by your daily acknowleding God in all your ways.

You desire that God will give wisdom and grace to your children, you *travail in birth again till you see Christ formed in them,* you pray for them; it is well, but it is not enough; you must pray with them; let them hear you pray to God for a blessing upon the good instructions and counsels you give them; it may perhaps put them upon praying for themselves, and increase their esteem both of you, and of the good lessons you teach them. You would have your servants diligent and faithful, and this perhaps would help to make them so. Masters do not give to their servants that which is just and equal, if they do not continue in prayer with them. They are put together, Col. 4. 1, 2.

There are some temptations which families, as such, lie open to. Busy families are in temptation to worldliness, and neglect of religious duties; mixed families are in temptation to discord, and mutual jealousies; decaying families are in temptation to distrust, discontent, and indirect courses to help themselves: they should therefore not only watch, but pray together, that they be not overcome by the temptations they are exposed to.

There are family-blessings which God has promised, and for which he will be sought unto, such as those on the house of Obed-edom for *the ark's sake;* or the mercy which St. Paul begs for the house of Onesiphorus, 2 Tim. 1. 16. These joint blessings must be sued out by joint prayers. There is a special blessing which God commands upon families that dwell together in unity, (Ps. 133. 1, 3.) which they must seek for by prayer, and come

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come together to seek for it, in token of that unity which qualifies for it. Where God commands the blessing, we must beg the blessing. God by promise blesses David's house, and, therefore, David by prayer blesses it too, 2 Sam. 6. 20.

[5.] You ought to make family-intercessions for others also. There are families you stand related to, or which by neighbourhood, friendship or acquaintance, you become interested in, and concerned for; and these you should recommend in your prayers to the grace of God, and your family that are joined with you in the alliances should join with you in those prayers. Evil tidings perhaps are received from relations at a distance, which are the grief of the family; God must then be sought unto by the family for succour and deliverance. Some of the branches of the family are, perhaps, in distant countries, and in dangerous circumstances, and you are solicitous about them; it will be a comfort to yourselves, and perhaps of advantage to them, to make mention of them daily in your family-prayers. The benefit of prayer will reach far, because he who hears prayer can extend his hand of power and mercy to the utmost corners of the earth, and to them that are afar off upon the sea.

In the public peace likewise we and our families have peace; and therefore if we forget thee, O Jerusalem, we are unworthy ever to stand in thy courts, or dwell within thy walls. Our families should be witnesses for us that we pray daily for the land of our nativity, and the prosperity of all its interests; that praying every where we make supplication for the Queen, and all in authority, 1 Tim. 2. 2, 8. That we bear upon our hearts the concerns of God's Church abroad, especially the suffering parts of it. Thus keeping up a spiritual communion with all the families that in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus.

In a word, let us go by this rule in our family-devotions; whatever is the matter of our care, let it be the matter of our prayer; and let us allow no care which we cannot in faith spread before God: and whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, let it be the matter of our thanksgiving; and let us withhold our hearts from all those joys which do not dispose us for the duty of praise.

Under this head of family worship I must not omit to recommend to you the singing of psalms in your families, as a part of daily worship, especially sabbath worship. This is a part of religious worship, which participates both of the word and prayer; for therein we are not only to give glory to God, but to teach and admonish one another; it is, therefore, very proper to make it a transition from the one to the other. It will warm and quicken you, refresh and comfort you; and perhaps if you have little children in your houses, they will sooner take notice of it than of any other part of your family-devotion; and some good impressions may thereby be fastened upon them insensibly.

(3.) Keep up family-discipline, that so you may have a complete church in your house, though in little. Reason teaches us that every man should bear rule in his own house, Esth. 1. 22. And since that, as well as other, power is of God, it ought to be employed for God; and they who so rule must be just, ruling in his fear. Joshua looked further than the acts of religious worship, when he made that pious resolution, *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,* Josh. 24. 15. For we do not serve him in sincerity and truth (which is the service he there speaks of, v. 14.) if we and ours serve him only on our knees, and do not take care to serve him in all the instances of a religious conversation. Those only who have clean hands, and a pure heart, are accounted the generation of them that seek God, Ps. 24. 4, 6. And without this those who pretend to seek God daily, do but mock him, Isa. 58. 2.

The authority God has given you over your children and servants is principally designed for this end, that you may thereby engage them for God and godliness. If you use it only to oblige them to do your will, and so to serve your pride; and to do your business, and so to serve your worldliness; you do not answer the great end of your being invested with it: you must use it for God's honour, by it to engage them as far as you can to do the will of God, and mind the business of religion. Holy David not only blessed his houshold, but took care to keep good order in it, as appears by that plan of his family discipline, which we have in the 101st Psalm, a psalm which Mr. Fox tells us that blessed Martyr Bishop Ridley often read to his family, as the rule by which he resolved to govern it.

You are made keepers of the vineyard, be faithful to your trust, and carefully watch over those who are under your charge, knowing you must give account.

[1.] Countenance every thing that is good and praise-worthy in your children and servants. It is as much your duty to commend and encourage those in your family who do well, as to reprove and admonish those who do amiss; and if you take delight only in blaming that which is culpable, and are backward to praise that which is laudable, you give occasion to suspect something of an ill nature, not becoming a good man, much less a good Christian. It should be a trouble to us when we have a reproof to give, but a pleasure to us to say with the apostle, (1 Cor. 11. 2.) *Now I praise you.*

Most people will be easier led than driven, and we all love to be spoken fair to: when you see any thing that is hopeful and promising in your inferiors, any thing of a towardly and tractable disposition, much more any thing of a pious affection to the things of God, you should contrive to encourage it. Smile upon them when you see them set their faces heavenwards, and take the first opportunity to let them know you observe it, and are well pleased with it, and do not despise the day of small things. This will quicken them to continue and abound in that which is good, it will hearten them against the difficulties they see in their

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their way, and, perhaps, may turn the wavering, trembling scale the right way, and effectually determine their resolutions to cleave to the Lord. When you see them forward to come to family-worship, attentive to the word, devout in prayer, industrious to get knowledge, afraid of sin, and careful to do their duty, let them have the praise of it, for you have the comfort of it, and God must have all the glory. Draw them with the cords of a man, hold them with the bands of love; so shall your rebukes, when they are necessary, be the more acceptable and effectual. The great Shepherd gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads them; and so should you.

[2.] Discountenance every thing that is evil in your children and servants. Use your authority for the preventing of sin, and the suppressing of every root of bitterness, lest it spring up, and trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Frown upon every thing that brings sin into your families, and introduces any ill words, or ill practices. Pride and passion, strife and contention, idleness and intemperance, lying and slandering, these are sins which you must not connive at, nor suffer to go without a rebuke. If you return to the Almighty, this among other things is required of you, that you *put away iniquity*, all iniquity, these and other the like iniquities, *far from your tabernacle*, Job 22. 23. Make it to appear, that in the government of your families you are more jealous for God's honour, than for your own authority and interest; and shew yourselves more displeased at that which is an offence to God, than at that which is only an affront or damage to yourselves.

You must indeed be careful not to provoke your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged; and as to your servants, it is your duty to "forbear or moderate threatening:" yet you must also with holy zeal and resolution, and the meekness of wisdom, keep good order in your families, and set no wicked thing before their eyes, but witness against it. *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* Be afraid of having wicked servants in your houses, lest your children learn their way, and get a snare to their souls. Drive away with an angry countenance all that evil communication which corrupts good manners, that your houses may be habitations of righteousness, and sin may never find shelter in them.

I come now (II.) to offer some motives to persuade you thus to turn your families into little churches. And O that I could find out acceptable words, with which to reason with you, so as to prevail! *Suffer me a little, and I will shew you* what is to be said *on God's behalf*, which is worth your consideration.

1. If your families be little churches, God will come to you, and dwell with you in them; for he has said concerning the Church, *This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell.* It is a very desirable thing to have the gracious presence of God with us in our families, that presence which is promised where two or three are gathered together in his name. This was it that David was so desirous of, (Ps. 101. 2.) *O when wilt thou come unto me!* His palace, his court, would be as a prison, as a dungeon to him, if God did not come to him, and dwell with him in it; and cannot your hearts witness to this desire, you who have houses of your own, would you not have God come to you, and dwell with you in them? Invite him then, beg his presence, court his stay. Nay, he invites himself to your houses by the offers of his favour and grace; *Behold he stands at your door and knocks:* it is the voice of your beloved, open to him, and bid him welcome; meet him with your "Hosannas, blessed is he that cometh." He comes peaceably, he brings a blessing with him, a blessing which he will cause to rest upon the habitations of the righteous, Ezek. 44. 30. He will command a blessing, which shall amount to no less than *life for evermore*, Ps. 133. 3. This presence and blessing of God will make your relations comfortable, your affairs successful, your enjoyments sweet; and behold by it all things are made clean to you. This will make your family comforts double comforts, and your family crosses but half crosses; it will turn a tent into a temple, a cottage into a palace. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth*, are the houses in which God dwells.

Now the way to have God's presence with you in your houses is to furnish them for his entertainment. Thus the good Shunamite invited the prophet Elisha to the chamber she had prepared for him, by accommodating him there with a bed and a table, a stool and a candlestick, 2 Kin. 4. 10. Would you furnish your houses for the presence of God, it is not expected that you furnish them as his tabernacle was of old furnished, with blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, but set up and keep up for him a throne and an altar, that from the altar you and yours may give glory to him, and from the throne he may give law to you and yours; and then you may be sure of his presence and blessing, and may solace yourselves from day to day in the comfort of it. God will be with you in a way of mercy while you are with him in a way of duty; *If you seek him he will be found of you.* The secret of God shall be in your tabernacle, as it was on Job's, (ch. 29. 4.) as it is with the righteous, Ps. 25. 14. Pro. 3. 32, 33.

2. If you make your houses little churches, God will make them little sanctuaries; nay, he will himself be to you as a little sanctuary, Ezek. 11. 16. The way to be safe in your houses, is to keep up religion and the fear of God in your houses; so shall you dwell on high, and *the place of your defence shall be the munition of rocks*, Isa. 33. 16. The Law looks upon a man's house as his castle, Religion makes it truly so. If God's grace be the "glory in the midst" of the house, his Providence will make a wall of fire round about it, Zech. 2. 5. Satan found it to his confusion that God made a hedge about pious Job, about his house, and about all that he had on every side, so that he could not find one gap by which to break in upon him, Job 1. 10. Every dwelling-place of Mount Sion shall be protected as the tabernacle was in the wilderness, for God has promised to create upon it a cloud and smoke

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smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, which shall be a defence upon all the glory, Isa. 4. 5. If we thus dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life, by making *our* houses *his* houses, we shall be hid in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide us, Ps. 27. 4, 5.

Wherever we encamp, under the banner of Christ, the angels of God will encamp round about us, and pitch their tents where we pitch ours; and we little think how much we owe to the ministration of the good angels, that we and ours are preserved from the malice of evil angels, who are continually seeking to do mischief to good people. There are terrors that fly by night and by day, which they only who abide under the shadow of the Almighty can promise themselves to be safe from, Ps. 91. 1, 5. Would you insure your houses by the best policy of insurance, turn them into churches, and then they shall be taken under the special protection of him who keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps; and if any damage come to them, it shall be made up in grace and glory. The way of duty is without doubt the way of safety.

Praying families are kept from more mischiefs than they themselves are aware of. They are not always sensible of the distinction which a kind Providence makes between them and others; though God is pleased sometimes to make it remarkable, as in the story which is credibly related of a certain village in the Canton of Bern in Switzerland, consisting of ninety houses, which in the year 1584, were all destroyed by an earthquake, except one house, in which the good man and his family were at that time together praying. That promise is sure to all the seed of faithful Abraham, *Fear not, I am thy shield,* Gen. 15. 1. Wisdom herself has past her word for it, (Pro. 1. 33.) *Whoso hearkeneth to me,* wherever he dwells, he *shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from* all real evil itself, and from the amazing, tormenting *fear of evil.* Nothing can hurt, nothing needs frighten those whom God protects.

3. If you have not a church in your house, it is to be feared that Satan will have a seat there. If religion do not rule in your families, sin and wickedness will rule there. *I know where thou dwellest* (says Christ to the angel of the church of Pergamos, Rev. 2. 13.) *even where Satan's seat is;* that was his affliction: but there are many whose sin it is; by their irreligion and immorality they allow Satan a seat in their houses, and that seat a throne. They are very willing that the strong man armed should keep his palace there, and that his goods should be at peace; and the surest way to prevent this is by setting up a church in the house. It is commonly said, that where God has a church, the Devil will have his chapel; but it may more truly be said in this case, where God has not a church, the Devil will have his chapel. If the unclean Spirit find the house in this sense empty, empty of good, though it be swept and garnished, he *taketh to himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.*

Terrible stories have been told of houses haunted by the Devil, and of the fear people have had of dwelling in such houses; verily those houses in which rioting and drunkenness reign, in which swearing and cursing are the language of the house, or in which the more spiritual wickednesses of pride, malice, covetousness and deceit have the ascendancy, may truly be said to be haunted by the Devil, and they are most uncomfortable houses for any man to live in: they are holds of foul spirits, and cages of unclean and hateful birds, even as Babylon the Great will be when it is fallen, Rev. 18. 2.

Now the way to keep sin out of the house is to keep up religion in the house, which will be the most effectual antidote against Satan's poison. When Abraham thought concerning Abimelech's house, *Surely the fear of God is not in this place,* he concluded no less but *they will slay me for my wife's sake,* Gen. 20. 11. Where no fear of God is, no reading, no praying, no devotion, what can one expect but all that is bad? Where there is impiety there will be immorality; they who restrain prayer, cast off fear, Job 15. 4. But if religious worship have its place in the house, it may be hoped that vice will not have a place there. There is much of truth in that saying of good Mr. Dod, "Either praying will make a man give over sinning, or sinning will make a man give over praying." There remains some hope concerning those who are otherwise bad, as long as they keep up prayer. Though there be a struggle between Christ and Belial in your houses, and the insults of sin and Satan are daring and threatening, yet as long as religion keeps the field, and the weapons of its warfare are made use of, we may hope the enemy will lose ground.

4. A church in the house will make it very comfortable to yourselves. Nothing more agreeable to a gracious soul than constant communion with a gracious God; it is the *One Thing* it desires, to *dwell in the house of the Lord;* here it is as in its element, it is its rest for ever. If, therefore, our houses be houses of the Lord, we shall for that reason love home, reckoning our daily devotion the sweetest of our daily delights; and our family-worship the most valuable of our family-comforts. This will sanctify to us all the conveniences of our houses, and reconcile us to the inconveniences of it. What are Solomon's gardens, and orchards, and pools of water, and other delights of the sons of men, (Ecc. 2. 5, 6, 8.) in comparison with these delights of the children of God?

Family-religion will help to make our family-relations comfortable to us, by promoting love, preventing quarrels, and extinguishing heats that may at any time happen. A family living in the fear of God, and joining daily in religious worship, truly enjoys itself; *Behold how good, and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren* thus to *dwell together;* it is not only like ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart, but like the holy ointment, the holy perfume, wherewith Aaron the saint of the Lord was consecrated: not only like the common dew to the grass, but like the dew which descends upon the mountains of Sion, the holy

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holy mountains, Ps. 133. 1, 2, 3. The communion of saints in that which is the work of saints, is without doubt the most pleasant communion here on earth, and the liveliest representation, and surest pledge of those everlasting joys which are the happiness of the spirits of just men made perfect, and the hopes of holy souls in this imperfect state.

Family religion will make the affairs of the family successful; and though they may not in every thing issue to our mind, yet we may by faith foresee that they will at last issue to our good. If this beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and our families, it will prosper the work of our hands unto us, yea, the work of our hands it will establish; or however, it will establish our hearts in that comfort which makes every thing that occurs easy, Ps. 90. 17. 112. 8.

We cannot suppose our mountain to stand so strong but that it will be moved; trouble in the flesh we must expect, and affliction in that from which we promise ourselves most comfort; and when the divine Providence makes our houses, houses of mourning, then it will be comfortable to have them houses of prayer, and to have had them so before. When sickness, and sorrow, and death come into our families, (and sooner or later they will come) it is good that they should find the wheels of prayer going, and the family accustomed to seek God; for if we are then to begin this good work when distress forces us to it, we shall drive heavily in it. They who pray constantly when they are well, may pray comfortably when they are sick.

5. A church in the house will be a good legacy, nay, it will be a good inheritance, to be left to your children after you. Reason directs us to consult the welfare of posterity, and to lay up in store a good foundation for those who shall come after us to build upon; and we cannot do this better than by keeping up religion in our houses. A family-altar will be the best entail; your children will for this rise up, and call you blessed, and it may be hoped they will be praising God for you, and praising God like you, here on earth, when you are praising him in Heaven.

You will hereby leave your children the benefit of many prayers put up to Heaven for them, which will be kept (as it were) upon the file there, to be answered to their comfort, when you are silent in the dust. It is true of prayer, what we say of winter, "It never rots in the skies:" The seed of Jacob know they do not seek in vain, though perhaps they live not to see their prayers answered. Some good Christians who have made conscience of praying daily with and for their children, have been encouraged to hope that the children of so many prayers should not miscarry at last: and thus encouraged, Joseph's dying word has been the language of many a dying Christian's faith, *I die, but God will surely visit you*, Gen. 50. 24. I have heard of a hopeful son, who said he valued his interest in his pious father's prayer far more than his interest in his estate, though a considerable one.

You will likewise hereby leave your children a good example, which you may hope they will follow when they come into houses of their own. The usage and practice of your families is commonly transmitted from one generation to another; bad customs are many times thus entailed: they who burnt incense to the Queen of Heaven, learnt it of their fathers, Jer. 44. 17. And a vain conversation was thus received by tradition, 1 Pet. 1. 18. And why may not good customs be in like manner handed down to posterity? Thus we should make known the ways of God to our children, that they may arise and declare them to their children, Ps. 78. 6. and religion may become an heir-loom in our families; let your children be able to say, when they are tempted to sit loose to religion, That it was the way of their family, the good old way, in which their fathers walked, and in which they themselves were educated and trained up: and with this they may answer him who reproaches them. Let family-worship, besides all its other pleas for itself, be able in your houses to plead prescription. And though to the acceptableness of the service it is requisite that it be done from a higher and better principle than purely to keep up the custom of the family, yet better so than not at all: and the form of godliness may by the grace of God at length prove the happy vehicle of its power; and dry bones, whilst unburied, may be made to live. Thus *a good man leaves an inheritance to his children*; and *the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

6. A church in the house will contribute very much to the prosperity of the Church of God in the nation. Family religion, if that prevail, will put a face of religion upon the land, and very much advance the beauty and peace of our English Jerusalem. This is that which I hope we are all hearty well-wishers to; setting aside the consideration of parties, and separate interests, and burying all names of distinction in the grave of Christian charity, we earnestly desire to see true catholic Christianity, and serious godliness in the power of it, prevailing and flourishing in our land; to see knowledge filling the land, as the waters cover the sea; to see holiness and love giving law, and triumphing over sin and strife; we would see cause to call your city *A city of righteousness, A faithful city*, its *walls salvation, and its gates praise.* Now all this would be effected, if family religion were generally set up, and kept up.

When the wall was to be built about Jerusalem, it was presently done by this expedient, every one undertook to repair over against his own house. See Neh. 3. 10, &c. And if ever the decayed walls of the gospel Jerusalem be built up, it must be by the same method. Every one must sweep before his own door, and then the street will be clean. If there were a church in every house, there would be such a church in our land as would make it a praise throughout the whole earth. We cannot better serve our country than by keeping up religion in our families.

Let families be well catechised, and then the public preaching of the word will be the more profitable, and the more successful. For want of this, when we speak ever so plainly of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, to the most we do but speak parables. *The book* of the Lord is delivered to them who are not catechised, saying, *Read this*, and they say *We are not*

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learned; learned enough in other things, but not in the one thing needful, Isa. 29. 12. But our work is easy with those who from their childhood have known the Holy Scriptures.

If every family were a praying family, public prayers would be the better joined in, more intelligently, and more affectionately; for the more we are used to prayer, the more expert we shall be in that holy and divine art of "entering into the holiest" in that duty. And public reproofs and admonitions would be as a *nail in a sure place*, if masters of families would second them with their family discipline, and so clench those nails.

Religious families are blessings to the neighbourhood they live in, at least by their prayers. A good man thus becomes a public good, and it is his ambition to be so. Though he see his children's children, he has small joy of that if he do not see peace upon Israel, (Ps. 128. 5, 6.) And therefore postponing all his own interests, and satisfactions, he sets himself to seek the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life. Happy were we if we had many such. That which now remains is to address myself to you upon the whole matter by way of exhortation; and I pray you let my counsel be acceptable to you; and while I endeavour to give every one his portion, let your consciences assist me herein, and take to yourselves that which belongs to you.

III. The Application.

I. Let those masters of families who have hitherto lived in the neglect of family-religion be persuaded now to set it up, and henceforward to make conscience of it. I know it is hard to persuade people to begin even a good work that they have not been used to; yet, if God by his grace apply this word, who can tell but some may be wrought upon to comply with the design of it? We have no ill design in urging you to this part of your duty: we aim not at the advantage of a party, but purely at the prosperity of your families. We are sure we have reason on our side, and if you will but suffer that to rule you, we shall gain our point; and you will all go home firmly resolved, as Joshua was, that whatever others do themselves, and whatever they say of you, *You and your houses will serve the Lord.* God put it into, and keep it in the imagination of the thought of your heart, and establish your way therein before him!

Proceed in the right method; first set up Christ upon the throne in your hearts, and then set up a Church for Christ in your house. Let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, and then let him dwell in your houses; you do not begin at the right end of your work, if you do not first give your ownselves unto the Lord; God had respect first to Abel, and then to his offering. Let the fear and love of God rule in your hearts, and have a commanding sway and empire there, and then set up an altar for God in your tents; for you cannot do that acceptably till you have first consecrated yourselves as spiritual Priests to God, to serve at that altar.

And when your hearts, like Lydia's, are opened to Christ, let your house, like hers, be opened to him too, Acts 16. 14, 15. Let there be churches in all your houses; let those who have the stateliest, richest, and best furnished houses, reckon a Church in them to be their best ornament: let those who have houses of the greatest care and business, reckon family-religion their best employment; and not neglect the one thing needful, while they are careful and cumbered about many things: nor let those who have close and mean habitations be discouraged; the ark of God long dwelt in curtains. Your dwelling is not so strait, but you may find room for a Church in it. Church-work is often chargeable, but you may do this Church-work cheap: you need not make silver shrines, as they did for Diana, nor lavish gold out of the bag, as idolaters did in the service of their gods, (Isa. 46. 6.) no, *An altar of earth shall you make to your God,* Exo. 20. 24.) and he will accept it. Church-work is accustomed to be slow work, but you may do this quickly. Put on resolution, and you may set up this tabernacle to-night before to-morrow.

Would you keep up your authority in your family? You cannot do it better than by keeping up religion in your family. If ever a master of a family looks great, truly great, it is when he is going before his house in the service of God, and presiding among them in holy things. Then he shews himself worthy of double honour, when he teaches them the good knowledge of the Lord, and is their mouth to God in prayer, blessing them in the name of God.

Would you have your family-relations comfortable, your affairs successful, and give an evidence of your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ? Would you live in God's fear, and die in his favour, and escape that curse which is entailed upon prayerless families? let religion in the power of it have its due place, that is, the uppermost place in your houses.

Many objections your own corrupt hearts will make against building these churches, but they will all appear frivolous and trifling to a pious mind that is stedfastly resolved for God and godliness; you will never go on in your way to heaven, if you will be frightened by lions in the street. Whatever is the difficulty you dread, the discouragement you apprehend in it, I am confident it is not insuperable, it is not unanswerable. But *he that observes the wind shall not sow, and he that regards the clouds shall not reap.*

Be not loath to begin a new custom, if it be a good custom, especially if it be a duty, (as certainly this is) which, while you continue in the neglect of, you live in sin; for omissions are sins, and must come into judgment. It may be that you have been convinced that you ought to worship God in your families, and that it is a good thing to do so; but you have put it off to some more convenient season. Will you now at last take occasion from this sermon to begin it? And do not defer so good a work any longer. The present season is without doubt the most convenient season.

Begin

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Begin this day; let this be the day of your laying the foundation of the Lord's temple in your house; and then consider, from this day and upward—as God by the prophet reasons with the people who neglected to build the temple, Hag. 2.18, 19. take notice—whether God do not from this day remarkably bless you in all that you have and do.

Plead not your own weakness and inability to perform family worship; make use of the helps that are provided for you: Do as well as you can when you cannot do so well as you would, and God will accept of you. You willingly write what is necessary for the carrying on of your trade, though you cannot write so fine a hand as some others can; and will you not be as wise in the work of your Christian calling, to do your best, though it be far short of the best, rather than not do it at all? To him who has but one talent, and trades with that, more shall be given; but from him who buries it, it shall be taken away. Be at some pains to make the Scriptures familiar to you, especially David's Psalms, and then you cannot be to seek for a variety of apt expressions proper to be used in prayer, for they will be always at your right hand. *Take with you* those *words, words which the Holy Ghost teaches,* for you cannot find more acceptable words.

And now shall I prevail with you in this matter? I am loath to leave you unresolved, or but almost persuaded; I beg of you for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for your own precious souls' sake, and for the children's sake of your own bodies, that you will live no longer in the neglect of so great, and necessary, and comfortable a duty as this of family-worship is. When we press upon you the more inward duties of faith and love, and the fear of God, it cannot be so evident that we succeed in our errand as it may be in this. It is certain that you get no good by this sermon—but it is wholly lost upon you—if after you have heard it, or read it, you continue in the neglect of family-religion; and if still you "cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God." Your families will be witnesses against you that this work was undone; and this sermon will witness against you that it was not for want of being called to do it, but for want of a heart to do it when you were called. But I hope better things of you, my brethren, and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak.

2. Let those who have kept up family-worship formerly, but of late have left it off, be persuaded to revive it. This, perhaps, is the case of some of you; you remember the kindness of your youth, and the love of your espousals; time was when you sought God daily, and delighted to know his ways, as families who did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of your God: but now it is otherwise. The altar of the Lord is broken down and neglected, the daily sacrifice is ceased; and God has kept an account how many days it has ceased, whether you have or no. (Dan. 8. 13, 14.) Now God comes into your houses seeking fruit, but he finds none, or next to none: you are so eager in your worldly pursuits, that you have neither hearts nor time for religious exercises. You began at first frequently to omit the service, and a small matter served for an excuse to put it by, and so by degrees it came to nothing.

O that those who have thus left their first love would now remember whence they are fallen, and repent, and do their first works. Enquire how this good work came to be neglected: was it not because your love to God cooled, and the love of the world prevailed? Have you not found a manifest decay in the prosperity of your souls since you let fall this good work? Has not sin got ground in your hearts and in your houses? And though when you dropt your family-worship you promised yourselves that you would make it up in secret worship, because you were not willing to allow yourselves time for both, yet have you not declined in that also? Are you not grown less frequent, and less fervent in your closet devotions too? Where is now the blessedness you have formerly spoken of? I beseech you to lay out yourselves to retrieve it in time. Say as that penitent adultress, (Hos. 2. 7.) *I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.* Cleanse the sanctuary, and put away the strange gods: is money the god, or the belly the god, that has gained possession of thy heart and house? Whatever it is cast it out. Repair the altar of the Lord, and begin again the daily sacrifice and oblation. Light the lamps again, and burn the incense. Rear up the Tabernacle of David which is fallen down, lengthen its cords, and strengthen its stakes, and resolve it shall never be neglected again as it has been. Perhaps you and your families have been manifestly under the rebukes of Providence, since you left off your duty,—and Jacob was, while he neglected to pay his vow; I beseech you hear at length the voice of the rod, and of him who has appointed it, for it reminds you of your forgotten vows, saying, *Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there,* Gen. 35. 1. Let the place thou dwellest in ever be a Bethel, so shall God dwell with thee there.

3. Let those who are remiss and negligent in their family-worship be awakened to more zeal and constancy. Some of you perhaps have a church in your house, but it is not a flourishing church; it is like the church of Laodicea, neither cold nor hot; or like the church of Sardis, in which the things that remain are ready to die: so that it hath little more than a name to live. Something of this work of the Lord is done for fashion-sake, but it is done deceitfully: you have in your flock a male, but you vow and sacrifice unto the Lord a corrupt thing: you grow "customary" in your accustomed services, and bring the torn and the blind, the lame and the sick, for sacrifice; and you offer that to your God which you would scorn to offer to your governor: and though it is but little you do for the church in your house, you think that too much, and say, *Behold what a weariness is it!* You put it off with a small and inconsiderable scantling of your day, and that the dregs and refuse of it. You can spare no time at all for it in the morning, nor any in the evening, till you are half asleep. It is thrust into a corner, and almost lost in a croud of worldly business and carnal conversation. When it is done, it is done so slightly,

in

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in so much haste, and with so little reverence, that it makes no impression upon yourselves or your families. The bible lies ready, but you have no time to read: your servants are otherwise employed, and you think it is no matter for calling them in: you yourselves can take up with a "word or two of prayer," or rest in a lifeless, heartless tale of words. Thus it is every day, and perhaps little better on the Lord's Day; no repetition, no catechising, no singing of psalms, or none to any purpose.

Is it thus with any of your families? Is this the present state of the church in your house? My brethren, *These things ought not to be so.* It is not enough that you do that which is good, but you must do it well. God and religion have in effect no place in your hearts or houses, if they have not the innermost and the uppermost place. Christ will come no whither to be an underling; he is not a guest to be set behind the door. What comfort, what benefit can you promise to yourselves from such trifling services as these; from an empty form of godliness without the power of it?

I beseech you, sirs, make a business of your family-religion, and not a by-business. Let it be your pleasure and delight, and not a task and drudgery. Contrive your affairs so that the most convenient time may be allotted both morning and evening for your family-worship, so that you may not be unfit for it, or disturbed and straitened in it; herein wisdom is profitable to direct. Address yourselves to it with reverence and seriousness, and a solemn pause; that those who join with you may see and say, that God is with you of a truth, and may be struck thereby into a like holy awe. You need not be long in the service, but you ought to be lively in it; not slothful in this business, because it is the business for God and your souls, but *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.*

4. Let those who have a church in their house, be very careful to adorn and beautify it in their conversation. If you pray in your families, and read the Scriptures, and sing psalms, and yet are passionate and froward with your relations, quarrelsome and contentious with your neighbours, unjust and deceitful in your dealings, intemperate and given to tippling, or allow yourselves in any other sinful way, you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other. Your prayers will be an abomination to God, and to good men too, if they be thus polluted. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.*

See that you be universal in your religion, that it may appear that you are sincere in it. Shew that you believe a reality in it, by acting always under the commanding power and influence of it. Be not Christians upon your knees, and Jews in your shops. While you seem saints in your devotions, prove not yourselves sinners in your conversations. Having begun the day in the fear of God, be in that fear all the day long. Let the example you set your families be throughout good, and by it teach them not only to read and pray, for that is but half their work, but by it teach them to be meek and humble, sober and temperate, loving and peaceable, just and honest; so shall you adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and those who will not be won by the word, shall be won by your conversation. Your family worship is an honour to you, see to it that neither you nor yours be in any thing a disgrace to it.

5. Let those who are setting out in the world set up a church in their house at first, and not defer it. Plead not youth and bashfulness; if you have confidence enough to rule a family, I hope you have confidence enough to pray with a family. Say not, *The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built,* as they did who *dwelt in their cieled houses,* while God's house lay waste, Hag. 1. 2, 4. It ought to be built immediately; and the longer you put it off, the more difficulty there will be in the doing of it, and the more danger that it will never be done.

Now you are beginning the world (as you call it) is it not your wisdom as well as duty to begin with God? Can you begin better? Or can you expect to prosper if you do not begin thus? The fuller your heads are of care about setting up house, and setting up shop, and settling in both, the more need you have of daily prayer, that by it you may cast your care on God, and fetch in wisdom and direction from on high.

6. In all your removals be sure you take the "church in your house" along with you. Abraham often removed his tent, but wherever he pitched it, there the first thing he did was to build an altar. It is observable concerning Aquila and Priscilla, of whose pious family my text speaks, that when St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans they were at Rome; for he sends salutations to them thither, and there it is said they had a church in their house, Rom. 16. 5. But now when he wrote this Epistle to the Corinthians they were at Ephesus, for thence it should seem this Epistle bore date, and here he sends salutations from them; and at Ephesus also they had a church in their house. As wherever we go ourselves we must take our religion with us; so wherever we take our families, or part of them, we must take our family-religion with us; for in all places we need divine protection, and experience divine goodness. *I will therefore that men pray every where.*

When you are in your city-houses, let not the business of them crowd out your family-religion; nor let the diversions of your country-houses indispose your minds to these serious exercises. That care and that pleasure are unseasonable and inordinate, which leave you not both heart and time to attend the service of the church in your house.

Let me here be an advocate also for those families whose masters are often absent from them, for their health or pleasure, especially on the Lord's day, or long absent upon business: and let me beg these absent masters to consider, with whom they leave those few sheep in the wilderness, (1 Sam. 17. 28.) and whether they do not leave them neglected and exposed. Perhaps there is not a just cause for your absence so much, nor can you give a good answer to that question, *What dost thou here, Elijah?* But if there be a just cause, you ought to take care that the church in your house be not neglected when you are abroad, but that

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that the work be done when you are not at home to do it.

7. Let inferior relatives help to promote religion in the families where they are. If family-worship be not kept up in the houses where you live, let so much the more be done in your closets for God and your souls: if it be, yet think not that will excuse you from secret worship: all is little enough to keep up the life of religion in your hearts, and help you forward toward heaven.

Let the children of praying parents, and the servants of praying masters, account it a great privilege to live in houses that have churches in them, and be careful to improve that privilege. Be you also ready to every good work; make the religious exercises of your family easy and pleasant to those who perform them, by shewing yourselves forward to attend on them, and careful to attend to them; for your backwardness and carelessness, will be their greatest discouragement. Let your lives also be a credit to good education, and make it appear to all with whom you converse, that you are every way the better for living in religious families.

8. Let solitary people, who are not engaged in families, have churches in their chambers, churches in their closets. When every man repaired the wall of Jerusalem over against his own house, we read of one that repaired over against his chamber, Neh. 3. 30. Those who live alone out of the way of family worship, ought to take so much the more time for their secret worship, and, if possible, add the more solemnity to it. You have not families to read the Scriptures to, read them so much the more to yourselves. You have not children and servants to catechise, nor parents or masters to be catechised by; catechise yourselves then, that you may hold fast the form of sound words, which you have received. *Exhort one another;* so we read it, (Heb. 3. 13.) παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς,—*Exhort yourselves,* so it might as well be read. You are not made keepers of the vineyards, and therefore the greater is your shame if your own vineyard you do not keep. When you are alone, yet you are not alone, for the Father is with you, to observe what you do, and to own and accept you, if you do well.

9. Let those who are to chuse a settlement, consult the welfare of their souls in the choice. If a church in the house be so necessary, so comfortable, then be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers, who will have no inclination for the church in the house, nor assist in the support of it, but instead of building this house, pluck it down with their hands, Pro. 14. 1. Let apprenticeships and other services be chosen by this rule, that "that is best for us which is best for our souls;" and therefore it is our interest to go with those, and be with those, with whom God is, Zech. 8. 23. When Lot was to chuse a habitation, he was determined therein purely by secular advantages, (Gen. 13. 11, 13.) and God justly corrected his sensual choice, for he never had a quiet day in the Sodom he chose, till he was fired out of it. The Jewish writers tell of one of their devout rabbins, who being courted to dwell in a place which was otherwise well accommodated, but had no synagogue near, he utterly refused to accept the invitation, and gave that text for his reason, (Ps. 119. 72.) *The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.*

10. Let religious families keep up friendship and fellowship with each other, and as they have opportunity assist one another in doing good. The communion of churches has always been accounted their beauty, strength, and comfort, and so is the communion of these domestic churches. We find here, and in other of St. Paul's epistles, kind salutations sent to and from the houses that had churches in them. Religious families should greet one another, visit one another, love one another, pray for one another, and as becomes households of faith, do all the good they can one to another; forasmuch as they all meet daily at the same throne of grace, and hope to meet shortly at the same throne of glory, to be no more, as they are now, divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel.

Lastly, Let those houses that have churches in them; flourishing churches, have comfort in them. Is religion in the power of it uppermost in your houses? And are you and your's serving the Lord, serving him daily? Go on and prosper, for the Lord is with you, while you be with him. See your houses under the protection and blessing of Heaven, and be assured that all things shall work together for good to you. Make it to appear by your holy cheerfulness that you find God a good master, Wisdom's ways pleasantness, and her paths peace; and that you see no reason to envy those who spend their days in carnal mirth, for you are acquainted with better pleasures than any they can pretend to.

Are your houses on earth God's houses? Are they dedicated to him, and employed for him? Be of good comfort, his house in heaven shall be your's shortly: *In my father's house there are many mansions;* and there is one, you may be sure, for each of you, who thus *by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality.*

A SERMON

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A

SERMON

PREACHED TO THE

SOCIETIES FOR REFORMATION OF MANNERS,

AT SALTERS-HALL, ON MONDAY, JUNE 30, 1712.

PSALM 7. 9.

O let the Wickedness of the Wicked come to an End; but establish the Just.

IN all your religious assemblies, it is as much the business of your ministers, who preside in them, to pray with you, as to preach to you; to be your mouth to God, as to be God's mouth to you; *He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee,*[a] is as natural an inference, as he is a prophet, and he shall teach thee: and in these two the Apostles themselves summed up the business of their apostolical office, *We will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word:*[b] and those, who, herein obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful, are their most genuine sons and successors: and it is as much your business in your attendance on religious assemblies, seriously to join in the errands they go upon to the throne of God's grace, as dutifully to receive the messages they bring from the throne of God's government: always remembering that God speaks to us, and we to him, by his Son.

In this religious assembly of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, we having now, by solemn prayer, committed them and their pious undertaking to God, having humbly begged the continuance of his presence with them, and his favour to them, to carry them on and succeed them in it, and make it a means of great good to our land,—I look upon it that the work of the day is more than half done; for I am sure God's grace can do wonders without any services of our's; but the best of our services can do nothing without his grace; which we have as necessary and constant a dependance upon for all the good that is to be done by us, and all the good effect of it upon others, as we have upon the Providence of God, for the actions of the natural life; and that grace must be fetched in by prayer. If therefore, the God of Israel grant us the things we have now requested of him, our point is gained; your work goes on successfully.

And, therefore, I see not how I can better befriend the Societies, nor do more to serve their pious design, in what remains of my work at this time, than by doing what I can to engage the continuance of the prayers of all who hear me this day, for the prosperity of them and it; and that is what I aim at in the choice of this text.

The undertaking is bold and great, and one in which the spirit of a truly Christian hero appears, as much as in any thing, a catholic spirit; the spirit of one who seeks the things of Christ more than his own things: it has a direct tendency to the advancing of the honour of God, and of his kingdom among men, and the interests of that holy religion which we make a profession of, and the weakening of the Devil's kingdom; it aims at the good of the souls of men, and the welfare of the public: and, therefore, *Men of Israel, help;*[c] help, *by your prayers,*[d] to forward this good work: from this part of the service I am sure there is none can excuse, can exempt themselves; you are all therefore, in this way, summoned "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" it is at your peril if you disobey the summons.

I hope I speak to a praying people; who make conscience of prayer, who make a business of prayer, who dare not live without prayer; (for those who do, live without God in the world;) who would not live without prayer, for it is their delight to approach unto God: I hope I speak to those who pray for the peace of Jerusalem, preferring it before their chief joy; you are not Israelites indeed, if you are not of the generation of them that seek God, and wrestle with him; if you do not seek him, and wrestle with him for the welfare and prosperity of Israel: let me therefore press it upon you with all earnestness, to take this concern of the "reformation of manners" into your daily prayers—alone, and in your families—as those who have sincerely espoused this righteous cause, have laid it near your hearts, and who keep it there, and have an entire dependance upon the almighty grace of God to make it successful.

My text is a prayer, and will be of use to direct us herein; it puts words into our mouths; not many to burthen our memories, but very proper and suited to

[a] Gen. 20. 7. Acts 6. 4.

[c] Acts, 21, 28. [d] 2 Cor. 1. 11.

our

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our purpose, for we are here taught to pray against all sin, and for all saints.

1. We are here taught to pray against all sin, to pray it down; to pray it, if possible, out of the world. *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end!* And in praying against the sin, we pray for the sinners; for whatever makes against the disease, makes for the patient.

Observe with what a pathetic strain of devotion the Psalmist breathes out this petition, and teaches us to do so; *Oh! let it come to an end! when shall it once be?* In prayer, as there should be a fixedness of thought, and a firmness of faith, so there should be a flame and fervour of pious and devout affections. Cold desires do but beg denials: and lifeless wishes are fruitless ones; but it is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much. When Jacob wrestles with God he commences "Israel, a Prince with God." The original word אנא here used to express the emphasis laid upon this request, is sometimes translated *now;* O that the wickedness of the wicked might speedily come to an end; the sooner the better; sometimes it is translated *Obsecro,—I pray thee,* let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; this is that for which I would be very importunate; O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me this thing which I long for!

Some of the critics read it, *Evil shall consume the wicked;* and so it is a prediction of the gradual and final destruction of all impenitent sinners: they who will not be reclaimed shall be consumed; *Evil shall slay the wicked.*[a] Their sin will be their ruin, if they repent not. The Man of Sin, that wicked one, shall be consumed;[b] and we are to pray for the hastening of the day when God will do this, as the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment.

But it is rather to be taken as we read it; it is a prayer, not that the wicked may come to an end, but that their wickedness may; that that may be consumed; let it not only be restrained and curbed, and driven into corners, but let it be utterly abolished, that we may not see it, or hear it, or hear of it, any more. God is calling to mankind from Heaven by his word, *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.* O that sinners would *cease to do evil,* and *learn to do well! Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;* he says to the fools, *Deal not foolishly;* let *him that stole, steal no more:* this is the burthen of every song, *Turn ye, turn ye;* now we must, by our prayers, concur with him herein; as those who are of God's mind; *Amen,* so be it; *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end.* God commands that men forsake their sins; we pray, that he would by his grace turn them from it, as those who are of his mind, and say in sincerity, *Thy will be done.*

2. We are here taught to pray for all saints, for all good people; *But establish the just.* Lord, let not those who are filthy, be filthy still, but let those who are holy, be holy still: let the bad be made good, and the good be kept so, and made better; let the same grace that first made them just, and wrought righteousness in them, secure and carry on that good work in their souls; as the same word of power that first made the world still upholds it.

The conversion of sinners, and the confirmation and edification of saints, are the two great things ministers are to aim at in their praying and preaching; to bring souls to Christ, which will effectually bring their wickedness to an end; and then to build them up in him, which will be an effectual establishment of the just.

Or, by the "just" here we may understand those who are not only just themselves, but like Phineas, execute judgment and justice upon daring criminals, for the staying of the plague. Lord, establish them in their good purposes, and strengthen their hands.

This is the prayer which we at a distance in the country, have many a time put up to God, for you here, and those in other places, who have set their hands to this good work. St. Paul, in his epistles, often tells his friends what it was which he asked of God for them, making mention of them always in his prayers, that they might know what to ask for themselves, and might be encouraged to hope for all that grace from God, which one who had so great an interest at the throne of grace, as Paul had, prayed-for for them; this is that which we desire of God for you, that God would spirit you for your work, by establishing your hearts; and that he would succeed you in it, by bringing the wickedness of the wicked to an end. And we desire that all praying people would frequently put up this prayer to God for you.

It is easy to gather from these words:

That it is, and ought to be, the desire and prayer of all good people, that God by his grace would put an end to the wickedness of the wicked, and establish the just.

Now, 1. This supposes that there are two contrary contesting interests in the world, visibly appearing in most places, that of the wicked, and that of the just; the children of God, who bear his image, and do his will; and the children of the Devil, in whom he works, and who are led captive by him, as all the children of disobedience are. This is a distinction which is as old as Cain and Abel, and will last as long as Heaven and Hell.

Look abroad into the world, and you will see persons of very different characters, the reverse to each other; one would wonder how those of the same nature, education, and conversation, should be so unlike one another. When Solomon is observing that in the course of providence there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, yet at the same time he industriously and very particularly shews, that notwithstanding that, there is a vast difference between them, in the temper of their minds, and the tenor of their lives; for one is clean, and the other unclean; one sacrifices, and the other sacrifices not; one swears, and the other fears an oath.[c] Some make conscience of what they say and do,

[a] Ps. 34. 21. [b] 2 Thess. 2. 8.

[c] Ecc. 9. 2.

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are in care to do right, and afraid of doing amiss; while others live at large, and walk at all adventures. Some are sober and temperate, and keep their appetites in subjection to religion and right reason, while others run to an excess of riot, and wallow in all manner of uncleanness. Some are honest and just in their dealings, while others are false and deceitful, and there is no confidence to be put in them. Some speak the language of Canaan, others the language of Ashdod. Some take time every day to call upon God, and converse with him, and sanctify the Lord's day to his honour, while others cast off fear, and restrain prayer, and make no difference between Sabbath-time and other time. Now which of these two will we recommend ourselves to, herd ourselves with, and cast in our lot among? Which of these will we take for our people, will we associate with of choice, and will we study to conform ourselves to? As our choice is, so will our doom be; and to them whom we take for our people, death will gather us, which if we duly consider, it will be our prayer, *Gather not my soul with sinners.*[a]

Abundance of wicked people there are in this world; it is therefore said to lie in wickedness, the whole world does so.[b] It is strange, it is sad, it is very sad, it is very strange, that among men, who are reasonable creatures, and depending upon their Creator, that there should be so many wicked, who act in a constant contradiction to the right reason of man, and a constant rebellion against the rightful authority of God: but as says the proverb of the ancients, so says the observation and experience of the moderns, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; for do men gather grapes of thorns?* or do they expect good things in the life, from an evil treasure in the heart? No; though *some men's* sins are so artfully concealed and disguised, that it must be left to the day to declare them; and it is only the heart-searching God who can say, *It is iniquity,* it is hypocrisy, even the solemn meeting;[c] and to him the judgment of such sins must be left; yet there are others whose sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment;[d] of which any one may say, as the angel to the Prophet, *This is wickedness;*[e] and wickedness of this kind we may and must in our places witness against. Do I need to tell you what that wickedness of the wicked is, which we must endeavour in our places to put a stop to? Your own hearts will tell you; some of the instances of it, even the heathen were convinced of by natural conscience. You know it is wickedness for men to profane the holy name of God, and by their ludicrous or passionate appeals to him, to make him altogether such a one as themselves; or to abuse themselves, their own bodies, and the gifts of God's providence, and by their drunkenness and uncleanness to make themselves altogether such as the beasts, and more vile. Do I need to tell you who the just are? Your own hearts tell you: they are not those of this or that dividing name or party; no, far be it from us to monopolize the character; for *in every nation,* and under every denomination of Christians, those who *fear God,* and *work righteousness, are accepted of him,*[f] and must be so of us. The just are they who live in the fear of God, and make conscience of rendering what is due to him, to themselves, to all with whom they have to do: these are they whose establishment we should seek.

2. This directs us which of these two interests to espouse, and side with, and make our own; as those who are convinced which is in the right, and which in the wrong, which will make us happy, and which will ruin us; particularly we are directed which of these to serve with our prayers. If we would be found on the Lord's side, in the day of enquiry, we must by our prayers act in concert with the just, and in communion with them, and help to establish them; and in contradiction to the wicked, and their wickedness, which we must do all we can to bring to an end.

For the opening of this I shall endeavour to shew, I. What it is we are directed in the text to desire and pray for. II. Why it is, and ought to be, the desire and prayer of all good Christians. And then make the application.

I. That which we are to desire and pray for, is in short this, That wickedness, that root of bitterness, may be rooted out of this world, and that righteousness, that plant of renown, may be planted and rooted in it. This I say we must desire and pray for; it is not enough in word and tongue to pray for it, but we must sincerely and in heart desire it; nor is it enough in heart to desire it, but we must by prayer offer up our desires to God in the name of Christ, for the plentiful effusions and powerful operations of that grace upon the minds and spirits of men, which are necessary to the effecting of these good works, and the attaining of these good ends; that that grace may be sufficient.

1. We must desire and pray, That God by his grace would bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, to a full end; that by his Spirit, he would counter-work and over-rule that evil spirit, which works and rules in the children of disobedience.

This charity must begin at home; we must in the first place pray, that God by his grace would bring the wickedness that is in our own wicked hearts to an end; that our corruptions may be mortified and subdued, and the power of our inordinate appetites and passions crushed and broken, and that we may be kept from every evil work and way.

But though it must begin at home, it must not end there; we must pray that the wickedness of other wicked people may come to an end, in the places where we live, in the city, in the nation, all the world over.

It must be our Heart's Desire and Prayer,

(1.) That wicked principles may be exploded and abandoned, and that men may be set right in their judgments concerning good and evil, right and wrong, God and themselves, this world and the other; that the beast may be wounded in the head, and that will be a *deadly wound;*[g] that a blow may be given to the

[a] Ps. 26. 9. [b] 1 John 5. 19. [c] Isa. 1. 13.
[d] 1 Tim. 5. 24. [e] Zech. 5. 8.
Acts 10. 35. [g] Rev. 13. 3.

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root of wickedness, by rectifying the mistakes of the understanding; that salt may be cast into the springs, and so the waters may be healed; for this is God's way of gaining the will and affections, by opening the understanding; and it is the regular way, it is coming in by the door. Till the peccant humours in the blood be purged out, in vain is application made to the external eruptions of the disease. Those who are bad, are so upon some bad principles, with which the god of this world has blinded their minds, and till those are conquered and laid aside, the wickedness of the heart and life will not be brought to an end.

O that men may be made to see the folly and falsehood of those atheistical notions and schemes, by which their fear of God, and their dread of sin, and the fatal consequences of it are abated, and by degrees worn off, that they may no longer, as they have done, call good evil, and evil good, put darkness for light, and light for darkness. O that sinners may be convinced of the absurdity of that with which they support themselves in their sinful ways, and are encouraged to say, *They shall have peace though they go on,* and that they may see their mistake before it is too late to have it rectified: O that God's grace would open men's eyes before the flames of hell do it! That the fallacy of that which pretends to wit may be discovered, and made contemptible by that which is real wisdom. The word of God, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, has intimated to us what the principles are that sinners go upon; they say in their heart, *There is no God;*[a] or, *The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it;*[b] He *hideth his face,* and *he will not require it.*[c] Nay, they have the impudence to say, *Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord;*[d] or, *Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?*[e] O that men might be beaten off from these strong holds, and that the hail might sweep away this refuge of lies; and these high thoughts might be captivated and brought into obedience to the power of divine truth. These corrupt principles are commonly concealed, and those who are fond of them are ashamed to own them; I wish the sinners you deal with, could be brought to discover them, and to confess what the tempter suggested to them, when he drew them into his snares; that some course might be taken to inform them better; to give them right thoughts of the differences between good and evil of the holiness and justice of God, the strictness of his law, and to convince them, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment.[f] O that men were brought to shake off the loose thoughts they have of the scriptures, the low thoughts they have of religion and godliness, and the slight thoughts they have of sin, and to receive the truth in the light and love of it.

O that Popery, which is so great a friend to sin, might be known to be, what really it is, a mystery of iniquity, sin in disguise, which when it is revealed, and set in a true light, is soon consumed by the breath of Christ's mouth, his word, and Spirit, and the brightness of the coming[g] of his truth into the soul. Idolatry was always an inlet to immorality and all impiety; and, therefore, it is necessary to the reformation of manners, that the principles upon which we reformed from Popery, be closely and faithfully adhered to, by which the honour of Christ, the authority of the scriptures, and the strictness of the divine law, are supported. These will help to reform the manners of the nation; and in return thereof, the more the manners of the nation are reformed, the better fortified it will be against Popery; for the mystery of faith is best held in pure conscience:[h] our enemies know, that profaneness paves the way to Popery.

(2.) We must desire and pray, that wicked persons may be converted and changed, by the grace of God. Has God given us his grace, and have we experienced the benefit of it? O let us be earnest with him to give it to those who are yet in sin; that thus the wickedness of the wicked might be brought to an end, by the teaching of transgressors the ways of God, and the conversion of sinners unto him:[i] that the public preaching of the word may be effectual for this purpose, and mighty through God for the turning of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; that in the chariot of the everlasting gospel, the Great Redeemer may ride forth conquering and to conquer.

O let us be humbly earnest with God in prayer, that the eyes of the blind may be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that wandering sheep may be sought and saved, and prodigal sons brought to themselves first, and then to their father's house; that God would translate those into the kingdom of his Dear Son, who have been long subjects in the kingdom of darkness. O that they who are Satan's slaves may be the Lord's freemen, and that God would bring their souls out of prison. O that the sea might fly, and Jordan might be driven back, and the rock turned into a fountain of waters at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.[k] O that the Ethiopian might be made to change his skin, and the leopard his spots, and that they might yet at last be brought to do good, who have been accustomed to do evil.[l]

We must not despair concerning the worst; for while there is life, there is hope, and room for prayer: the repentance of Manasseh, and the conversion of Paul, tell us that nothing is too hard for the Almighty grace of God to do. The Corinthians were many of them as bad as the worst, and as vile as the vilest; such were some of you, and yet ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified.[m] Let us, therefore, apply ourselves to Christ, for those who have been long under the power of sin and Satan, as the father of the possessed child in the gospel, *If thou canst do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help them,*[n] O snatch them as brands out of everlasting burnings! O that drunkards and harlots might be made sober and chaste; that

[a] Ps. 14. 1. [b] Ps. 94. 7. [c] Ps. 10. 11, 13. [d] Mal. 2. 17. [e] Rom. 9. 19. [f] Ecc. 11. 9.

[g] 2 Thess. 2. 8. [h] 1 Tim. 3. 9. [i] Ps. 51. 13. [k] Ps. 114. 3, 7, 8. [l] Jer. 13. 23. [m] 1 Cor. 6. 10, 11. [n] Mark 9. 22.

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those who so passionately curse and swear, may be brought as affectionately to pray and praise; that sabbath-breakers might be Sabbath-sanctifiers. O that Satan may be dispossessed of his strong holds, that the prey may be taken from that mighty one, and the unlawful captive may be delivered; that Christ's throne may be set up where the usurper's seat has long been: *With men, this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,* even this. Nay, the worse any are, the more earnestly we should desire and pray for their conversion, not only because otherwise their ruin will be the greater, but because there will be so much the greater joy in heaven for their repentance, more for one of them than for ninety-nine just persons who comparatively need no repentance.[a] How earnest should we be herein, did we consider, that the converting of a soul from sin is the saving of a soul from death.[b]

Those whom you reprove and inform against for their wickedness, it should be with a strong desire for their conversion, and that the trouble you give them may contribute to it; that the uneasiness you put them to, may make them weary and heavy laden under the burden of sin, and willing to get clear of it by coming to Christ. O that the punishing of them might prevent their perishing, and that when they are holden in the cords of affliction, their ear may be open to discipline: let your prayers always accompany your endeavours to reclaim and reform them, that while you are making them examples of your justice, God by his grace may make them monuments of his mercy. When you prosecute them, pray that God would pardon them: *Father forgive them,* and qualify them for forgiveness. And if God forgive them, and let them know that he has forgiven them by a saving change wrought in them, they will not only forgive you this wrong, but will thank you, and thank God for you, as David for Abigail, and for the seasonable stop you gave them, when they were hastening apace to their own ruin.

(3.) We must desire and pray, that wicked practices may be prevented and restrained; that though the root of bitterness be not plucked up, yet that it may not spring up to trouble us, and thereby many should be defiled; and that whatever may lie hid, yet there may not appear any fornicator or profane person among us, as Esau.[c] Let us pray, that if the stream be not turned, yet it may be checked and dammed up, and may not become an overflowing deluge; that though the lion be not turned into a lamb, yet he may be chained up and kept within grates; that though the unclean spirit be not cast out, yet he may be silenced, and not suffered to speak, not suffered to tear. *Est aliquid prodire tenus, si non datur ultra—To this degree he may proceed, but not beyond.* O that God by his grace would restrain the remainder of the wickedness of the wicked, would set bounds to the breaking out of it, as he does to the waves of the sea, *Hitherto shall it come, and no farther:* that though Balaam be still the same he was, yet he may not be suffered to curse Israel: that though Sennacherib has still an inveterate rage against God, yet he may be made to feel that God has a hook in his nose, and a bridle in his jaws.[d] And O that the magistrate who bears the sword might be, as the scripture calls him, *An heir of restraint,*[e] *A terror to evil doers,* and that the proper means used for the suppression of vice and profaneness, may attain the end; so that though sin has blossomed and budded, yet it may not rise up into a rod of wickedness, to oppress the lot of the righteous.[f]

We should desire and pray, that thus far at least the wickedness of the wicked may come to an end, that it may not be committed openly, and that the infection may not spread.

[1.] O let not wickedness be committed publicly and openly, and in the face of the sun, as it were by licence, and with allowance. Let those who will not be persuaded to hate sin, and who cannot blush for it, yet be compelled to forbear it before men; and since they will be as the horse and the mule that have no understanding, let them be held in, as they are, with bit and bridle.[g] Let those who will not by fair reasoning be made ashamed of the sin they have committed, by a due correction be made afraid to commit it again; and if they will not tremble at the wrath of God revealed from Heaven against them, let them be afraid of the civil powers, which bear not the sword in vain.[h] Let all iniquity be made at least to hide her head, and stop her mouth,[i] that if men will not be wrought upon, by ministers' preaching, to break off their sins, yet by the magistrates' acting they may be driven into corners, and if they do things that are not right, they may do them secretly, and so the nation may not bear the guilt and blame of it.[k]

If the laws of God and religion prevail not to be obeyed and submitted to, yet let them not be impudently affronted and bid defiance to: if the wicked will still do wickedly, and will not be made to understand,[l] yet let them not pass without rebuke, and a testimony borne against their wicked ways: let them not be able to make their sin fashionable, nor to bring it into reputation; but let it be made to appear, as it is, odious and scandalous, and that which all wise and good men have a dislike of. If the idols of iniquity be not driven out of the world, and quite abolished, yet let them be cast to the moles and to the bats.[m] If men will be drunk, let them be drunk in the night,[n] and let the works of darkness know and keep their place, but let those who are of the day be sober, and walk honestly, and as becomes them. O that the wickedness of the wicked might thus far at least come to an end, that they may not dare to declare it as Sodom,[o] so as to vex the righteous souls of those about them from day to day, with their filthy conversation.[p] Let the sin be the ruin of the sinner, as certainly it will be, if it be not repented of; but let it not, by going bare-faced and undisturbed, be the reproach of the

a Luke 15. 7. b Jam. 5. 20. c Heb. 12. 15, 16.

d Isa. 37. 28, 29. e Jud. 18. 7. *Marg.* f Ezek. 7. 10, 11. g Ps. 32. 9. h Rom. 13. 4. i Ps. 107. 42. k 2 Kin. 17. 9. l Dan. 12, 10. m Isa. 2. 20. n 1 Thess. 5. 7. o Isa. 3. 9. p 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8, 9.

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nation. Let not the fathers of our country be such as Eli was to his family, whose sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not;[a] but let it ever be said, to the honour of our land, to the honour of your city, that though there be found those who boldly bend their tongues like their bow for lies, yet there are found those likewise who are valiant for the truth in the earth.[b] And though there are *horns, four horns,* that attempt to scatter Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, to run down all that is sacred and just, yet there are those who lift up the head against them, there are *four carpenters* who come to break these horns, and to cast them out;[c] that the horns of the wicked being cut off (though their heads be not) the horns of the righteous may be exalted.[d]

[2.] O let not the wickedness of the wicked be propagated, so as to infect others! Let this plague die with those who are dying of it, because they will die! but O let the contagion be kept from spreading; Though multitudes drop into the pit daily, yet let not the bills of this mortality rise; though things are bad, let them not grow worse. If the sinners themselves will not be persuaded to leave, yet let not those about them be persuaded to learn their pernicious ways. They have erred, but let their error remain with themselves, and let not others be tainted with it, nor carried away by it. O let not this leprosy overspread the whole body; let it never be said, that *from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, nothing but wounds and bruises.*

We know that sinners are enticing: the wise-man supposes this, *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* They who have the plague are willing to infect others. The Devil was no sooner an apostate himself, but he became a tempter to man; and they who are of that wicked one thus do his lusts. Those who are bad, I fear are more industrious to debauch others, and to make them as bad as themselves, than those who are good are to invite others to the ways of religion and virtue, and to make them as good as themselves.

We know also by sad experience, that sin is an enticing thing; it has its baits with which it allures the unthinking and unstable into the net; and there is in the corrupt nature of man a proneness to follow bad examples, and to go into the measures of those who take their measures from the world and the flesh; and to follow them straitway, without any consideration, as an ox goes to the slaughter.[e] We should therefore earnestly desire and pray, as we are taught to do every day, that God would not lead either us, or others, into temptation, but out of it, and would deliver us, and them from evil. O pray that the tongue of the tempters may be tied, and they may be ashamed to do the Devil's work, and that the force of the temptation may be broken: pray that the ear of the tempted may be stopped, and that they may be enabled with the shield of faith, to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Let us stand with our censer like Aaron, between the living and the dead, between the sick and the sound, and endeavour, by our intercessions, to stay the plague. Let us desire and pray that in wicked families, the entail of sin may be cut off, that there may not rise up in the father's stead an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord, the thing Moses dreaded, Num. 32. 14. But that the son, when he sees all his father's sins, may consider and not do like him,[f] nor tread in his steps, that so the next generation, at least, may be better than this. Pray, that in wicked places, where there are many sinners, there may be no more; that men may be so wise for themselves, as well as just to the cause of virtue and serious godliness, as not to make friendship, or keep company with the vicious and profane, lest they learn their way, and get a snare to their souls.

O let us be earnest with God in prayer, that he would give more, and yet more, of that grace which is necessary, in order to the putting of this full stop to the course of sin. Pray for grace for those who do not yet desire it, or pray for it for themselves; it might do well, when we are alone with God, to be particular herein; Lord give grace to such a sinner, who is very provoking both to God and good men, preventing grace, restraining grace, renewing grace, victorious grace. Let Saul become Paul, that it may appear, that that pattern of divine mercy, which was of old set forth to them which should afterwards believe,[g] may yet be copied out again, in answer to prayer, as that was in answer to Stephen's prayer; God's arm is not shortened that it cannot save the greatest sinner, nor is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear the weakest prayer, that is offered up in faith, the prayer of the destitute.

2. We must desire and pray that God by his grace would establish the just; that religion and godliness may get ground, as vice and profaneness lose ground. Let us pray,

(1.) That the just may be established in their integrity, and may ever retain it. It is the duty of the watchmen to warn not only the wicked that they go not a step further in their wicked ways, but the righteous also, that they turn not a step back from their righteous ways, that they do not so much as look back,[h] and our desire and prayer must be accordingly, as those who are afraid lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, not only we ourselves, but any others of us should so much as seem to come short.[i] O that good people may be established in their good principles, and good resolutions, and may faithfully adhere to them; that the righteous may still hold on their way, and those who have clean hands may be stronger and stronger. O that though the stream be strong, the righteous may be enabled to swim against it, and may never be carried down by it! but that, like Job, in difficult trying times, they may still hold

[a] 1 Sam. 3. 13. [b] Jer. 9. 3. [c] Zech. 1. 19. 21.
[d] Ps. 75. 10. [e] Pr. 7. 22.
[f] Ezek. 18. 14. [g] 1 Tim. 1. 16. [h] Ezek. 3. 19, 21.
[i] Heb. 4. 1.

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fast their integrity; may keep themselves pure in times of common iniquity, and may, like fish, be fresh in salt water; as Noah, in the old world. Nay, we should desire and pray, that the just may be like springs of water, which, by Antiperistasis, are warmest when the air is coldest, that the worse others are, the better they may be; that the more others profane the name of God, the more they may abound in praising it; the more loose others are in their conversation, the more circumspect they may be; as Noah and Lot, who were both better in the midst of temptation, than when they were out of the way of it.

We should especially be earnest with God in prayer for young people, who are setting out in the world, that by the grace of God they may be preserved from the corruption that is in the world through lust; that that may not be a spark to the tinder of the corruption that is in their hearts. Commit them to the conduct and custody of the divine grace. *Keep, Holy Father, keep through thy name those that we commit unto thee, keep them from the evil* of this *present world*, keep them to the end.[a] Those who have been blest with a good education, who have begun well, and promise fair, and are numbered among the just, O that they may be confirmed in the choice they have made, and may always abide by it! that when they come to the turning time of life, such a right turn may be given to their thoughts, as that they may be stedfastly resolved for Heaven as their end, and Christ and holiness as their way. Satan and his agents have a particular spite at such, and are industrious to draw them aside; O let us help them by our prayers, that they may be fortified against the temptations the world is full of, and may never lose the things they have wrought, the things they have gained; but may obtain a full reward.[b] That the holy seed may be the substance of our land,[c] and never the shame of it, by mingling themselves with the people of these abominations; that they may appear to be a seed which the Lord has blessed in answer to prayer, and which we shall bless him for; that the branches of the families of God's people may continue branches of righteousness.

(2.) That they may be established in their comfort and hope. In troublesome threatening times good men are apt to be shaken in mind, and to fear lest the cause and interest of religion should be sunk and run down: when they see how iniquity abounds, and how cold the love of many is, how bold the factors for Hell are grown, and how bashful the advocates for Christ and his gospel are, they are ready to give up all for gone; ready to say, when they see the ungodly prosper in the world, that they have cleansed their hearts and hands in vain.[d] We have, therefore, need to pray for them, that they may be established in the belief of the promise that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against the Church, and may encourage themselves and one another with it, and may never cast away their confidence in it. O that the just may be established in the assurance of this, that God will plead his own cause, will own his own interests, will do his own work, and will be exalted in his own strength. Though his truths be opposed and ridiculed, yet they are great, and shall prevail. Though his name be profaned, yet he has glorified it, and will glorify it yet again: he will magnify his law, and make it honourable,[e] though men vilify it, and make it contemptible. *These are the true sayings of God.*

Now, Lord, give to the just to believe in the Lord their God, that so they may be established,[f] and not be afraid of evil tidings, nor despair of their cause, no, nor so much as distrust it; for it is not the cause of a party that they espouse and embark in, but that of Catholic Christianity, pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, which we are sure will keep its ground, and carry the day; it is the kingdom of God among men, which cannot be destroyed. O that the just may rejoice and glory in this! that this may keep their resolutions firm, and their hopes flourishing in the worst of times; that they may rejoice in God, and glory in him, and their feet being set upon this rock, they may have a new song put into their mouths.

(3.) That they may be established in their undertaking to do what they can to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end; Lord, by thy grace strengthen their hands in their opposition to the interests of sin and Satan in the world. O that they may be confirmed in the principles they go upon therein, and may not be shaken by any doubts or jealousies, concerning the equity and goodness of the cause they are engaged in, but may be abundantly satisfied in their own minds, that in bearing their testimony against, and giving a check to immorality and profaneness, in their places, they are doing a good work, and if they sincerely aim at the honour of God in it, he will graciously accept it, as honour done to him.

O that they may not be shaken by any discouragements they meet with, any difficulties they find in their way, but that their zeal and resolution may be rather the more animated thereby; that they may not be driven off from it, or made to drive on heavily in it, either by the heat of those who own themselves enemies to it, or by the coldness of those who yet own themselves friends to it; pray for them, that God by his grace would help them over these discouragements, that when upright men cannot but be astonished at this,[g] astonished, that so good a work should be so much opposed, and so little furthered, yet they may not sit down astonished, as Ezra, in a like case, despairing to bring any thing to pass: but that the innocent may stir up himself so much the more against the hypocrite, because, as Ezra was then told, *There is yet hope in Israel concerning this thing*;[h] the case is bad, but not desperate.

We ought to pray for magistrates, for the Queen, and all in authority, for the judges and the justices of peace in the several counties and corporations, that they

[a] John 17. 11. [b] 2 John 8. [c] Isa. 6. 13. [d] Ps. 73. 12, 13. [e] Isa. 42. 21. [f] 2 Chron. 20. 20. [g] Job 17. 8. [h] Ezra 10. 2.

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they may be established in a holy zeal against vice and profaneness, and a resolution to do the utmost they can in their places to suppress it; that God would give them his judgment and his righteousness,[a] that, according to the trust reposed in them, they may be for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them who do well.[b] We are doing our own work when we are praying for Kings and all in authority, for if they be established in their duty, we shall live quiet and peaceable lives under them in all godliness and honesty;[c] the restraint of the vicious will be the repose of the virtuous, and a defence of their virtues.

We ought to pray for ministers, for all the ministers of the word of God, that they may be full of power, by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, may have both wisdom and courage to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin,[d] that they may set their face as a flint, in a holy zeal against profaneness; and that the Spirit of God may work with them, and by them, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.[e], Pray that ministers may be established, and their hands strengthened in their work, though they are sometimes tempted to say, "We have laboured in vain."

We ought to pray for masters of families, that their endeavours may be blessed in the education of their children and servants, and they may be established in Joshua's resolution, that they and their houses will serve the Lord; Pray that they may be reformers in their own families, may prevail to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in the heart of those under their charge, and to principle them with an antipathy to that which is evil, betimes, and then the work of magistrates and ministers would be very easy.

And for all who in their places are striving against sin, let us strive in our prayers, that they may be established in their resolution not to draw back their hand wherewith they have stretched out the spear against those vices that are the common enemies of our Israel, (as is said of Joshua in his battle with the men of Ai) till they have utterly destroyed[f] and suppressed them, or at least done their utmost toward it; that having an eye to him, who, in striving against sin, endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, they may not be weary, nor faint in their minds.[g] And, in order to this establishment of the just, and the progress and success of that righteous cause wherein they are engaged, the great thing, and indeed the one thing needful we have to ask of God, is, that the Spirit may be poured out upon us from on high, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field;[h] then the work will go on and prosper, till there shall be no more occasion for it: and there is no petition we can present at the throne of grace with more hope of speeding than this, "for the pouring out of the Spirit;" for if earthly *parents being evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*[i]

II. I come next to shew why it is, and ought to be, the desire and prayer of all good people, that the wickedness of the wicked may come to an end, and the just may be established in their opposition to it.

1. All good people have a holy concern for the name and honour of God, and the Lord Jesus, and for the reputation of that holy religion which we make profession of, and therefore they cannot but desire, that that may come to an end, by which God is dishonoured, his name is profaned, the Lord Jesus crucified afresh, and religion wounded in the house of her friends. All the children of God having his glory in their eyes, as their highest end, have it upon their hearts as their chief care, and it is dearer to them than any interests of their own; nothing grieves them so much as the injury done to the honour of God, by the wickedness of the wicked; and the great occasion thereby given his enemies to blaspheme. *Horror takes hold of their hearts*, and *rivers of tears run down their eyes*, because of this:[k] Every good man should be able to say as David, *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me:*[l] I take them as cast upon myself, and therefore *the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, has made me forget myself, and all interests and concerns of my own, that I might be wholly swallowed up with resentments of the dishonour to God, and that worthy name by which I am called.

Let that therefore come to an end, let it be wholly extirpated, which is such a daring affront to God's majesty, such an impudent contempt of his sovereignty, such a direct contradiction to his truth, and such an open violation of his law, which grieves the Spirit of his grace, and bids defiance to his strivings, which supports the kingdom of Satan, that kingdom of darkness and malignity, and is in constant opposition to that kingdom of light, holiness, and love, which the Lord Jesus came to set up in the world. Will not all those then who rightly understand the thing, and lay it to heart, earnestly pray that that may come to an end, which has all this mischief in it; and that those may be established, who are doing what they can to bring it to an end. And we may come the more boldly to the throne of grace on this errand, because we can plead God's interest in the case; *Lord, thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*, and, therefore, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, that thy kingdom may be advanced, thy power submitted to, and that glory given to thee, which thou hast by it been robbed of. How may we wrestle with God, and hope to speed, when our prayer is, *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause,*[m] and our plea is, *Lord, what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*[n]

2. All good people have a tender love to the souls of men, and a true desire of their welfare here and for ever, and, therefore, they cannot but desire and pray,

[a] Ps. 72. 1. [b] 1 Pet. 2. 14. [c] 1 Tim. 2. 2. [d] Mic. 3. 8. [e] Joh. 16. 8. [f] Josh. 8. 26. [g] Heb. 12. 3. [h] Isa. 32. 15. [i] Luk. 11. 13. [k] Ps. 119. 53, 136. [l] Ps. 69. 9. [m] Ps. 74. 22. [n] Josh. 7. 9.

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that that may come to an end, which is the only thing that ruins souls. Brethren, I hope you are convinced of the worth of souls, you know what they were made for, and in whose image they were made; what they were bought for, and with what price they were bought; what service for God they are capable of doing, what happiness in God they are capable of enjoying. You have made your conviction of this to appear by the concern you have for your own souls, and will you not make it further to appear by your concern for the souls of others? Shall it not be your desire, and care, and prayer, that none of those may perish for whom Christ died.[a] Did Christ shed his blood for them, and shall we think much to drop a tear over them?

When you see a poor sinner running to an excess of riot, think with yourselves, here is a precious soul, more worth than all the world, alienated from its rightful Lord, and sold for a mess of pottage, for the gratifications of a base lust, into the hands of its sworn enemy, and made a prey to the roaring lion. Here is one made a cage of unclean and filthy birds, who is capable of being made a temple of the Holy Ghost; a drudge to Satan, who might have been a servant of God; an instrument of unrighteousness, who might have been a vessel of honour: O that the opposing interest may be overturned in this soul, and that he may come whose right it is, and it may be given him.[b] Here is a miserable creature running headlong into everlasting burnings, upon the brink of ruin, and not aware of the danger: O that the grace of God would snatch this brand out of the burning, for it is yet capable of being made use of in the building. Though it is spoken of but with a "peradventure that God will give them repentance," yet that is encouragement to pray for it, and we should be earnest for it, because it is the only way of their being recovered out of the snare of the Devil.[c] If you saw any of those about you that you have the least concern for, thus destroying their own bodies, you would interpose and do what you could to prevent it; and are not their souls of unspeakably more value than their bodies? Is not eternal death more dreadful than temporal death? If, therefore, you can do nothing else toward their recovery, pray for them; O pray that their sins may come to an end, before their lives do.

3. All good people have a great value for the grace of God, and are convinced of the sovereignty and power, the necessity and efficacy of that grace; and therefore, they pray for that grace, both for the reformation of sinners, and for the establishment of the just. They know how much they are themselves indebted to that grace, what favours, what wonders have been done for them by it; that it is purely by that grace that they are what they are that is good: and it is that grace that made them to differ from the wicked; that begun the good work in them, and carries it on. They know there is a fulness of grace in Christ, enough for all, though ever so many, enough for each, though ever so bad; and, therefore, they are still for having recourse to that grace, and fetching it in for themselves and others. They know that nothing can be done without it, not a good thought started or pursued, not a good word spoken, or a good work done, by themselves, or any other; and therefore whatever good they wish may be effected, either upon sinners or saints, they depend upon that grace for it, and its powerful influences.

They know also that this grace is promised to the Church, this clean water to cleanse it from all its filthiness, and from all its idols,[d] yet God will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: we must ask, and then we shall receive. Having therefore such an esteem for God's grace to do the work, and for the duty of prayer to obtain that grace, this is their petition, this is their request, *Lord, bring thou the wickedness of the wicked to an end.* After all the pains we have taken to prophesy upon the dead and dry bones, they are *dead and dry* still, and therefore we look upwards: *Come, O breath,*[e] *and breathe upon these slain,* and then they shall live. They know that the filth of Zion and Jerusalem can never be washed away, unless God himself do it by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning;[f] and therefore to him they apply themselves, Lord, take the work into thine own hands; be thou exalted in thine own strength, the strength of thine own grace, and thou shalt have the glory.

4. All good people are hearty well-wishers to the land of their nativity, and are in care for the prosperity of it, because it is a Christian nation, it is their own, and in the peace thereof they shall have peace, and in the setting up and keeping up of religion among them they have joy and satisfaction, and, therefore, they seek the good of Jerusalem for their brethren and companions' sake,[g] as well as because of the house of the Lord their God, and the interests of it.

It cannot but grieve them to see this pleasant land polluted, and all its beauty sullied and stained by the filthiness of its inhabitants, so that it is become odious in the eyes of him who cannot endure to look upon iniquity; to see a land, that God has dealt favourably with, exposed to his judgments, and ready to be made as like to Sodom and Gomorrah in ruin, as it has been in sin; *Shall not God visit for these things,* which are to be found among us? *Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Do we not see how fast the measure of the nation's sin fills? How near full it is, and how ready to overflow in a deluge of wrath? Do we not see our plenty forfeited by the abuse of it? Nay, the word of God, and the means of grace, which are more than our necessary food, forfeited by the contempt cast on them; the blessings of the government forfeited by the inefficacy of the endeavours used by it to suppress profaneness; and the honours and advantages of our religion ready to be taken from us by the sworn enemies of it abroad; because they have been so tamely yieleed to the destroyers of its powers and vitals at home?

[a] 1 Cor. 8. 11. [b] Ezek. 21. 27. [c] 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. [d] Ezek. 36. 25, 37. [e] Ezek. 37. 9. [f] Isa. 4. 4. [g] Ps. 122. 8, 9.

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And is it not the concern of all good people then to stand in the gap, to turn away the wrath of God, and by their prayers to empty the measure, which so many are filling by their sins? To be earnest with God to bring that to an end, which, otherwise, will bring our nation to an end, and deprive it of all its glory, and to establish and strengthen those whose piety and zeal is the strength and stability of our times. When there was a general corruption of manners, transgressions were multiplied, truth failed, and there was no judgment; it was such a presage of destruction coming, that God *wondered there was no intercessor:* [a] but I trust there are and will be many intercessors that cry day and night to God, not only against the threatened calamities, but against the threatening iniquities, the provoking cause of them, that those may be brought to an end; for as Queen Esther pleaded with herself, *How can we endure to see the evil that shall come upon our people, and the destruction of our kindred?*

III. And now that which remains is, to make application of what has been said; it is what we are all concerned in, and therefore should each of us apply to ourselves.

1. Let us address ourselves by earnest prayer and supplication to God, for his grace, to promote and advance the reformation of manners in our land, and particularly in this city, the reformation of which would have a good influence upon the nation. You will all say, it is a desirable thing that the manners of the nation should be reformed, now that which I am pressing you to contribute towards it, is, that which I am sure no one can except against in others, no nor plead that they are excused and exempted from themselves. It will be no expense to you, the poorest of the flock of Christ may do as much in this part of the service as the rich. It will not expose you to any hazard—to weep in secret for the wickedness of the wicked, and to pray against it; and I hope we shall not again see the day when it will be penal to pray publicly against it: nor will it expose you to any blame or censure, as some of your endeavours for reformation perhaps may: in this I am sure you can never be charged with going out of your sphere, or meddling with that which does not belong to you; so that the most timorous, the most cautious may thus help forward this good work; all who have any interest at the throne of grace (and miserable is the case of those who have not); all who know how to pray (and those who do not are concerned to learn) are this day in God's name summoned to this part of the service. The daughters of my people, though we cannot expect they should—do Deborah's part against this Sisera, this common enemy—lead the forces into the field against him; (yet blessed be God we have a Deborah, that by her pious proclamation does that:) though we cannot expect they should do Jael's part, who laid her hand to the workman's hammer, to nail this Sisera to the earth; yet we expect and require that they do the part of Anna the prophetess, who *served God with fastings and prayers night and day,* [b] and let them make this the matter of their daily prayers; that in such a day of distress, such an hour of temptation as this, they do the part of Esther and her maids. [c] And when there are daughters of Belial, daughters of Moab, who contribute to the debauching of the nation, let the daughters of Israel, the daughters of Sarah, be glad that they can any way contribute to the reforming of it. Let masters of families take this matter into their family prayers, that they may bring down a blessing not only on their own houses, but on the houses of their neighbours, and thus may be themselves blessings to the places where they live.

Let me recommend it especially to my brethren in the ministry, whose business it is to give themselves to prayer, let them lead those they pray with to the throne of grace on this errand: *O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just.* We are as Moses upon the mount, it is our work to lift up our prayers against Amalek with the rod of God in our hand, whilst others in the valley are doing Joshua's work: our's is the safer and easier province, it is a shame for us then if we be wanting in our work, and it may be of ill consequence; for when Moses lifted up his hands, and kept them steady, Israel prevailed: if we continue instant and constant in prayer, the attempts for reformation, it may be hoped, will be the more successful; but when Moses let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. [d] If we grow cold and remiss in prayer, the work is in danger of going back and losing ground. We pray for the success of our own endeavours, for the conversion of sinners, and the confirmation of saints; I hope we dare not omit it: and should we not pray also for their success, who, in a different way, are pursuing the same design?

Let those who are engaged in the societies for reformation look upon themselves as bound to further their own undertaking by their prayers, for others must strive, together with you, in their prayers to God for you. [e] Your associating in this good work obliges you in this way, as well as in other instances, to give mutual assistance, and to strengthen the hands one of another. You cannot but find what need you have of the continual supply of the grace of God to furnish you for this good work, and to fortify you against the temptations and difficulties you meet with in it; let that therefore drive you to the throne of grace, for grace sufficient. You lack wisdom for it, that wisdom which in the critical cases that often occur is *profitable to direct;* you must therefore ask it of God in Christ's name, and you may expect, that if you sincerely aim at his glory in it, he will give it you, will give liberally, and will not upbraid; [f] will give a mouth and wisdom, such as all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist. Let your prayers go before all your undertakings in this work, and accompany your consultations about it; and let your prayers follow what you do, that it may answer the end, the reformation of the offenders themselves you convict, and the deterring of others from doing the like. You would prosper the better in this good work, if you had it more upon your hearts in

[a] Isa. 59. 16. [b] Luke 2. 37.

[d] Exod. 17. 11. [e] Rom. 15. 30. [f] Jam. 1. 5.

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prayer; and it would be a token for good that you shall carry your point; for when God *seeks to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem*, as a preface and introduction to it, he *pours out a spirit of prayer and supplication.*[a]

To stir you up all to be earnest with God in prayer for the success of all pious designs to suppress profaneness and debauchery; consider,

(1.) How much depends upon the carrying on of this good work. If there were a general reformation of manners in our land, what a happy turn would it give to all our affairs; what a blessed change would it produce! what a beauty would it put upon the nation, upon this city, and render them amiable in the eyes of God and all good men! What a security would it be against the judgments that threaten us, and what a preparative for the blessings we wait for! How would the Lord then delight to do us good, and to dwell among us!

Nay, though the desired reformation should not be effected, yet while it is endeavoured, it turns to us for a testimony, and helps to save the guilt of the sin of sinners from being national. The reigns of the reforming Kings of Judah were blessed of God, though none of them made a complete reformation.

But if the work should now be let fall, if the forces that have for many years past been drawn into the field, and have acted successfully against vice and profaneness, should now be withdrawn, you not only lose all the points you have gained, but, it is to be feared, all iniquity will take encouragement to be so much the more daring; as when the dam that stopped the current for a while is broken through, the stream runs so much more violently. We are therefore concerned to pray the more earnestly, that the wheels of this good work may be kept a-going, and that though it should not get ground, it may not lose ground. A good man said long since, "He feared the sins of the land more than the French." If iniquity were subdued, how soon would all our other enemies be subdued! Would you therefore help to save a sinful nation from ruin, be intercessors for it now, that the unclean spirit that has met with a rebuke for some time may not recover possession; for if he do, it is to be feared it will be with seven other *more wicked than himself*, then will our *last state be worse than the first.*

(2.) Consider, what difficulties yet lie in the way of this good work, which nothing less than the power of almighty grace can help us over, and that grace must be obtained by prayer. I doubt you find the work goes on heavily, and meets with many rubs, many things retard it, and clog its wheels; and perhaps the reason is, because it wants praying hands to help it forward. Our complaint is the same with Hezekiah's, *This day is a day of rebuke and blasphemy, for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth*; we must therefore take the course he then took, *lift up our prayers for the remnant that is left*, the little remnant.[b] We may plead as Jehoshaphat did, *Lord, we have no might against this great company that* fights *against us*, these troops, these legions of iniquities that invade our land, *neither know we what to do*, but *our eyes are up unto thee*,[c] and on thee do we depend.

When you meet with any difficulties in this work, follow the example of Nehemiah, that great reformer, who did such eminent service to the church of God in his day, and was famous for this, that upon every occasion he had recourse to God by prayer, made himself easy, and carried his point by lifting up an ejaculation to Heaven. When he was waiting at table, afraid to ask what he hoped to have, and the King bid him speak his mind, he prayed to the God of Heaven,[d] spoke to God in the silent language of the heart before he ventured to speak to the King. When the enemies of the work he was about, ridiculed it, as a foolish attempt, and made a jest of these feeble Jews, he appealed to God, went and told him of the contempt put upon them: *Hear, O our God, for we are despised.* When he set a watch against them, he first made his prayer to God, and then set a watch.[e] When to drive him off from his undertaking, it was suggested to him, that the government would take umbrage at it, and he would be taken up as a disaffected person, that thereby his hands might be weakened, he addressed himself to prayer immediately, *Now therefore O God, strengthen my hands.*[f] And if we thus, like Nehemiah, look up to God by prayer for strength and grace to do our work, we may, in faith, like him, look up to God for his gracious acceptance of us in it; *Remember me, O my God, for good*;[g] for what is done by divine assistance, will be owned and favoured; what comes from God will come to him.

Let me now briefly tell you what further we must do in our prayers for reformation.

[1.] We must sadly lament the wickedness of the wicked, which we pray for the removal of; we must complain of it to God, as those who do indeed lay it to heart, and look upon it with inward trouble. Can we each of us say, as David, *I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved*; do as Joseph did then concerning his brethren, bring to your father, your heavenly Father, their evil report,[h] It will better become us to weep in secret for the sins of sinners, than openly to exclaim against them. The character of those who are marked for preservation, and whom the destroying angel must not touch, is, that they *sigh and cry for the abominations* that are found among us,[i] that is the spirit of a Christian: not that they are satyrical in their invectives against them, so far a Pharisee may go. We are then fit to pray against sin when we truly bewail it.

[2.] We must bless God for what is done towards the bringing of the wickedness of the wicked to an end in our land. We have reason to be thankful to God for the national testimonies that are born against vice and profaneness, that it does not go without a check;

[a] Zech. 12. 9, 10. [b] Isa. 37. 3. 4.

[c] 2. Chron. 20. 12. [d] Neh. 2. 4. [e] Neh. 4. 8, 9. [f] Neh. 6. 9.
[g] Neh. 13. 14, 22, 29, 31. [h] Gen. 37. 2. [i] Ezek. 9. 4.

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that good and wholesome laws are made against drunkenness, swearing, and sabbath-breaking; that the Queen's proclamation against immorality is read in all our courts of justice; that here in this great city, and in some other places, societies are formed and yet kept up for the assistance of the magistrates in turning the edge of the sword of justice against the most notorious delinquents. This standard the Spirit of the Lord has lifted up against the enemy who was coming in upon us like a flood:[a] this banner God has given to them that fear him, to be displayed because of the truth;[b] a banner for them to triumph in, and list themselves under.

[3.] We must in these prayers for grace to reform our land, act faith upon the mediation of Christ, and the promise of God, and make them our plea. Let us take our encouragement in these prayers from this, that Jesus Christ ever lives to make intercession for the same thing; that he came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil;[c] was manifested to take away sin: and we are sure that he will gain his point, and that *him the Father heareth always:* and through him we have precious promises to plead, on which we are caused to hope, that God will *remove the iniquity of the land in one day;*[d] that the *Redeemer shall come to Zion, and shall turn away ungodliness from* Jacob;[e] and shall *sit as a refiner.* So that we shall not pray in vain, for faithful is he that has promised, who also will do it.

2. Let us follow our prayers with our serious and sincere endeavours; and let us act as those who are in good earnest, when we pray that God would bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, and establish the just. When I press you thus to pray for it, it is not as if I thought there were nothing else to be done, and that prayers and tears were all the weapons that the cause of reformation would admit of,—as if no means were to be used, but we must sit down, and leave it to God to do all; or as if I thought the case so deplorable, that it were to no purpose to attempt any thing for the relief of it; I do not come upon this errand to you to day as Luther's friend did to him, with his *Abi in cellam, & dic, Miserere mei Domine;—Away to thy closet, and say, Lord, have mercy on me;* bidding him content himself with praying for reformation, for it would be in vain for him to think of doing any thing toward it; no, my brethren, both God's promises and our prayers, are intended to quicken and encourage, not to supersede or slacken our endeavours. When in answer to prayer, you do, like David, hear the sound of a going upon the tops of the mulberry trees, and you perceive that God goes before you, that God is with you of a truth, then you must bestir yourselves; then up and be doing.[f]

(1.) You especially who are engaged in these societies for reformation, now you have this day set me upon your watch-tower, you must give me leave to be your monitor in God's name, as one who desires to be found faithful, and that you be found so too. Be mindful of the obligations you laid upon yourselves when you entered into these societies, in a sense of your duty to God, as well as in love to your country; to do all you could in your places for the suppression of vice and profaneness; you have not discharged yourselves from these obligations, make conscience, therefore, of fulfilling them; you have opened your mouth unto the Lord, and you cannot go back; go forward, then; go on, and prosper. Though the endeavours of your societies should prove unsuccessful, yet let not the title of them be insignificant, and an empty name. You are called "Societies for Reformation of Manners," and therefore are concerned to enquire, what you are doing towards it? Your warfare, I am sure, is not accomplished, for the Canaanites are yet in our land, and are as snares to us, and as thorns in our eyes.[g] The exorbitant power of vice and profaneness is not reduced. The house of Saul, though we hope it grows weaker and weaker, yet is still in being, and its forces threatening, and therefore you must resolve, with meekness and fear, vigorously to carry on this holy war, and to act offensively, not for the destruction, but for the salvation, and spiritual benefit of those you appear against.

I understand you have societies of two sorts, that have different provinces assigned them. Some made up of persons of a lower rank, who are as the hands and feet of this body; others of a higher rank, who are to them (as Moses said to Jethro) instead of eyes; and both these have need of, and are serviceable to one another. Shall I speak particularly to each?

[1.] You who have engaged yourselves in the more active part of this undertaking: be active in it; not as lords over your brethren, but as servants to God and the government, in a good work. Let those of you who grow remiss, and indifferent, be excited by the good example of those who yet retain their zeal; and let their care and courage in this matter flourish again; and return with a double vigour to the relief of those who have long born the burthen and heat of the day, that you may strengthen the hands which you have weakened. Complain not that the drudgery lies upon you, for in such good work as this, nothing is to be called drudgery; but rather say, *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.*[h] Be not frightened with winds and clouds from sowing and reaping; nor excuse yourselves with a sluggard's fancy of *A lion in the way, A lion in the streets.* The God whom you serve is able to protect you, and to bear you out, however you may be threatened, and abundantly to recompense you, whatever charge you are at, and whatever damage you may sustain; you know whom you have trusted, even one who will be faithful to you while you are so to him; and though you may be losers for him, you shall not be losers by him, in the end.

[2.]. You who have undertaken the directive part,

[a] Isa. 59. 19. [b] Ps. 60. 4. [c] 1 John 3. 8. [d] Zech. 3. 9. [e] Rom. 11. 26. [f] 2 Sam. 5. 24. [g] Josh. 23. 13 [h] Ecc. 11. 4.

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I beseech you do your part. What you also contribute toward the necessary charges of this work, continue to do it, increase it if there be occasion, do it liberally, do it chearfully and without grudging; how can you bestow what you have, better than in thus honouring God with it? And what a pity it is that such a good cause as this should be starved? And there is another thing which may be justly expected from you, gentlemen, and that is, that you be forward to appear in person, when there is occasion, for the keeping up of the reputation of this pious undertaking. The figure you make in the world, gives you an opportunity to do it, your education and conversation enable you to do it with a good grace; and these are talents which put you into a capacity of serving God and your generation, and which must be accounted for. A frown from you may daunt a daring transgressor, and put him out of countenance, more than a reproof or an information from an inferior person. A smile from you may hearten an honest reprover, and keep him in countenance when he is insulted, as Lot was, with *Who made thee a judge?* It will be your honour, gentlemen, to patronize those who are busy in this service, and to stand by them, while there are those who censure them, and run them down as over busy. Be ready to give your advice before-hand to the most regular, prudent, and inoffensive methods for carrying on this work; and what is done conscientiously and zealously, appear in the defence of it, and think not to excuse yourselves by saying it might have been done with more caution and discretion in some little circumstance or other, which it is an easy thing for those who seek an excuse, and have a mind to be critical to spy out: but that will no more justify you in an inglorious retreat from them, than it would justify David in the orders he gave to desert Uriah the Hittite, to say, *Why went he so near the wall?* I know nothing can excuse your drawing back, unless you be conscious to yourselves of the beam in your own eye; and if that be the reason that you are ashamed to appear, it is your own fault, and you cannot but be ashamed of your reason. But I hope better things of you, gentlemen, that your hearts condemn you not, and then you may have confidence in this cause of God, and shall have confidence in the day of God. Be bold, therefore, and act like yourselves, like men of honour: let it not be said of you, as it was of the Nobles of Tekoa,[a] that they *put not their necks to the work of the Lord;* nay, we ask you not to put your necks to it, only to shew your faces in it. Honour God thus with your honour, and you shall find him true to his word, that those who honour him he will honour, while those that despise and desert him shall be lightly esteemed.

(2.) We are all obliged in our places to do our utmost for the carrying on of this work, something more than by our prayers.

[1.] Let us do what we can to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end. Let our conversation in every thing be such as becomes the gospel of Christ, strict, and universally conscientious, that they who will not be won either by the word of the ministers, or the rod of the magistrates, may be won by that.[b] We must study to be not only blameless and harmless, and without rebuke, but exemplary in every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy. Let our light shine before men, that they may be brought to glorify that name of God, which they have reproached and dishonoured. Let those who are masters of families keep up religion there; and put away iniquity far from their tabernacles. In all our conversation, let us witness against sin, and drive it away (if we cannot use any other means) by an angry countenance. It is our duty to tell our neighbours of their faults, between us and them alone, in any wise to rebuke them, and not to suffer sin upon them, lest we bear sin for them, and make ourselves sharers in their guilt. Let us do what we can to make sinners ashamed of their sin; were they brought to that, it would be an ingenuous and prevailing principle of their reformation. Let us have no fellowship with the works of darkness, but reprove them. Let us have as little fellowship as possible with the workers of those works, and so reprove them.

[2.] Let us do what we can to establish the just, to confirm those who are good in their goodness. Let those who fear the Lord speak often one to another for their mutual instruction, quickening, and encouragement; for the sharpening of one another's countenance, and the strengthening of one another's hands. Those who are not themselves engaged with the societies for reformation, yet should do what they can to establish them; if they have not your hand, let them have your good word; speak well of them as it comes in your way: the city ought to be made sensible of its obligation to them; were it so, what an establishment would it be to them! As occasion offers, let them have your help, and be ready to say, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

To conclude, It will, I hope, be some encouragement to you,—to be on the Lord's side, and to assist, by your prayers and endeavours, for the bringing of the wickedness of the wicked to an end, and the establishing of the just,—if I tell you from the word of God, what will be, at least, the issue of this struggle between Jacob and Esau, between the pious and the profane. You may assure yourselves, brethren, the cause of religion and serious piety is the cause of God, and it will, in the end, be a victorious cause: it will be so in the day of decision; when the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.[c] The Lord Jesus will then, and not till then, gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity; then will the wickedness of the wicked come to a perpetual end, when into the new Jerusalem there shall not enter any unclean thing: and then shall the just be for ever established

[a] Neh. 3. 5.

[b] 1 Pet. 3. 1.

[c] Ps. 1. 5.

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blished, when they shall shine as the sun in the firmament of our Father; when he who is holy shall be holy still, shall be for ever holy. Then shall the Great Redeemer have put down all the opposing rule, principality, and power of sin and satan, which are now so daring, so threatening, which we are sometimes ready to fear will bear down all before them, and carry the day. It shall all be crushed and sunk; and the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, that that God whom sinners now despise and make light of, may be "all in all" to eternity.

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POPERY, A SPIRITUAL TYRANNY;

SHEWED IN A

SERMON

Preached on the FIFTH of NOVEMBER, 1712.

ISAIAH 51. 23.

——Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over.

THE haughtiness and insolence of the proud oppressors of God's Church and people are here described as the ground of the controversy God had with them; and of the kind designs he had concerning his oppressed people. Jerusalem was afflicted,[a] her sons fainted;[b] go, says God to the prophet, and encourage them, lay up cordials in store for them against this time of need; tell them the Lord Jehovah, the God of all power and grace, is their Lord, and their God; tell them he owns them for his people still, and will undoubtedly plead their cause; tell them he will take, nay he has taken the cup of trembling, that bitter cup out of their hands, which during their captivity they have been daily drinking of; and they shall no more drink it again;[c] shall know no more of the hardships and terrors they have so long suffered; nay, tell them withal, that though they must forgive their enemies and oppressors, and not meditate revenge, yet God will reckon with them; tell them that the cup of trembling shall be put into the hands of them who have afflicted them,[d] who have trampled upon them, and tyrannized over them; who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over;* so the text comes in. The Babylonians, their cruel task-masters in their captivity, shall be called to an account for the violence done to Sion:[e] and Babylon's destruction by the Persians, shall be more terrible than Jerusalem's was by the Babylonians.[f]

Now observe here for encouragement;

1. That there is a people in the world who are God's own people: such there have been, are, and will be to the end of time; they are his by choice, his by covenant, called out of the world, and distinguished from it, such as approve themselves obedient subjects, and faithful friends and well-wishers to his kingdom among men. To them he still says, as here to Israel, (let them take the comfort of it) *I am thy Lord, the* LORD, *and thy God.* They have taken the Lord for their Lord, to rule and govern them, and he will be their God, to make them happy. All that he is in himself, and in his promises, is made over to them, and settled on them. *God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* Let this people then be our people, and this God our God.

2. There is a cause depending between the people of God and their enemies, and has been so ever since the enmity was put between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.[g] The children of God, who are born after the spirit,—have been hated and envied, and persecuted by the children of this world, the children of the wicked one, who are born after the flesh.[h] And we are not to think it strange; the servant is not better than his Lord, nor can expect better treatment.

3. While this cause is depending, the people of God may have a cup of trembling put into their hands; may be in great frights and confusions, and ready to give up all for gone; fearing continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy;[i] as it is described here-before in this chapter. Providence gives them some cause to fear, and then their fears prevail more than there is cause for, so far as to bear down their faith and hope in God; and it is "their infirmity," perhaps too much the infirmity of some at this day. When Zion said, *The Lord has forsaken me, my God has forgotten me;*[k] *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God,*[l] she drunk deeper than she need of the cup of trembling. When the *Lord roars like a lion,* it becomes the children to tremble[m] before him: but when the enemies roar in the sanctuary of God, we should take sanctuary in God, by a holy trust and triumph in him; and not conclude our case desperate, though it be very sad.[n] We some of us remember what a cup of trembling was in our hands before the Revolution; what black and dismal apprehensions we then had of things, how ready we were to say, *Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts;*[o] but cannot forget how much better God was to us than our fears, and are therefore very unworthy and ungrateful, if again we distrust him, and despair of relief from him.

[a] Isa. 51. 21. [b] v. 20. [c] v. 22. [d] v. 23.
[e] Jer. 51. 35. [f] Jer. 51. 49.
[g] Gen. 3. 15. [h] Gal. 4. 29. [i] Isa. 51. 13. [k] Isa. 49. 14.
[l] Isa. 40. 27. [m] Hos. 11. 10. [n] Ps. 74. 3, 4. [o] Ezek. 37. 11.

4. God

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4. God will plead his people's cause in due time, their just but injured cause, and take the cup of trembling out of their hands, and will put into their hands a cup of salvation, and with it a cup of blessing. God always espouses the cause of his Church and people; and in the proper time he will plead it with jealousy. His cause is their's, and they plead for his truths, ordinances and laws, and reckon the reproaches cast on him to fall on them; and therefore their cause shall be his, and he will plead for their rights and liberties; those of the human nature, which they are entitled to as children of men, and much more those of the divine nature, which they are entitled to as God's children. The clouds they are under shall blow over; and they shall not always drink of the cup of trembling, though they cannot be sure they shall no more drink of it again, till they come to Heaven.

5. Sometimes God is pleased when he takes the cup of trembling out of the hands of his oppressed people, to put it into the hands of their oppressors that afflicted them; that they may themselves know what it is to be terrified, who have taken a pride and pleasure in terrifying others. *When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled.*[a] Thus *the wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous,*[b] when *the righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*[c] And the Lord is righteous in it.—*Nec Lex est justior ulla—nor is there any law more just*; he who leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity,[d] and Babylon's doom is, *Reward her even as she rewarded you.*[e]

This was fulfilled in the glorious deliverances which we this day celebrate the memorial of. What a cup of trembling was put into the hands of our popish adversaries, when the Gunpowder Treason was discovered, and those who made the pit, and digged it, fell into the ditch which they made,[f] and it proved an occasion of putting an edge both upon the laws, and upon the spirits of the nation against popery. And no less upon the Revolution, when the enemies of our peace and holy religion, who sought our ruin, were seized with a panic fear, and melted before our great deliverer, as wax before the fire, both councils and armies did so; *The speech of the trusty* was *removed, and the understanding of the aged, the strength of the mighty weakened, and the heart of the chief of the people of the earth*;[g] then,—as it was foretold upon, a much greater Revolution, the empire becoming Christian,—the great men, and the mighty men hid themselves.[h] Thus when God took off Pharaoh's chariot wheels, put his hook into Sennacherib's nose, made Belshazzar's knees smite one against another by the hand-writing on the wall, and smote Herod by an angel's hand, he made them drink the cup of trembling, who had been the oppressors of his people, and made himself a terror to them, who had made themselves the terror of the mighty, of the godly, in the land of the living.

6. The reason why God thus terrifies and brings down his Church's enemies, and lays their power in the dust, is, because when they had power they abused it, and abused the people of God with it; who being conquered and taken captive, tamely yielded to them all their temporal interests, they *laid their body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over*; (as it follows here in the latter part of the verse;) whatever was their's *Jure Belli—by the right of war*, let them take it; but this did not satisfy these proud tyrants; they grew upon their concessions, as Benhadad upon Ahab's,[i] and they demand the submission of the soul too; they *have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over*; they have ridiculed their religion, and so have grieved their spirits; they have attempted to force them from their religion, and to bring them to worship the golden image which they have set up. Now this comes in here:

(1.) To justify God's quarrel with the oppressors of his people, for he will be justified in every thing he says and does. If God bring down the mighty men of Babylon, and put a cup of trembling into their hands, all the world shall be made to see and say, that he is righteous in contending with them. For,

[1.] They have usurped his authority, and have assumed to themselves that power over his people which belongs to him only, as Pharaoh did, who would not let God's people go, that they might serve him. God is the Sovereign of the heart, it is his prerogative to command the conscience; he has said; *All souls are mine*; and he is jealous of all invasions made upon his sovereignty, by those who are vexatious to his people, in the matters of their God, as Darius's edict was to Daniel.[k]

[2.] They have wronged his people's liberties, and have been injurious to them in their most sacred interests. God sends his people into captivity, for their good, and the temporal afflictions they are under are sanctified to them; but if the enemies say to their souls, *Bow down,—Now will I arise*, saith the Lord; this affects a tender part indeed. If the rod of the wicked on the lot of the righteous, force them to put forth their hands unto iniquity,[l] it shall rest no longer there, but be returned on the oppressors. He who touches the souls of God's people, touches the apple of his eye,[m] and it were better they were thrown into the sea with a millstone about their neck, than that they should thus offend one of these little ones.[n] When the Philistines took the ark prisoner, and that glory fell into the enemies' hands, then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep,[o] and put a cup of trembling into their hand.

(2.) It serves also to magnify the mercy of God's delivering his people from them. Let them see what kind of enemies they were, out of whose hands God had saved them, that they might welcome the salvation with so much the greater enlargements in joy and thankfulness, and improve it for so much the stronger engagements to duty and obedience. This is that which God expects from us upon such days as this, when we are celebrating the memorial of the great deliverances God has wrought for our land, both in our own age, and in the days of our fathers.

[a] Isa. 33. 1. [b] Pro. 21. 18. [c] Pro. 11. 8.
[d] Rev. 13. 10. [e] Rev. 18. 6. [f] Ps. 7. 15.
[g] Job 12. 20, 21, 24. [h] Rev. 6. 15.
[i] 1 Kings 20. 6. [k] Dan. 6. 5. [l] Ps. 125. 3.
[m] Zech. 2. 8. [n] Mat. 18. 6. [o] Ps. 78. 61, 65.

To

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To be delivered from those who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over,* must needs be valued as an inestimable mercy, by those who had any honour for their God, or love for their own souls.

[1.] Such as had a concern for God's glory, and a true desire to approve themselves faithful to him, and to his kingdom and interest, could not but magnify such a deliverance as this; for when these proud oppressors bore sway, and carried all before them, God's oppressed ones were more grieved for the dishonour done to God, than for any damage done to themselves; this was their great petition, *Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause,*[a] whatever becomes of our's; and whatever disgrace we may lie under, O *do not disgrace the throne of thy glory.*[b] And this was their great plea, *What wilt thou do unto thy great name.*[c] As for our little names, it is no matter, though they be written in the dust, and buried there; but let not thy name suffer, which is, and ought to be above every name, when, therefore, God humbles the proud invaders of his right, and asserts his own dominion, this is the burthen of their praising songs, *We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty,* not so much because thou hast given us our liberty, as because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned, though the nations were angry.[d]

[2.] Such as had a concern for souls, their own and others, and were in care about them, and tender of their interests, and would not have them wronged, would greatly rejoice in a deliverance which set them at liberty from serving the lusts of men, which is perfect slavery, to keep a feast to the Lord, and to receive his law, (as Israel, when they were brought out of Egypt,) which is perfect freedom. The more the soul is concerned in any redemption, the nearer related it is to the great redemption wrought out for us by the Lord Jesus, and consequently the more to be valued are the deliverances that we are this day called to give thanks for, and that is what I desire to make myself and you sensible of, and God by his grace make us so!

Doct. It is an unspeakable mercy, and must so be accounted, to be delivered from those who usurp a dominion, and exercise a tyranny over the souls and consciences of men.

The adversary and enemy that the text speaks of is Babylon; Babylon in the New Testament is Rome; that is, it is the papacy, and the papal kingdom. There are many things said of Babylon in the Old Testament, which are plainly referred to in those predictions, which we have in the Revelations, of the rise, reign, and ruin of that usurped power; and this of Babylon's saying to the soul, *Bow down,* seems to be alluded to, in that article of the trading of the New Testament Babylon, where her merchandise is said to be in slaves and souls of men;[e] it is put last, as that which all the other particulars had a tendency to. And that by the souls of men there, is not meant in general only the persons of men, as we trade in negroes, but the souls taken strictly as the seats of reason and conscience, is plain,—because they are there distinguished from slaves, or as it is in the margin, bodies; nay, and that they may not be confounded, it is in the original put in a different case; και σωμάτων και ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων,—*it is the merchandise of bodies,* but it is *the soul* they aim at.

We are this day giving God thanks for the deliverance of our land from Popery; its first deliverance at the Reformation, when popish errors and delusions were discovered, disowned, and protested against; popish powers shaken off and broken; and popish idolatries and superstitions rooted up and purged out; its many deliverances since from the restless attempts of those inveterate hereditary enemies of our peace, to bring us back into Egypt again. Particularly, its deliverance from that base and barbarous design of blowing up the parliament-house with gunpowder this day, 107 years ago; a deliverance never to be forgotten by a people who to this day reap the blessed fruits of it, inasmuch as we should to this day have been groaning under the dismal fatal consequences of the plot, if it had taken effect. How deep the design was laid, and how high the hopes of our enemies grounded upon it were raised, and how near to be put in execution, when the discovery of it was its effectual defeat, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us; and a more full account of some particulars, relative to that happy deliverance, was published but last week, by an unknown but very judicious pen, entitled, "A Memorial to Protestants on the Fifth of November," and dated Oct. 25, 1712.

We are likewise to call to mind that glorious deliverance of our land, from another more dangerous attempt upon our religion, when that, with our civil liberties, lay ready to be sacrificed to a popish and arbitrary government; but God interposed, and our extremity was his opportunity to appear so much the more glorious for us: this was the Lord's doing, it was then, and ought still to be marvellous in our eyes, for it was done, not by might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts.[f] To that happy revolution we owe all that liberty and quietness we have enjoyed these twenty-four years past, all the blessings of the present reign, and the provision that is made for the preserving of that good thing which is committed to us, and the transmitting of it to posterity, by the entail of the crown upon the illustrious house of Hanover: besides all the advantages, which, not only foreign churches, but foreign nations, gained by the check it gave to the growing threatening greatness of the French King.

Now what is it that is the ground of our rejoicing in these great deliverances? It is the preservation of our religion, the Protestant religion, owned and professed among us; it is the keeping out of Popery, which at the Reformation was driven out, and which our popish enemies both at home and abroad, have been very industrious to bring in, and to re-establish among us by force and violence.

[a] Ps. 74. 22. [b] Jer. 14. 21. [c] Josh. 7. 9. [d] Rev. 11. 17. [e] Rev. 18. 13.

[f] Zec. 4. 6.

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It is proper, therefore, upon this occasion to inquire what that thing called Popery is; that mischievous dangerous thing from which we are delivered; what evil there is in it, and what harm it would do us, if it should get the mastery; that we may see what reason we have to be thankful, to be greatly thankful to God for our deliverance from it; and still to dread all its assaults upon us, and to pray against it; and this among many other bad things we have to charge it with, that if the Pope and Romish Clergy might have their will, they would say to our souls, *Bow, down, that me may go over.*

If Popery had carried its point in these and other attempts, we have reason to hope that many in our land would have borne their testimony against it, even to the death, and by the Grace of God would have overcome it[a] for themselves, and it would have been their honour (and the honour of our religion) to *die martyrs* or *live confessors*, in so good a cause; what multitudes of the most precious and valuable lives, besides liberties, families, and estates, must inevitably have been sacrificed to that Moloch, if it had been set up, is easy to imagine; for the spirit of Popery is a spirit of inhuman cruelty to all who oppose it, as appears not only by the martyrologies of former times, but by the late and present bloody and barbarous persecution of the poor French protestants, many of whom died martyrs, and many still live confessors in prisons, in the gallies, and in foreign countries; and there are, of them, ministers, aged ministers, in the extremes of poverty; monuments of the tender mercies of the wicked which are cruelty, that we may see what we were saved from when we were saved from popery. Yet this effect of the prevalence of Popery, though very dreadful, is capable of a more pleasing aspect—from the crown of glory and life, which they are as sure of who are faithful unto death in the service of Christ, as if it were already upon their heads.

But we have reason to fear, that in case of the prevalence of Popery, far the greater part of the nation would have yielded to it, and have gone down the stream; those who are under the power of infidelity and impiety, and are indeed of no religion, will readily be of any religion, especially of that which will indulge them in their lusts. And the tyranny of popery over the souls of sinners, is a much greater mischief, and of more fatal consequence, than its tyranny over the bodies of saints, and will appear so, if we look forward to the future state. And that is it which I would at this time open to you.

The Romish Clergy shew themselves not to be the *Followers of Christ*, by their affecting a worldly dominion, and the pomp and grandeur that attend it. Christ has said, *My kingdom is not of this world;*[b] and gave that as a reason, why his servants did not draw the sword in his defence; the kings of the earth, and those commissioned by them exercise Lordship, but the disciples of Christ "shall not be so,"[c] the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, it is the sword of the Spirit that is put into their hands, which is the word of God, and with that they are to fight his battles; those, therefore, who propagate the faith, and suppress heresy by croisades, and inquisitions, and massacres, and assassinations, and writs *de Hæretico comburendo,—of burning a heretick*, are certainly destitute of the Spirit of Christ and his Gospel. *Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are these?*

Yet this is not all; they shew themselves to be enemies of Christ, and rebels against him, by affecting a spiritual dominion over the souls and consciences of men; and that is the dominion, which (whatever they pretend) they thus violently contend for, and are so zealous for the maintenance and support of. It is not the faith of Christ, or the power of godliness, that they thus lay out themselves for the propagation of, but the advancement of their own wealth and power.

It has been commonly said, that popery and tyranny go together, and mutually befriend each other. I remember it was said by a great man at the time of the popish plot in King Charles the II.'s time, that he apprehended the project to be thus laid, "That in England popery was to bring in slavery, and in Scotland slavery was to bring in popery."* But with this I meddle not. As to our civil rights and liberties, we have great reason to thank God for our present enjoyment of them under a good government, and to pray to God for the continuance of them; but as to the claiming and adjusting of them, and contending for them, it must be left to the proper persons, to lawyers, parliaments, and diets; the original contracts and *pacta conventa,—agreed covenants* of the nations—to states and statesmen, *Tractent fabrilia fabri,—The engineers manage the machines.* But that which I have now to say against Popery, is, that it is itself the worst of tyrannies; it is a spiritual tyranny, and usurpation; it is a traiterous confederacy against the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ—and that is the kingdom of God which we are in the first place to seek, and to value ourselves upon our relation to.

Now I shall endeavour to make out, I. that Popery is an invasion upon the prerogatives of Christ, the Prince—and II. upon the rights and liberties of Christians, the Subjects—of this Kingdom; and so it is a direct and daring violation of the everlasting Gospel, the Magna Charta by which this kingdom is incorporated, and an impudent oppression of the souls of men, saying to them, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

I. The Papal Power usurps the prerogatives of our Lord Jesus, plucks the flowers of his crown, plunders the jewels of it, nay, it profanes his crown, by casting it to the ground, and, which is worse, putting it upon the head of a man of sin; and therefore when our Lord appears against this bold but base usurpation, for the bringing of it to ruin, his manifesto, by which he justifies his declaration of war is included in the name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*[d]

[a] Rev. 12. 11. [b] John 18. 36. [c] Luke 22. 26.

[d] Rev. 19. 16.

* See the Bishop of Clogher's Sermon, Oct. 23, 1712.

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Christ is the Sovereign of the heart; the rightful Sovereign; for him the throne is to be reserved; conscience is his deputy; by him it is to be commanded, and to him it is accountable; it is the "word of Christ" that is to dwell in the soul, and to rule there, and to him only every thought is to be brought into obedience, into a blessed captivity;[a] *The Kingdom of God is within you.*

Christ is the King of the Church, the political head of that body; to him all judgment is committed, both the legislative and the judicial power, for he has all power given him both in heaven and in earth; in the treaty of peace between God and man, he is the sole plenipotentiary, for *the Father loveth the Son, and has given all things into his hand.*[b] It is proclaimed before him as it was before Joseph, *Bow the knee; bow the soul; every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.*[c] Now this indisputable right which Christ alone has to say to souls, *Bow down,* is usurped in the church of Rome.

For, 1. The Pope is made to be the sovereign of the heart, and the head of the church, and to him they ascribe such a supremacy as is no way consistent with the honour of our Lord Jesus, and his just demands. Jesus Christ is our Lord and our God, but it is frequent with them to call the Pope *Dominus Deus noster Papa,—our Lord God the Pope;* * this was not a hasty word slipt from them, but some of their writers undertake to make out that he ought to be called so.

Christ is the great law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy: but they lodge in the Pope a power to make laws, immediately to bind conscience, though there be neither scripture nor reason for them, nay, though they be directly contrary both to scripture and reason; and it is a principle of their canon law, *that the Pope has all rights and all laws in his breast;* and *Papa judicatur a nemine,—is accountable to none.* †

It is one of the new articles of Pope Pius the 4th's Creed, that the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter there, *is the supreme and universal pastor of Christ's Church by divine appointment,* ‡ and that all churches, all Christians, all souls are bound to yield an implicit obedience to his commands. The Papists will not allow the Scriptures to have any authority but what is derived from the Pope, and *their* church; and whereas it is Christ's prerogative to have the keys of hell and death, they put these into the hands of the Bishop of Rome. Christ is the chief Shepherd, but they make the Pope to be *Pastor Pastorum,—the chief Shepherd*; and though they pretend to make him only Christ's Vicar, they really make him a rival with Christ for the throne. It is by Christ that Kings reign, and Princes decree justice,[d] and it is his law that every soul should be subject to the higher powers: but the church of Rome not only exempts its clergy from the jurisdiction of princes and civil powers, but subjects Kings and Emperors to the Pope, and gives him a power to dispose of their kingdoms.

Thus is the kingly office of our Lord Jesus invaded by that *Man of Sin,* who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;[e] and if he have such a power as he pretends to, it will follow of course that he may say to men's souls at his pleasure, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

2. They make the Pope an infallible director and judge, in matters of faith; and as one lie must be called in to maintain another, so this of the Pope's infallibility must be advanced to support his supremacy. They maintain that their church never erred, nor can err, that the Pope when he is in *Cathedrâ—the pontifical chair,* is an oracle; one of their most celebrated Doctors has plainly said, *If the Pope should err in commanding vices, and forbidding virtues, yet the church is bound to believe vices to be good, and virtues to be evil, or else she sins against conscience.* * It is a great slavery to be bound to an implicit obedience, but it is worse and a greater reproach to be bound to an implicit faith.

Our Lord Jesus has forbidden his disciples to be themselves called "Rabbi," because "One is our master even Christ," and his dictates alone are to be subscribed to as infallible; he has forbidden us to call any man Father upon earth, because *One is our Father in Heaven,*[f] on whom we depend for our education and direction; yet the Pope will have all to call him Father, *Most Holy Father,* and to follow him blindfold as their guide. The Apostles pretended not to have dominion over the Faith[g] of Christians: but the church of Rome undertakes to frame new creeds, witness that of Trent. Blessed Paul anathematized himself if he should preach any other gospel to Christians than what they had received:[h] but the church of Rome anathematizes all who adhere to the Gospel they had received, and will not embrace that which they add to it, and sentences them to the pit of Hell. We are directed to take heed to the Scriptures as to a *light shining in a dark place,*[i] and to have recourse to *the law and the testimony,*[k] and try by that touchstone; and to that we must bow our understanding: no, say they, you must refer yourselves to the Pope's infallibility, and to him your understandings must be captivated.

And what sort of men do you think these bishops of Rome have been who have been intrusted with this pretended infallibility? Were they holy men, such as they were who were moved by the Holy Ghost to write the Scriptures? No, one of themselves, even an historian of their own, confesses that many of them were *Hominum portenta,—Monsters of Men,* and that there were eighteen Popes successively one after another who were magicians, and in league with the Devil. † And another eminent writer among them owns, *There were scarce any sins, except that of heresy, which the Bishops of Rome were not guilty of.*

And what use have they made of their infallibility? Have they with the help of it expounded the dark places of Scripture, or accommodated differences

[a] 2 Cor. 10. 5. [b] Phil. 2. 9, 10. [c] *Ibid.* 11. [d] Prov. 8. 15.
* Gloss. Extravag. † Gratian, Decr. ‡ Decret. 1. 2. tit. 23.

[e] 2 Thess. 2. 4. [f] Matt. 23. 8, 9. [g] 1 Cor. 2. 5. [h] Gal. 1. 8.
[i] 2 Pet. 1. 19. [k] Isa. 8. 20.
* Bellarm. Lib. 4. De sum. Pontif. Cap. 5. † Platina in Pool.

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among Christians? No, but only have supported with it their own secular pomp and power, and the dominion they claim over the consciences of men in competition with, and therefore in opposition to, the prophetical office of Jesus Christ, in whom alone we are to believe.

3. They give the Pope a power to forgive sin, and to absolve from the punishment of it; and this is another invasion upon the prerogatives of Christ, who has *the power on earth to forgive sin*; and herein they are worse than the Scribes and Pharisees, whose principle it was, *None can forgive sins but God only.*[a]

They have a groundless notion that the spare merits of good men, by their works of supererogation; or superfluous satisfactions, which they had no occasion to make use of themselves; are laid up in the treasures of the Church, which the Pope has the key of, and grants the benefit of for a sum of money to such as he thinks qualified for it, by the fulness of his apostolical power: this is as daring a usurpation upon the royalties of the Lord Jesus, as it would be upon the prerogative of the sovereign—for any subject, and, especially, one who is himself a criminal, to undertake to pardon crimes committed against the majesty of the Prince, or to remit any part of the punishment; which would be so far from being pleadable in any court of justice, that to pretend to it would be a heinous crime.

The selling of the Pope's indulgences was the first thing that Luther witnessed against, of all the delusions of the Church of Rome, in the year 1517, and it broke the ice of the reformation; for his sister having a mind to purchase a pardon, he dissuaded her from it, which displeased the Priest who had the selling of them, who complained that Luther marred his markets, which gave him occasion to study the point, and that led him to a farther discovery of that great and complicated mystery of iniquity.

But their doctrine of indulgences is so miserably patched up by themselves, that it plainly appears to be a mere artifice for the magnifying of the power of the Pope, and the amusing of people into a blind veneration for him, and subjection to him; and the filling of his coffers with vast sums of money, which have enabled him to support his tyranny.

4. They make all this power to extend to the universal Church; nay and to all the world, declaring it by their canon law absolutely necessary to salvation, for every human creature to be subject to the Bishop of Rome; and not only all the reformed churches, but all the Greek churches are cut off from the catholic church by their sentence, because they own not the Pope for their supreme head.

It is Christ's prerogative to have power over all flesh;[b] his the kingdom is, and he is the governor among the nations;[c] he is the only universal monarch, to whom every tongue must swear;[d] he is the centre of the Church's unity, to whom are gathered together all the children of God who were scattered abroad.[e] This honour the Pope usurps, though he knows not a great part of the world, nor can have any correspondence with it, or be any way of use to it; yet he will have all power derived from him, and depend upon him; and all churches to meet in him. And herein he is a genuine king of Babylon, a son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, that son of pride, who affected to have all people, nations, and languages, to tremble and fear before him.[f]

Thus is Popery an impious usurpation of the powers and prerogatives of the Lord Jesus, and therefore ought to be looked upon with a jealous eye, by all who know themselves obliged—to *honour the Son as they honour the Father*;[g] and therefore to be as far from other Christs, as from other Gods; and to call them Anti-gods, and Anti-christs, however they pretend to be Vice-christs and Vice-gods.

II. The papal power invades the rights and liberties of the subjects of Christ's Kingdom, enslaves them, oppresses them, and tyrannizes over them, and says to their souls, *Bow down*, and worship the image of the beast, that golden image of paganism, the first beast which they have set up;[h] *Bow down, that we may go over.* As one of the Popes made the Emperor bow down, and then set his foot upon his neck, impiously applying that promise to it, *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder.* And thus have the Romish Priests gloried in their triumphs over the souls of men; one of them said, "If Luther had not appeared when he did, they should have brought the people to eat grass like oxen."

Let us observe some of the many instances that might be given of the tyranny of the Church of Rome over the souls of men.

1. They oblige people to believe as true, whatever their church requires them to believe, though never so contrary to sense and reason; and not only so, but to curse and condemn as heretical, whatever the Council of Trent has adjudged to be so. They do in effect require men to give up their understandings, and to pin their faith upon the Pope's sleeve, though they know not whither he will carry it, and suffer him to put out their eyes, and lead them whithersoever he pleases. All freedom of thought, and with it all the dignities and privileges of the human soul, as rational and intelligent, are surrendered and betrayed; no liberty left for the use of reason when a man is tied *jurare in verba Magistri—to swear every thing that their Church says*, though it should be that black is white, and white black. The Collier's faith, "I believe as the Church believes, and the Church believes as I believe," which all wise men make a jest of, they make the foundation of their faith, and a sovereign antidote against infidelity.

A grosser instance of this cannot be given, than the belief of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was introduced for no other end but to magnify the Priests, and make poor people admire them, and give up themselves to their conduct, though they were ever so ignorant and scandalous. Was ever such a tyranny over the souls of men, as making them believe that that which

[a] Mark 2. 7. John 17. 2. [c] Ps. 22. 28. [d] Isa. 45. 23. [e] John 11. 52.

[f] Dan. 5. 19. [g] John 5. 23. [h] Rev. 13. 15.

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they see and feel, and smell and taste to be bread, is not bread, but the body of a man; and that which they see, and smell, and taste to be wine, is not wine, but the blood of a man; and this prodigious imaginary change to be wrought by the Priests pronouncing five words over it, *Hoc est enim corpus meum—for this is my body.* Our Saviour appealed to men's senses: for the proof of his miracles, *Go tell John what ye hear and see;* and of his resurrection, *Handle me, and see me:* this is dealing with men as men, and putting an honour upon their nature; but the Church of Rome demands the belief of that which bids defiance to four of our five senses at once, and is directly contradicted by them. So that as the excellent Archbishop Tillotson speaks, "The business of transubstantiation is not a controversy of Scripture against Scripture, or of reason against reason, but of downright impudence against the plain meaning of Scripture, and all the sense and reason of mankind. It is a most self-evident falsehood, and there is no doctrine or proposition in the world that is of itself more evidently true, than transubstantiation is evidently false." And yet the Papists as firmly believe it as that there is a God; nor do they leave it to be a matter of doubtful disputation in the schools, but have reduced it to practice: for if they do not believe it, they must own themselves to be the most gross idolaters in worshipping the bread they suppose to be thus metamorphosed; and the most barbarous murderers in putting those to death with inhuman cruelty who will not believe it too. For (as Fuller observes) this was in Q. Mary's time "The *burning doctrine*, the test by which the martyrs were tried;" and the Popish persecutors then were so perfectly lost to all sense of reason and honour, as to condemn the most valuable lives to so great a death as being burnt at a stake, only because they could not believe this monstrous absurdity. Were ever the powers and faculties of the human soul so trampled upon, and trodden into the dirt? yet those who receive Popery must receive this.

And when the soul is brought to *bow down* to this, they are ready to *go over it* with troops of strong delusions, and make it believe a thousand lies, when once it is persuaded to believe this. For as conscience, so faith, when it is thoroughly debauched in one instance, lies exposed in any other. Those who have once swallowed transubstantiation, will never be choked with any of the forgeries of their lying legends, or the impostures of their miracles and relics, which some of themselves have the honesty to own to be frauds, but the wickedness to call pious frauds. And to say, "If people will be deceived, let them be deceived," though it may serve them to laugh in their sleeves with now, will prove but a miserable excuse for their impiety and villany in the Great Day.

2. They oblige people to obey all the commands of their Church, though ever so contrary to the divine commands. I remember in a little catechism published here by the Romish emissaries in King James the IId's time, the answer to that question, "What is sin?" was, "Sin is the transgression of the law of God, or of the Church;" so making the laws of their Church equally binding with the laws of God; nay, they make them to be of a superior obligation; and if men make conscience of observing the law of God, they say to such consciences, *Bow down, that we may go over*, you are to obey the Church, and not God.

A plain proof of this is their worship of images. God has expressly forbidden it, and, frequently in his word, has given many reasons for that prohibition; there is no sin which has been more severely punished by the righteous God, nor more courageously witnessed against by righteous men; and yet the Church of Rome commands and compels all its members to fall down and worship images of God, Christ, and the Saints; to pray before them, and burn incense to them; to adore the consecrated host with the same worship that they would give to Christ himself. And to shew that they command this in contempt and defiance of the law of God, and in pursuance of their own authority over the souls of men, they leave the second commandment, out of the Ten, in all their catechisms and books of devotion, and have done so for many ages, and so they call the third commandment the second, the fourth the third, and so on; but because people had heard that there were ten, lest they should miss that precious jewel which they have stolen, they divide the tenth into two; and the ninth commandment with them is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house;* and the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.* You will scarce believe that men could be guilty of such impudence and impiety, and imposition upon souls, but I assure you it is true.

It is the express command of God, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve:* but contrary to this command, they require people to pray to saints and angels, which is expressly forbidden to St. John by an angel himself, *See thou do it not;*[a] *but worship God.*[b] They require I know not what higher degree of worship to be paid to the Virgin Mary, than to other saints, and desire her to command her Son to help them; and give no reason for this and many other such impositions, but *sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas—thus I will, thus I command, my will stands for reason;* now how miserably must the souls of men be racked and torn by this usurped power; when their own reason and conscience tell them, they must worship God and Christ only, but their Priests tell them, in obedience to the Church, they must pray to this and the other saint; *No man indeed can serve two masters,* when their commands thus contradict one another; and, therefore, they must certainly disown God for their Master, who take their church for their Mistress; and a miserable choice they make, for God says to the soul, *Lift it up,* that he may receive and embrace it; they say to the soul, *Bow down,* that they may *go over it,* and trample upon it.

3. They forbid the use of the Scriptures to the common people, and oblige them (as the heathen persecutors of old forced the Christians) to surrender their Bibles; because they could not enslave them, if they did not first put out their eyes, and disarm them of the sword of the Spirit.

[a] Rev. 19. 10. [b] Rev. 22. 9.

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It is the privilege of reasonable creatures to judge for themselves, and, therefore, in all matters of concern to be furnished with the proper rule they are to judge by; but Papists resign this privilege to their Priests, who bid them leave it to them to chuse for them. It is the privilege of Christians, as formerly of the Jews, that to them are committed the oracles of God,[a] the sure word of prophecy; they have Moses and the Prophets,[b] and are commanded to hear them; the Bereans are commended, because they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so which the Apostles themselves preached to them. But the Church of Rome will not allow Christians to consult this oracle, forbids what Christ has commanded, not only as in other things to shew her authority, but because she cannot otherwise support her authority; for if people might but have liberty to look with an unprejudiced eye into the word of God, they would not suffer themselves to be thus enslaved by the craft of men. But they who impose on their customers with counterfeit goods, find it their interest to keep their shops dark. The Philistines could never have made Sampson grind in their prison-house, if they had not first blinded him.

This is not only an imperious piece of tyranny, but a barbarous piece of cruelty to the souls of men; for they who take away the key of knowledge from men, shut up the kingdom of heaven against them. And "it is a very hard case" (says Archbishop Tillotson) "to which the Church of Rome has reduced men, that it will neither allow them salvation out of their Church, nor the best and most effectual means of salvation when they are in it."[c]

4. They take away the cup in the Lord's Supper from the laity, and will allow them to communicate but in one kind. This is a great affront to our Lord Jesus, who, in the institution of this ordinance, appointed his disciples, all of them to drink of the cup, as well as to eat of the bread; and that decree of the Romish Church, which forbids the people the use of the cup, did it with an express *non obstante—notwithstanding* opposed to the divine institution. So said the Council of Constance, "Though Christ did administer this sacrament under both kinds, yet *notwithstanding this*, the custom of communicating under one kind only, is now to be taken for a law;" that is, you who make conscience of conforming to the will of Christ, must quit that principle, and must *bow down, that we may go over.*

But this is not all: as it is an affront to Christ, so it is a great wrong and injury to Christians, and deprives them of part of the legacy which their Redeemer left them; in denying them the cup of blessings, they do, as far as they can, deny them the blessings themselves. And as those are reckoned to tyrannize over the bodies of men who take away their goods, which they are legally entitled to; so they certainly tyrannize over men's souls, who deprive them of a privilege they are evangelically entitled to: for, as an excellent pen well expresses it, "Look what benefit a man would be robbed of, in being deprived of Christ's blood; that comfort he is robbed of, who is deprived of this cup."

5. They make the validity and virtue of the sacraments, to depend upon the intention of the priest or minister.* So the council of Trent has decreed; and hence it will follow, that if the Priest either be carelessly thinking of something else, or wilfully and wickedly design something else, when he baptizes, or consecrates the bread and wine, it is no sacrament at all, nor has any virtue in it to the receiver; the person so baptized is no member of the Church; the host so consecrated is not the body of Christ, and therefore it is idolatry to worship it.

Now can any thing tyrannize more over the souls of men than this? or put it more into the power of every profane, ignorant, drunken Priest, to tyrannize over them,—when they lie at his mercy, and in a thing too which they can never be sure of, whether they shall have any benefit by the sacraments? "So that when a man has done all he can to work out his own salvation, he shall be never the nearer, only for want of that which is wholly out of his power;† the right intention of the priest."

6. They offer up their public prayers and praises in a language, which the generality of the people do not understand. The mass is all in Latin, which is not at this day the vulgar tongue in any nation; so are their psalms, and other devotions. And this is designed to support the reputation of their Priests, that they may be thought to have more learning than their neighbours; and to train people up in that blind devotion of their Church, which they boast that ignorance is the mother of.

This is a great dishonour to God, it is taking his name in vain, and bringing the blind for sacrifice; it is directly contrary to the law of Christ, who has commanded us to pray and praise with understanding; and so full and plain is the Apostle's discourse against it, (1 Cor. 14.) that a Papist happening to read that chapter, which he had been kept in ignorance of before, professed he thought St. Paul was a Lutheran.

But that which I now condemn it for is, its tyranny over the souls of men; it deprives them of the comfort and benefit of prayer; utterly disables them to pray in faith, and in the spirit; and puts it in the power of the Priest (and that is it which by all means possible must be supported) to make the people say Amen to the most direful imprecations, or execrations, which a wicked Priest, by the change of a word or two, unobserved, and undiscovered, may turn the prayers into! Thus as in believing, and obeying, so in praying, the souls of men considered as rational, are tyrannized over; and are put under the Priests' girdles.

7. They oblige all people at some certain times to confess all their sins privately to a Priest, in order to their receiving absolution from him. This is as mischievous an engine of papal tyranny as any other, and is as perfect a rack to the consciences of men. Thus men are made to stand in awe of, and are brought into

[a] John 5. 39. [b] Luke 16. *ult.* Compare Mat. 23. 13. with Luke 11. 52.

* Can. 11. † See Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. I.

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subjection to their Priests, as the fathers of their spirits, as having it in their power to admit them into, or shut them out of the kingdom of heaven; by this artifice they let themselves into the secrets of men's lives and affairs, which makes it every man's interest to please them, and upon any terms to keep in with them.

*Scire volunt secreta Domûs atque inde timeri.**—

They wish to know the secrets of the house, that thus they may be feared.

This province therefore, of receiving confessions,—of all the orders of the Romish Clergy, the Jesuits have most applied themselves to, who are most slaves to the Pope, enemies to the Protestants, and lords over the souls of men; and with the help of this carry on their great design to aggrandize and enrich themselves, and enslave and impoverish those about them.

8. They impose what penances they please upon those who come to them to receive absolution, and force them to submit to them, by denying them absolution unless they do. Never did any prince pretend to such an authority over a subject, any parent over a child, or master over his servant, as the confessor claims over his penitent, which he is told he is bound in conscience to submit to, though the services enjoined be never so absurd, and the injunction never so arbitrary. Judges must give sentence according to law, but confessors according to humour, whether a gay humour, which makes the penance like children's play, or an imperious malicious one, which makes it worse than Bridewell. These things are industriously kept private; but I have been told of some, who, by pilgrimages to, and penances in St. Winifred's Well, in my country, imposed upon them by their Priests, have ruined their health, and lost their lives, and it is easy to say at whose hands their blood will be required, for God never required these things at their hands.

And that which in this matter is the greatest imposition of all is, that they are made to believe, that these corporal austerities (or barbarities rather) make satisfaction to God's justice for their sins; which is a great indignity done to Christ, as if his satisfaction were deficient, and needed to be thus helped out, and a great cheat put upon the souls of men; but thus do they triumph over conscience, and take a pride in making that a duty and debt to God, which is done in pure obedience to them.

Even crowned heads, by bringing conscience into the case, have been made to submit to this tyranny; witness our King Henry the II. who, because he complained, and very justly, of the insolent and traiterous carriage of Thomas a Becket, then Bishop of Canterbury, whence some ruffians who heard him, took occasion, utterly unknown to him, to go and kill the Bishop, was obliged to go to Canterbury, and when he came within sight of Becket's Church, he alighted from his horse, put off his shoes and stockings, and walked bare-foot to Becket's tomb, and there suffered himself to be whipped on the naked back by the monks of Canterbury.† This is Popery, this is tyranny, this is saying to mens souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.*

9. They undertake to absolve men from their lawful oaths, and to dissolve and dispense with the most solemn and sacred obligations, and thus triumph over conscience as much by the looses they give it, contrary to the law of God, as by the bonds they lay upon it, contrary to that law.

There is nothing which the light of nature, and consent of nations, teach men to have more a veneration for, and a deeper sense of the obligation of, than the ordinances of marriage, and an oath, which men who have any thing of conscience left, will make conscience of being true to; and yet the Church of Rome has ways of breaking these bonds in sunder.

As in the case of marriage, they exercise their tyranny in forbidding marriage to ministers at all times, and forbidding it to all people at some certain seasons of the year! so they do in dissolving marriages, when the parties enter into religion, (as they call it) and are professed.

And if a Prince disoblige the Pope so far, that he adjudge him a heretic, his subjects are absolved from their oath of alleg iance to him; though he be ever so able and willing to protect them, and govern them according to law, they ought not to defend him, or stand by him; and if any think themselves bound by their oath, they shall be told, that the Pope has dispensed with that; and thus does he say to men's souls, *Bow down.*

10. By the fear of purgatory, and the hope of advantage which men's souls may have, by Masses said for them after they are dead, they amass to themselves vast riches, to the ruin of families, and the civil interests of the nations; and this is another instance of the tyranny of Popery.

When men have thoughts of death, and see it at the door, then, if ever, conscience is awake, and then it is seasonable to take hold of it, that in consideration of it the soul may be effectually brought to repentance and faith, and resignation to God, and a holy heavenly temper; and they who are so influenced by it, may go comfortably under the conduct of our Lord Jesus into another world: but here the Romish clergy put in for a dominion over men's consciences; they possess even good men with a dreadful apprehension of the pains of purgatory, which they must endure for a great while before they can go to heaven,—in order to their cleansing, that they may enter pure into eternal life; it is fire, it is a prison; and after all, it is a fancy, a mere chimera, an invention of their own, that has no foundation in the word of God. But they have a way to lighten and shorten these pains; leave the Church, the Priest, or the Convent a good legacy, leave them a part of your estates, and by Masses you shall soon have a discharge procured for you. Thus they frighten people with an imaginary evil, which

* Juv. Sat.

† Fuller's Ch. Hist. Lib. 3.

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Christ never threatened; to seek for an imaginary deliverance, which Christ never promised; by endowing monasteries, and maintaining priests in superstition and idolatry, a service which Christ never required.

"Purgatory pick-purse," so it has been called for this reason; the locusts of the Romish Clergy have been wont to swarm about the beds of dying men, to gain from them—or about their graves, to gain from their surviving friends—grants of lands, or sums of money to prav them out of purgatory; and thus by tyrannizing over men's souls, they vastly enrich themselves and their Church, and so become capable of tyrannizing over men in every thing else.

In the dark times of Popery, grants to the religious, as they called them—and the religious houses—were become so many, and so rich, that the wisdom of the state saw fit to restrain them by the statute of Mortmain, in the third year of Edward I. which made it necessary to have the royal licence for such endowments; otherwise, says our historian, all England would in a short time have become one entire continued monastery.* The like laws for limiting men's liberality to the Church, had been made a little before in France and Spain; which could never have been done at that time, if the fatal consequences of it had not been most apparently clear; and if the guardians of the public peace and welfare had not plainly seen what they were aiming at, who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over;* nothing less than enslaving the kingdom too.

11. The greatest instance of the tyranny of the Church of Rome over the souls of men, is their making princes and magistrates, and others, the conscientious tools of their persecuting rage, against those who will not receive the mark of the beast in their foreheads or their right hands.

When princes make bloody laws against their own subjects, who willingly pay them tribute, are ready to serve them, pray for them, and live quiet and peaceable lives under them, and contribute their share to the nation's wealth and strength, rendering in every thing to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, only desiring to reserve their consciences for God, because they are his; when edicts made for their protection, and solemnly ratified, are most perfidiously and ungratefully repealed after a thousand direct violations of them, and troops of dragoons, those booted Apostles, are commissioned (by the most barbarous and inhuman outrages and tortures that ever the malice of hell invented) to force men's consciences, or destroy their lives and families; when those who might be the profitable members of a state, are thrown into bonds or banishment, against all the true politics of a nation; when courts of inquisition are kept up, their proceedings countenanced against all the established rules of justice and equity, and their most unrighteous sentences executed blindfold by the secular arm; when all the bowels of humanity are put off, and all the bonds of relation, friendship, and neighbourhood, are broken through, and those who are both harmless and resistless are massacred in their beds and houses in cold blood, as many thousands of Protestants were in Paris, and other parts of France in 1572, and in Ireland in 1641;—and lastly, when princes, whose persons are taken under the particular protection of the laws of God and man, are barbarously assassinated by their own subjects, as Henry IVth of France was by Ravillac;—it is natural to inquire, how it is possible that men should act so contrary to the dictates of nature, and reason, and interest, how one man could be such a bear, such a beast to another; and it will be found upon enquiry, that the power of the Church of Rome over misguided consciences is at the bottom of all this; the bigotted clergy said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over,* and then they are at their service, not only to do the greatest drudgery, and think it no dishonour to themselves, but to perpetrate the greatest villany, and to think it no dishonour to God, as long as they are made to believe it is for the advantage of the Church, the propagating of the faith, and the extirpation of heresy. A zeal for that which they call the catholic cause is thought sufficient, not only to justify, but even to sanctify murder, treason, perjury, and all manner of wickedness.

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.—
To so much evil could their religion persuade them.

In them is fulfilled what Christ said to his disciples, that those who killed them would think they did God service;[b] and what God of old said by the prophet concerning his people, that those who hated them, and cast them out, would say, *Let the Lord be glorified.*[c] But what an insult is this upon conscience, what a tyranny over it! What a force put upon it; such a dominion could never have been gained over it, but by the power of strong delusions. Surely never were kings and kingdoms so ridden, never were princes so intoxicated,[d] as those are who have given their power and honour to the beast.

Many more instances might be given for the proof of this charge, that Popery is a spiritual tyranny, ut these shall suffice.

The Application.

1. Let this confirm and increase our pious zeal against Popery, and a holy indignation at the pride and tyranny of the Church and Court of Rome. We may now be tempted to cry out, "O Jesus, are these thy christians!" Are these the followers of the meek and lowly Saviour, who did not strive or cry; who came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister;[e] not to destroy men's lives, but to save them?[f] Are these professors of that gospel, which makes these, two of its first precepts, Humility and Charity? Can those be ever owned as friends of Christ,

* Fuller's Ch. Hist. Lib. 3. 127.

[b] John 16. 2. [c] Isa. 66. 5. [d] Rev. 17. 2.
[e] Mat. 20. 28. [f] Luke 10. 56.

who

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who ride over the heads,[a] and set their feet upon the necks, and, which is worst of all, trample upon the consciences of the free-born subjects of God's kingdom in the world?

Is it possible that under the umbrage of Christ's name—and that particularly by such, as from his saving healing name JESUS call themselves Jesuites—so much opposition should be given, and so much mischief done to pure Christianity. But therefore Popery is called a mystery of iniquity,[b] because it has a show of piety and devotion; it is that beast that has horns like a lamb, and yet speaks as a dragon;[c] that enemy that sits in the temple of God, and yet there tramples on all that is sacred.

Far be it from me to possess you with hatred against the persons of any, no, we ought to love our enemies, and do them good; but it is the way of Popery, as it is contrary to the way of Christianity, that I think we all ought to conceive and retain a dislike of, and an antipathy to.

Our Lord Jesus in his preaching was never so severe upon any sort of sinners as he was upon the Scribes and Pharisees, who buoying themselves up with the traditions of the elders, bound heavy burthens upon men's consciences, and grievous to be borne;[d] nor is there any thing more contrary to the temper and constitution of the Gospel, than ministers' lording it over God's heritage,[e] for it is by the power of truth, and reason, and holiness, and love, that they are to rule; nor than Christians, making themselves the servants of men[f] in things pertaining unto God, for *where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*[g]

It may justly be wondered at, that such a spiritual tyranny as this has continued so long in the Church, that God has so long suffered it, and men have so long submitted to it; but God has wise and holy ends in permitting it, *It must needs be that such offences come, that they which are perfect may be made manifest;* and it ought not to be a stumbling block to us, for we are told before that the Holy City must be trodden under foot forty and two months;[h] and as for those who submit to it, we have reason to fear that God has herein given them up to a judicial infatuation, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.[i] They who shake off the easy gentle yoke of God's government, it is just with him to leave them to submit to the iron yoke of the King of Babylon. *They shall be his servants,* (says God) *that they may know* the difference between *my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.*[k] Because Israel had despised God's statutes, therefore he gave them statutes that were not good,[l] he left them to be subject to the imposition of their proud oppressors. But though this usurped abused dominion has continued long, we may hope it will not continue always; its day shall come, to fall, for the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God, and will fulfil every word that he has spoken.

2. Let us pity and pray for those nations of the earth who are under the yoke of this tyranny and oppression, and I wish I could say were groaning under it. It is sad to think how many there are who have a zeal for God, but it is not according to knowledge,[m] for they are kept in ignorance of the Scripture, and so are easily led into idolatry and false worship, and their devotion is misplaced. We ought to look upon them with compassion, and to pray that God would send the light of the Gospel among them, and open their eyes to receive it; that those who mean honestly, may be brought to the knowledge of the truth. O that God would effectually call his people out of that captivity; and that Zion, who dwells with the daughter of Babylon,[n] would deliver herself, and that God would deliver her; that God would by his Spirit stir up the captives to arise and shake themselves from their dust, and loose themselves from the bands of their neck.[o] O that the same spirit of life that entered into the dry bones at the Reformation, might put life into the bones that are yet dead, for they are very many, and lo they are very dry. We should pray earnestly for the conversion of the Papists who are of our own nation, and live among us, that their mistakes may be rectified, and their prejudices removed, and I heartily wish that more were done toward it by the rational gentle methods of the Gospel, than is; and particularly for the instruction of the Papists in Ireland, by the carrying on of that which seems to be a very excellent design, of preaching the Gospel to them in their own language.

We have reason to fear there are many who are convinced of the errors of Popery, but are carried down the stream in them, (*Eamus ad communem Errorem,—Let us join in the popular error,*) and are held by force and fear in practices contrary to their convictions, and know not how to help themselves. Did we, as we ought, put our souls into their souls' stead, we should pity their case; and, O that God would hear the sorrowful sighings of those prisoners, and find out a way to deliver them from the insults of those who say to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.* It is the case of those they call The new converts in France; O that by some means or other, Pharaoh and his taskmasters may be compelled to let God's people go, that they may serve him.

And by the prophecies in the Revelation, it is intimated to us, that we should pray particularly for the Kings of the earth, that God would put it into their hearts to assert the rights of their crowns against the bold invasions of the Man of Sin; and to give their power and honour to the Lord Jesus; that he would inspire them with hatred of this Mother of Harlots, that as it is prophesied, they may make her desolate and naked;[p] that the righteous men may judge her after the manner of adultresses,[q] and free themselves and their kingdoms from the papal yoke. But who shall live when God does this?

3. Let us bless God that we of this nation are by the

[a] Psa. 66. 12. [b] 2 Thess. 2. 7. [c] Rev. 13. 11. [d] Mat. 23. 4. [e] 1 Pet. 5. 3. [f] 1 Cor. 7. 23. [g] 2 Cor. 3. 17. [h] Rev. 11. 2. [i] 2 Thess. 2. 10. [k] 2 Chron. 12. 8. [l] Ezek. 20. 25.

[m] Rom. 10. 2. [n] Zech. 2. 7. [o] Isa. 52. 2. [p] Rev. 17. 16. [q] Ezek. 23. 45.

providence

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providence and grace of God delivered out of this house of bondage; that we are a protestant nation, were made so above 150 years ago, and continue so to this day, notwithstanding the restless designs of our popish enemies to bring us back into Egypt again, like Pharaoh's, to re-inslave Israel. Many a weapon has been formed against us and our holy religion, which has not prospered. Here we may set up our Eben-ezer, for hitherto the Lord has helped us. *No enchantment* has hitherto *prevailed against our Jacob, nor any divination against our Israel,*[a] but *according to this time* it has been said, and shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, *What has God wrought!*

We can never be enough thankful to God for the abolishing of the papal power in these islands; and the preventing of its return. *Happy art thou, O* Great Britain, *who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord.* Think what a mercy it is to us that we have the Scriptures in a language we understand; our Father's will in our mother tongue; that the pure word of God is read in our synagogues every sabbath-day; that we have plenty of bibles, that care is taken to teach even the children of the poor to read, and that we have so many helps in searching the Scriptures, that we may understand them; that we may *see with our own eyes,* and may find, our religion there, where alone we are to seek it, in the Word of God: that our public prayers and praises are offered up so that we may join in them with understanding; that we have the Lord's Supper in both kinds, and not maimed; that we worship God only, and are not compelled to pay the homage to saints and angels which is his due; and to say more Ave-Marys than Pater-Nosters. That we are not imposed upon by the frauds and forgeries of popish priests, as the poor deluded members of the church of Rome are; but have the bread of life broken to us by the stewards of the mysteries of God, and are nourished up with the words of truth and good doctrine;[b] and what is the chaff to that wheat? We can never be enough thankful to God for these privileges, and ought to take care, lest by our unthankfulness for them, we provoke God to deprive us of them.

4. Being delivered from this spiritual oppression, let us serve God the more cheerfully in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.[c] What will it avail us to be Protestants in profession, if we be not Christians in sincerity? To be of a reformed Church, if we be not reformed in our own conversations, and transformed through the grace of God by the renewing of our minds. This is that which with all earnestness I would now in the close press upon you all.

Brethren, we are delivered from the power of the Man of Sin at Rome, but what the better shall we be for that, if we continue under the power of the Man of Sin in our own hearts, the anti-christ in our own bosoms, which will be to us the more dangerous enemy. You can glory in it that you are not priest-ridden, but your glory may well be turned into shame if you be pride-ridden, and passion-ridden, and lust-ridden. You thank God that you are not drudges to the Pope, and slaves to the French, and you have reason to do so; but your thanks are thankless, if by covetousness you continue drudges to the world, and by sensuality, slaves to the flesh, and a base lust, that *saith to your souls, Bow down, that we may go over.* We live in an age of liberty, but withal it is an age of libertinism, an age of licentiousness, the stream of which is so strong, that there is need of great resolution, and that in the strength of God's grace, to swim against it. Be persuaded therefore, whatever snare of the Devil any of you are taken in, give diligence to recover yourselves out of it, that you may not any longer be led captive by him at his will.[d] The service of sin is perfect slavery, let it not then reign in your mortal bodies,—because they are mortal, and must shortly return to the dust whence they came; nor in your immortal souls,—because they are immortal, and must shortly return to God who gave them. Suffer not appetite and passion to get dominion over conscience and right reason, but since sin is a tyrant, dethrone it, depose it, and shake off its yoke.

But this is not all, being delivered from this tyranny, submit yourselves to the government of the Lord Jesus. He *saith to your souls, Bow down,* not *that he may go over* them, but that he may raise them up; he has authority over your souls, yield to his authority. *Kiss the Son.* Come and take his yoke upon you, and draw in it; it is an easy yoke; the yoke of his institution is very easy, in comparison with the yoke of the ceremonial law, much more in comparison with that of the canon law. He has right to rule us, and rules by love; his service is perfect freedom, come, therefore, and bow your souls to him; your understandings to his truths, your wills to his laws, and let every thought within you be brought into obedience to him. It is foretold, that *they that go down to the dust shall bow before him,* since none can of himself *keep alive his own soul;* we are all going down to the dust,[e] nay, if infinite mercy prevent not, we are going down to the pit, and cannot save ourselves from death or hell; come therefore, and let us bow before the Lord Jesus, make him our head, and be willing in the day of his power.

5. Being delivered out of the snare of popish tyranny, let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,[f] and dread the thoughts of being again entangled in that snare. However it may change its disguises, Popery is the same evil thing that ever it was; and its patrons and factors as restless as ever to re-establish it in our land; and to bring us back again to the Egyptian brick-kilns; and I wish there be not those among ourselves,—who make light of our deliverance, as even the captive Israelites did of Moses, because when he saw the Hebrews strive together, he said to him that did the wrong, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?*[g] —who because we are not in Canaan immediately, are for *making a captain* to return into Egypt.[h]

We have therefore no reason to be secure, but to take heed lest by our sins we provoke God to suffer

[a] Num. 23. 23. [b] 1 Tim. 4. 6. [c] Luke 1. 74, 75.
[d] 2 Tim. 2. 26. [e] Psal. 22. 29. [f] Gal. 5. 1.
[g] Exod. 2. 13. [h] Neh. 9. 17.

these

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these oppressors of conscience again to have dominion over us. O let us be earnest with God in prayer, to keep Popery out of our nation, and to fortify our bulwarks against it, that if that enemy should come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord may again lift up a standard against him.

We know not how we should be able to bear up and keep our ground, if trying times should come, and therefore have reason to pray that there may be a lengthening of our tranquillity, and we may not be put to the trial. Dread the departure of our glory, in the captivity of our ark; and the removal of our candlestick, in the loss of our bibles; and let us in our places do what it becomes us to do in defence of the present protestant government and settlement we are under, that the blessings thereof may be safely transmitted to those who shall come after us, that the children who shall be created may praise the Lord for them.

6. Let us all carefully watch against that in ourselves, which we witness against in the Church of Rome, lest we be found condemning ourselves in that thing which we allow.

We condemn the Papists for their idolatry, and formality in worship, let us take heed of spiritual idolatry, of making images of God in our fancy, and worshipping them; of resting in the outside of duties, and suffering our hearts to depart from God, when we draw nigh to him with our mouths, and honour him with our lips; let us take heed lest we grow customary in our accustomed services, and lest our devotion degenerate into a formality, and by losing its life become a carcass.

We condemn them for putting contempt upon the Scriptures, keeping people in ignorance of them, and setting up other rules in competition with them; let us take heed, lest we through carelessness and neglect of our duty, keep our families, our children and servants ignorant of the Scriptures, and lest we be ourselves strangers to them; and govern ourselves by the will of the flesh, and the way of the world in these things, wherein the word of God ought to be our commanding rule.

We have been now condemning them for imposing upon men's consciences, and tyrannizing over them, let us take heed to ourselves, lest there be in us any thing of that spirit; lest we grow magisterial in prescribing to others, and censuring them; and lest we expect every sheaf to bow to ours, and every one to believe just as we believe, and speak just as we speak, and do just as we do, or else condemn him as none of God's people; and no follower of Christ, because he follows not with us. Our conscience ought to be a rule to ourselves, and by it let every man prove his own work; but we ought not to make it a standard to every one else, by it to judge and set at nought our brother; as if all were blind who do not see with our eyes, and all out of the way to Heaven, who do not walk in our particular path, but let all our works be done with charity. As we may remember for our comfort, that others are not to be our judges, or our Lords, so we must remember for caution, that we are not to be their judges or their Lords; both they and we must stand or fall to our own Master,[a] to whom therefore we are concerned to approve ourselves, and refer one another.

There are many things, about which good Christians may, both in judgment and practice, differ from one another, and yet both sides be accepted of God; and therefore they ought to make the best one of another, since there are faults on both sides, and neither without something good. And for private persons to hate and despise, to censure and condemn, to expose and reproach those who are not in every thing of their mind, is in effect the same thing, as it is in Popes and Councils to excommunicate, hereticate, and anathematize all who subscribe not to their sentiments and injunctions; it is saying to men's souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.* But let us make it appear, that we have not so learned Christ; that we are governed by a spirit of love, and not of bigotry. In those things which concern the power of godliness, let us be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, and zealous of good works; but in those things which only concern the form of it, let us take heed of being too hot, lest we be found serving ourselves; but let us conscientiously walk according to the light that God has given us, and charitably believe that others do so too; which is but doing as we would be done by.

[a] Rom. 14. 3, 4.

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A

METHOD FOR PRAYER,

WITH

SCRIPTURE EXPRESSIONS

PROPER TO BE USED UNDER EACH HEAD.

To the Reader.

RELIGION is so much the business of our lives, and the worship of God so much the business of our religion, that what has a sincere intention, and probable tendency to promote and assist the acts of religious worship (I think) cannot be unacceptable to any who heartily wish well to the interests of God's kingdom among men: for if we have spiritual senses exercised, true devotion (that aspiring flame of pious affections to God, as far as in a judgment of charity we discern it in others, though in different shapes and dresses, which may seem uncouth to one another) cannot but appear beautiful and amiable, and as far as we feel it in our own breasts, cannot but be found very pleasant and comfortable.

Prayer is a principal branch of religious worship, which we are moved to by the very light of nature, and obliged to by some of its fundamental laws. Pythagoras's golden verses begin with this precept, "Whatever Men made a God of they prayed to," *Deliver me, for thou art my God*, Isa. 44. 17. Nay, *Deos qui rogat ille facit,—whatever they prayed to they made a God of.* It is a piece of respect and homage so exactly consonant to the natural ideas which all men have of God, that it is certain those who live without prayer, live without God in the world.

Prayer is the solemn and religious offering up of devout acknowledgments and desires to God, or a sincere representation of holy affections, with a design to give unto God the glory due unto his name thereby, and to obtain from him promised favours, and both through the Mediator. Our English word prayer is too confined, for that properly signifies petition or request; whereas humble Adorations of God, and Thanksgivings to him, are as necessary in prayer as any other part of it. The Greek word Προσωχὴ, from Ἐυχὴ, is a vow directed to God. The Latin word *Votum* is used for prayer. Jonah's mariners, with their sacrifices, made vows; for prayer is to move and oblige ourselves, not to move and oblige God. Clemens Alexandrinus (Serom. 7. p. 722. Edit. Colon.) calls prayer (with an excuse for the boldness of the expression) Ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν, it is conversing with God: and it is the scope of a long discourse of his there, to shew that his ὁ Γνόσικος, that is, his believer (for faith is called knowledge, and p. 719. he makes his companions to be οἱ ὁμοίως πεπιστευκότες, those who have in like manner believed) lives a life of communion with God; and so is praying always; that he studies by his prayers continually to converse with God. Some (says he) have their stated hours of prayer, but he παρὰ Ὅλον ἐυχεῖται τὸν βίον, prays all his life long. The Scripture describes prayer to be our drawing near to God, lifting up our souls to him, pouring out our hearts before him.

This is the life and soul of prayer; but this soul in the present state must have a body, and that body must be such as becomes the soul, and is suited and adapted to it. Some words there must be, of the mind at least, in which, as in the smoke, this incense must ascend; not that God may understand us, for our thoughts afar off are known to him, but that we may the better understand ourselves.

A golden thread of heart-prayer must run through the web of the whole Christian life; we must be frequently addressing ourselves to God in short and sudden ejaculations, by which we must keep up our communion with God in providences and common actions, as well as in ordinances and religious services. Thus, prayer must be *sparsim—a sprinkling of it* in every duty, and our eyes must be ever toward the Lord.

In mental prayer, thoughts are words; and they are the first-born of the soul, which are to be consecrated to God. But if—when we pray alone—we see cause, for the better fixing of our minds, and exciting of our devotions, to cloath our conceptions with words; if the conceptions be the genuine products of the new nature, one would think words should not be far to seek: *Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequuntur,—When a subject has been meditated, words spontaneously flow.* Nay, if the groanings be such as cannot be uttered, he who

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searcheth the heart knows them to be the mind of the Spirit, and will accept of them, Rom. 8. 26, 27. and answer the voice of our breathing, Lam. 3. 56. Yet through the infirmity of the flesh, and the proneness of our hearts to wander and trifle, it is often necessary that words should go first, and be kept in mind for the directing and exciting of devout affections, and in order thereunto, the assistance here offered, I hope, will be of some use.

When we join with others, in prayer, who are our mouth to God, our minds must attend them, by an intelligent believing concurrence with that which is the sense and scope and substance of what they say, and affections working in us suitable thereunto: and this the Scripture directs us to signify, by saying Amen mentally, if not vocally, at their giving of thanks, 1 Cor. 14. 16. And, as far as our joining with them will permit, we may intermix pious ejaculations of our own with their addresses, provided they be pertinent, that not the least fragment of praying-time may be lost.

But he that is the mouth of others in prayer, whether in public or private, and therein useth that παῤῥησία, *that freedom of speech*, that holy liberty of prayer, which is allowed us (and which we are sure many good Christians have found by experience to be very comfortable and advantageous in this duty) ought not only to consult the workings of his own heart (though them principally, as putting most life and spirit into the performance) but the edification also of those who join with him, and both in matter and words should have an eye to it: and for service in that case I principally design this endeavour.

That bright ornament of the church, the learned Dr. Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, has left us an excellent performance, much of the same nature with this, in his discourse concerning the gift of prayer; which, some may think, makes this of mine unnecessary: but the multiplying of books of devotion is what few serious Christians will complain of: and as on the one hand I am sure those who have this poor essay of mine will still find great advantage by that, so on the other hand, I think those who have that may yet find some further assistance by this.

It is desirable that our prayers should be copious and full; our burthens, cares, and wants are many, so are our sins and mercies. The promises are numerous and very rich, our God gives liberally, and has bid us open our mouths wide, and he will fill them, will satisfy them with good things. We are not straitened in him, why then should we be straitened in our bosoms? Christ had taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer, and yet tells them, (John 16. 24.) that hitherto they had asked nothing, that is, nothing in comparison with what they should ask when the Spirit should be poured out, to abide with the Church for ever; and they should see greater things than these. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. We are encouraged to be particular in prayer, and in every thing to make our request known to God, as we ought also to be particular in the adoration of the divine perfections, in the confession of our sins, and our thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies.

But since at the same time we cannot go over a tenth part of the particulars which are fit to be the matter of prayer, without making the duty burthensome to the flesh, which is weak even where the spirit is willing (an extreme that ought carefully to be avoided) and without danger of intrenching upon other religious exercises, it will be requisite that what is but briefly touched upon at one time, should be enlarged upon at another time; and herein this store-house of materials for prayer may be of use to put us in remembrance of our several errands at the throne of grace, that none may be quite forgotten.

And it is requisite to the decent performance of the duty, that some proper method be observed, not only that what is said be good, but that it be said in its proper place and time; and that we offer not any thing to the glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth which is confused, impertinent, and indigested. Care must be taken then more than ever, that we be not rash with our mouth, nor hasty to utter any thing before God; that we say not what comes uppermost, nor use such repetitions as evidence not the fervency, but the barrenness and slightness of our spirits; but that, the matters we are dealing with God about being of such vast importance, we observe a decorum in our words, that they be well chosen, well weighed, and well placed.

And as it is good to be methodical in prayer, so it is to be sententious: the Lord's Prayer is remarkably so; and David's Psalms, and many of St. Paul's prayers, which we have in his Epistles. We must consider that the greatest part of those who join with us in prayer will be in danger of losing or mistaking the sense, if the period be long, and the parentheses many; and in this, as in other things, they who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak: Jacob must lead as the children and flocks can follow.

As to the words and expressions we use in prayer, though I have here in my enlargements upon the several heads of prayer confined myself almost wholly to Scripture language, because I would give an instance of the sufficiency of the Scripture to furnish us for every good work, yet I am far from thinking, but that it is convenient, and often necessary, to use other expressions in prayer, besides those that are purely scriptural; only I would advise, that the sacred dialect be most used, and made familiar to us and others, in our dealing about sacred things; that language Christian people are most accustomed to, most affected with, and will most readily agree to; and where the Scriptures are opened and explained to the people in the ministry of the word, Scripture language will be most intelligible, and the sense of it best apprehended. This is sound speech that cannot be condemned; and those who are able to do it, may do well to enlarge by way of descant or paraphrase upon the Scriptures they make use of; still speaking according to that rule, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual, that they may illustrate each other.

And it is not to be reckoned a perverting of Scripture, but is agreeable to the usage of many divines, especially the fathers, and I think is warranted by divers quotations

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quotations in the New Testament out of the Old, to allude to a Scripture phrase, and to make use of it by way of accommodation to another sense than what was the first intention of it, provided it agree with the analogy of faith. As for instance, those words, (Ps. 87. 7.) *All my springs are in thee,* may very fitly be applied to God, though there it appears, by the feminine article in the original, to be meant of Sion; nor has it ever been thought any wrong to the Scripture phrase, to pray for the *blessings of the upper springs and the nether springs,* though the expression from whence it is borrowed, (Judg. 1. 15.) has no reference at all to what we mean; but by common use every one knows the signification, and many are pleased with the significancy of it.

Divers heads of prayer may no doubt be added to those which I have here put together; and many Scripture expressions too, under each head; (for I have only set down such as first occurred to my thoughts;) and many other expressions too, not in Scripture words; which may be very comprehensive and emphatical, and apt to excite devotion. And perhaps those who covet earnestly this excellent gift, and covet to excel in it, may find it of use to them to have such a book as this interleaved, in which to insert such other heads and expressions as they think will be most agreeable to them, and are wanting here. And though I have here recommended a good method for prayer, and that which has been generally approved, yet I am far from thinking we should always tie ourselves to it; that may be varied as well as the expression: thanksgivings may very aptly be put sometimes before confession or petition, or our intercessions for others before our petitions for ourselves, as the Lord's Prayer. Sometimes one of these parts of prayer may be enlarged upon much more than another; or they may be decently interwoven in some other method.

There are those (I doubt not) who at some times have their hearts so wonderfully elevated and enlarged in prayer, above themselves at other times; such a fixedness and fullness of thought, such a fervour of pious and devout affections, the product of which is such a fluency and variety of pertinent and moving expressions, and in such a just and natural method, that then to have an eye to such a scheme as this, would be a hindrance to them, and would be in danger to cramp and straiten them: if the heart be full of its good matter, it may make the tongue as the pen of a ready writer. But this is a case that rarely happens, and ordinarily there is need of proposing to ourselves a certain method in prayer, that the service may be performed decently and in order; yet, in which one would avoid that which looks too formal. A man may write strait without having his paper ruled.

Some few forms of prayer I have added in the last chapter, for the use of those who need such helps, and who know not how to do as well or better without them; and, therefore, I have calculated them for families. If any think them too long, let them observe that they are divided into many paragraphs, and those mostly independent, so that when brevity is necessary, some paragraphs may be omitted.

But after all, the intention and close application of the mind, the lively exercises of faith and love, and the outgoings of holy desire toward God, are so essentially necessary to prayer, that without these in sincerity, the best and most proper language is but a lifeless image. If we had the tongue of men and angels, and have not the heart of humble serious Christians in prayer, we are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. It is only the *effectual fervent prayer*; the δεησις ἐνεργουμενη,—*the in-wrought, in-laid prayer: that avails much.* Thus therefore we ought to approve ourselves to God in the integrity of our hearts, whether we pray by or without a pre-composed form.

If any good Christians receive assistance from it in their devotions, I hope they will not deny me one request, which is, that they will pray for me, that I may obtain mercy of the Lord to be found among the faithful watchmen on Jerusalem's walls, who never hold their peace day or night, but give themselves to the word and prayer, that at length I may finish my course with joy.

Chester, March 25, 1710. MATT. HENRY.

A METHOD

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A

METHOD FOR PRAYER,

WITH SCRIPTURE EXPRESSIONS PROPER TO BE USED UNDER EACH HEAD.

CHAP. I.

Of the first Part of PRAYER, *which is, Address to* GOD, *Adoration of him, with suitable Acknowledgements, Professions, and preparatory Requests.*

OUR spirits being composed into a very reverent serious frame, our thoughts gathered in, and all that is within us charged in the name of the Great God carefully to attend the solemn and awful service that lies before us, and to keep close to it; we must—with a fixed intention and application of mind, and an active lively faith—set the Lord before us, see his eye upon us, and set ourselves in his special presence; presenting ourselves to him as living sacrifices, which we desire may be holy and acceptable, and a reasonable service;[a] and then bind these sacrifices with cords to the horns of the altar,[b] with such thoughts as these:

Let us now lift up our hearts[c] with our eyes[d] and our hands unto God in the Heavens.

Let us stir up ourselves to take hold on God,[e] to seek his face,[f] and to give him the glory due unto his name.[g]

Unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our souls.[h]

Let us now with humble boldness, enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, in the new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil.[i]

Let us now attend upon the Lord without distraction,[k] and let not our hearts be far from him when we draw nigh to him with our mouths, and honour him with our lips.[l]

Let us now worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him.[m]

HAVING *thus engaged our hearts to* approach *unto God,*[n]

I. WE must solemnly address ourselves to that infinitely great and glorious Being with whom we have to do, as those who are possessed with a full belief of his presence, and a holy awe and reverence of his Majesty; which we may do in such expressions as these:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come.[o]

O thou whose name alone is Jehovah, and who art the most high over all the earth![p]

O God, thou art our God, early will we seek thee;[q] our God, and we will praise thee; our fathers' God, and we will exalt thee.[a]

O thou who art the true God, the living God,[b] the One only living and true God, and the everlasting King! The Lord our God, who is one Lord.[c]

AND we may, thus, distinguish ourselves from the worshippers of false gods:

The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, they are vanity and a lie, the work of men's hands, they that make them are like unto them, and so is every one that trusteth in them.[d] But the *Portion of Jacob* is not like them, for He is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance; the Lord of Hosts is his name,[e] God over all blessed for evermore.[f]

Their rock is not as our rock, even the enemies themselves being judges;[g] for he is the rock of ages, the Lord Jehovah, with whom is everlasting strength;[h] whose name shall endure for ever, and his memorial unto all generations,[i] when the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from off the earth, and from under these heavens.[k]

II. WE must reverently adore God as a being transcendantly bright and blessed, self-existent and self-sufficient, an infinite and eternal Spirit, who has all perfections in himself, and give him the glory of his titles and attributes.

O Lord our God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty, thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment,[l] and yet as to us makest darkness thy pavilion,[m] for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.[n]

This is the message which we have heard of thee, and we set to our seal that it is true, That God is Light, and in him is no darkness at all;[o] and, That God is Love, and they that dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them.[p]

Thou art the Father of Light, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning, and from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift.[q]

Thou art the blessed and only potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hast immortality; dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see.[r]

WE must acknowledge his being, to be unquestionable, and past dispute.

The heavens declare thy Glory, O God, and the firmament

[a] Rom. 12. 1. [b] Ps. 118. 27. [c] Lam. 3. 41. [d] John 17. 1. [e] Isa. 64. 7. [f] Ps. 27. 8. [g] Ps. 29. 2. [h] Ps. 25. 1. [i] Heb. 10. 19, 20. [k] 1 Cor. 7. 35. [l] Mat. 15. 8. [m] John 4. 23, 24. [n] Jer. 30. 21. [o] Rev. 4. 8. [p] Ps. 83. 18. [q] Ps. 63. 1.

[a] Exod. 15. 2. [b] Jer. 10. 10. [c] Deut. 6. 4. [d] Ps. 115. 4, 8. [e] Jer. 10. 15, 16. [f] Rom. 9. 5. [g] Deut. 32. 31. [h] Isa. 26. 4. margin. [i] Ps. 135. 13. [k] Jer. 10. 11. [l] Ps. 104. 1, 2. [m] Ps. 18. 11. [n] Job 37. 19. [o] 1 John 1. 5. [p] 1 John 4. 16. [q] Jam. 1. 17. [r] 1 Tim. 6. 15, 16.

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mament sheweth thy handy-work;[a] and by the things that are made is clearly seen and understood thine eternal power and godhead;[b] so that they are fools[c] without excuse[b] who say there is no God;[c] for verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth,[d] and in Heaven too.

We therefore come to thee, believing that thou art, and that thou art the powerful and bountiful rewarder of them that diligently seek thee.[e]

YET we must own his nature to be incomprehensible.

We cannot by searching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection.[f]

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and this greatness is unsearchable.[g]

Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?[h]

—— AND his perfections to be matchless, and without comparison.

Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?[i]

Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?[k]

Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works; for thou art great, and doest wonderous things; thou art God alone.[l]

There is not any creature that has an arm like God, or can thunder with a voice like him.[m]

AND that he is infinitely above us, and all other beings.

Thou art God and not man;[n] hast not eyes of flesh, nor seest as man seeth: Thy days are not as the days of man, nor thy years as man's days.[o]

As Heaven is high above the earth, so are thy thoughts above our thoughts, and thy ways above our ways.[p]

All nations before thee are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance, and thou takest up the isles as a very little thing: they are as nothing, and are counted to thee less than nothing, and vanity.[q]

PARTICULARLY, in our adorations, we must acknowledge,

1. That he is an eternal, immutable God, without beginning of days, or end of life, or change of time.

Thou art the King eternal, immortal, invisible.[r]

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God;[s] the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.[t]

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the Heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.[a]

Thou art God, and changest not; therefore is it that we are not consumed.[b]

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord our God, our holy One?[c] The everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who faintest not, neither art weary; there is no searching out of thine understanding.[d]

2. THAT he is present in all places, and there is no place in which he is included, or out of which he is excluded.

Thou art a God at hand, and not a God afar off; none can hide himself in secret places that thou canst not see him, for thou fillest heaven and earth.[e]

Thou art not far from every one of us.[f]

We cannot go any whither from thy presence, or flee from thy Spirit; if we ascend into heaven, thou art there; if we make our bed in hell, in the depths of the earth, behold thou art there; if we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead us, and thy right hand shall hold us.[g]

3. THAT he has a perfect knowledge of all persons and things, and sees them all, even that which is most secret, at one clear, certain, and unerring view.

All things are naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do; even the thoughts and intents of the heart.[h]

Thine eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good;[i] they run to and fro through the earth, that thou mayest shew thyself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright with thee.[k]

Thou searchest the heart, and triest the reins, that thou mayest give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.[l]

O God, thou hast searched us and known us, thou knowest our down-sitting and our up-rising, and understandest our thoughts afar off? Thou compasseth our path and our lying-down, and art acquainted with all our ways; there is not a word on our tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is high, we cannot attain unto it.

Darkness and light are both alike to thee.[m]

4. THAT his wisdom is unsearchable, and the counsels and designs of it cannot be fathomed.

Thine understanding, O Lord, is infinite, for thou tellest the number of the stars, and callest them all by their names.[n]

Thou art wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.[o] Wise in heart and mighty in strength.[p]

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom

[a] Ps. 19. 1. [b] Rom. 1. 20. [c] Ps. 14. 1. [d] Ps. 58. 11. [e] Heb. 11. 6. [f] Job 11. 7. [g] Ps. 145. 3. [h] Ps. 106. 2. [i] Exod. 15. 11. [k] Ps. 89. 6, 8. [l] Ps. 86. 8, 10. [m] Job 40. 9. [n] Hos. 11. 9. [o] Job 10. 4, 5. [p] Isa. 55. 9. [q] Isa. 40. 15, 17. [r] 1 Tim. 1. 17. [s] Ps. 90. 2. [t] Heb. 13. 8.

[a] Ps. 102. 25, 26, 27. [b] Mal. 3. 6. [c] Hab. 1. 12. [d] Isa. 40. 28. [e] Jer. 23. 23, 24. [f] Acts 17. 27. [g] Ps. 139. 7, 8, 9, 10. [h] Heb. 4. 12, 13. [i] Pro. 15. 3. [k] 2 Chro. 16. 9. [l] Jer. 17. 10. [m] Ps. 139. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12. [n] Ps. 147. 4, 5. [o] Isa. 28. 29. [p] Job 9. 4.

hast

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hast thou made them all;[a] all according to the counsel of thine own will.[b]

O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.[c]

5. THAT his sovereignty is uncontestable, and he is the owner and absolute Lord of all.

The Heavens, even the Heavens, are thine,[d] *and all the hosts of them.* The earth is thine, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.[e] In thy hand are the deep places of the earth, and the strength of the hills is thine also: the sea is thine, for thou madest it, and thy hands formed the dry land:[f] All the beasts of the forest are thine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills:[g] Thou art therefore a great God, and a great King above all Gods.[f]

In thy hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.[h]

Thy dominion is an everlasting dominion, and thy kingdom is from generation to generation: thou dost according to thy will in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, What doest thou?[i]

6. THAT his power is irresistible, and the operations of it cannot be controuled.

We know, O God, that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be with-holden from thee:[k] Power belongs to thee;[l] and with thee nothing is impossible.[m]

All power is thine, both in Heaven and in earth.[n]

Thou killest and thou makest alive, thou woundest and thou healest, neither is there any that can deliver out of thy hand.[o]

What thou hast promised thou art able also to perform.[p]

7. THAT he is a God of unspotted purity and perfect rectitude.

Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel:[q] Holy and Reverend is thy name;[r] and we give thanks at the remembrance of thy holiness.[s]

Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,[t] neither shall evil dwell with thee.[u]

Thou art the rock, thy work is perfect, and all thy ways are truth and judgment; a God of truth, and in whom there is no iniquity.[x] Thou art our rock, and there is no unrighteousness in thee.[y]

Thou art holy in all thy works,[z] and holiness becomes thy house, O Lord, for ever.[a]

8. THAT he is just in the administration of his government, and never did, nor ever will do wrong to any of his creatures.

Righteous art thou, O God, when we plead with thee,[b] and wilt be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.[c]

Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity; for the work of a man shall he render unto him.[a]

Thy righteousness is as the great mountains, even then when thy judgments are a great deep![b] And though clouds and darkness are round about thee, yet judgment and justice are the habitation of thy throne.[c]

9. THAT his truth is inviolable, and the treasures of his goodness inexhaustible.

Thou art good, and thy mercy endures for ever.[d] Thy loving kindness is great towards us,[e] and thy truth endureth to all generations.[f]

Thou hast proclaimed thy name: The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.[g] And this name of thine is our strong tower.[h]

Thou art good and doest good,[i] good to all, and thy tender mercy is over all thy works.[k] But truly God is in a special manner good to Israel, even to them that are of a clean heart.[l]

O that thou wouldest cause thy goodness to pass before us;[m] that we may taste and see that the Lord is good;[n] and his loving kindness may be always before our eyes.[o]

10. *et ult.* THAT when we have said all we can of the glorious perfections of the divine nature, we fall infinitely short of the merit of the subject.

Lo, these are but parts of thy ways, and how little a portion is heard of God! But the thunder of his power who can understand?[p]

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out, he is excellent in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice,[q] and he is exalted far above all blessing and praise.[r]

III. WE must give to God the praise of that splendor and glory wherein he is pleased to manifest himself in the upper world.

Thou hast prepared thy throne in the heavens,[s] and it is a throne of glory, high and lifted up, and before thee the seraphims cover their faces.[t] And it is in compassion to us that thou holdest back the face of that throne, and spreadest a cloud upon it.[u]

Thou makest thine angels spirits, and thy ministers a flame of fire.[x] Thousand thousands of them minister unto thee, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before thee[y] to do thy pleasure. They excel in strength, and hearken to the voice of thy word.[z] And we are come by faith and hope, and holy love, into a spiritual communion with that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, even to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, in the heavenly Jerusalem.[a]

IV. WE must give glory to him as the Creator of the world, and the great Protector, Benefactor, and Ruler of the whole creation.

[a] Ps. 104. 24. [b] Eph. 1. 11. [c] Rom. 11. 33. [d] Ps. 115. 16. [e] Ps. 24. 1. [f] Ps. 95. 3, 4, 5. [g] Ps. 50. 10. [h] Job 12. 10. [i] Dan. 4. 34, 35. [k] Job 42. 2. [l] Ps. 62. 11. [m] Luke 1. 37. [n] Mat. 28. 18. [o] Deut. 32. 39. [p] Rom. 4. 21. [q] Ps. 22. 3. [r] Ps. 111. 9. [s] Ps. 30. 4. [t] Hab. 1. 13. [u] Ps. 5. 4. [x] Deut. 32. 4. [y] Ps. 92. 15. [z] Ps. 145. 17. [a] Ps. 93. 5. [b] Jer. 12. 1. [c] Ps. 51. 4.

[a] Job 34. 10, 11. [b] Ps. 36. 6. [c] Ps. 97. 2. [d] Ps. 136. 1. [e] Ps. 117. 2. [f] Ps. 100. 5. [g] Exod. 34. 6, 7. [h] Pro. 18. 10. [i] Ps. 119. 68. [k] Ps. 145. 9. [l] Ps. 73. 1. [m] Ex. 33. 19. [n] Ps. 34. 8. [o] Ps. 36. 3. [p] Job. 26. 14. [q] Job. 37. 23. [r] Neh. 9. 5. [s] Ps. 103. 19. [t] Isa. 6. 1, 2. [u] Job. 26. 9. [x] Ps. 104. 4. [y] Dan. 7. 10. [z] Ps. 103. 20, 21. [a] Heb. 12. 22, 23.

Thou

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Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, and for thy praise, they are and were created.[a]

We worship him that made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters;[b] who spake and it was done, who commanded and it stood fast;[c] who said, Let there be light, and there was light; Let there be a firmament, and he made the firmament; and he made all very good;[d] and they continue this day according to his ordinance, for all are his servants.[e]

The day is thine, the night is also thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun: Thou hast set all the borders of the earth, thou hast made summer and winter.[f]

Thou upholdest all things by the word of thy power,[g] and by thee all things subsist.[h]

The earth is full of thy riches; so is the great and wide sea.[i] The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season: Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.[k] Thou preservest man and beast,[l] and givest food to all flesh.[m]

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all: And the host of Heaven worshippeth thee,[n] whose kingdom ruleth over all.[o]

A sparrow falls not to the ground without thee.[p]

Thou madest man at first of the dust of the ground, and breathedst into him the breath of life, and so he became a living soul.[q]

And thou hast made of that one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hast determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.[r]

Thou art the most High, who rulest in the kingdom of men, and givest it to whomsoever thou wilt;[s] for from thee every man's judgment proceeds.[t]

Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns,[u] and doth all according to the council of his own will, to the praise of his own glory.[x]

V. We must give honour to the three persons in the Godhead, distinctly; to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that great and sacred name into which we were baptized, and in which we assemble for religious worship, in communion with the universal church.

We pay our homage to the Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are One.[y]

We adore thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth;[z] and the *Eternal* Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made, and who in the fulness of time was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and shewed his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.[a]

And since it is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father;[b] we adore him as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; herein joining with the angels of God, who were all bid to worship him.[c]

We pay our homage to the exalted Redeemer, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth,[d] confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.[e]

We also worship the Holy Ghost the comforter, whom the Son has sent from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father,[f] and who is sent to teach us all things, and to bring all things to our remembrance;[g] who indited the Scriptures, holy Men of God writing them as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.[h]

VI. We must acknowledge our dependance upon GOD, and our obligations to him; as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor.

Thou, O God, madest us, and not we ourselves, *and therefore* we are *not our own, but thine,* thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture;[i] let us therefore worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker.[k]

Thou, Lord, art *the former of our bodies, and they are* fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought. Thine eyes did see our substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all our members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.[l]

Thou hast cloathed us with skin and flesh, thou hast fenced us with bones and sinews, thou hast granted us life and favour, and thy visitation preserves our spirit.[m]

Thou art the Father of our spirits,[n] for thou formed the spirit of man within him,[o] and madest us these souls.[p] The Spirit of God hath made us, and the breath of the Almighty hath given us life:[q] Thou puttest wisdom in the inward part, and givest understanding to the heart.[r]

Thou art God our Maker, and teachest us more than the beasts of the earth, and makest us wiser than the fowls of heaven.[s]

We are the clay, and thou our potter; we are the work of thy hand.[t]

Thou art he that took us out of the womb, and kept us in safety when we were at our mother's breasts; we have been cast upon thee from the womb, and held up by thee. Thou art our God from our mother's[u] bowels, and therefore praise shall be continually of thee.[x]

[a] Rev. 4. 11. [b] Rev. 14. 7. [c] Ps. 33. 9. [d] Gen. 1. 3, 6, 7, 31. [e] Ps. 119. 91. [f] Ps. 74. 16, 17. [g] Heb. 1. 3. [h] Col. 1. 17. [i] Ps. 104. 24, 25. [k] Ps. 145. 15, 16. [l] Ps. 36. 6. [m] Ps. 136. 25. [n] Neh. 9. 6. [o] Ps. 103. 19. [p] Mat. 10. 29. [q] Gen. 2. 7. [r] Acts 17. 26. [s] Dan. 4. 25. [t] Pro. 29. 26. [u] Rev. 19. 6. [x] Eph. 1. 11, 12. [y] 1 John 5. 7. [z] Mat. 11. 25.

[a] John 1. 1, 2, 3, 14. [b] John 5. 23. [c] Heb. 1. 3, 6. [d] Rev. 1. 5. [e] Phil. 2. 11. [f] John 15. 26. [g] John 14. 26. [h] 2 Peter 1. 21. [i] Ps. 100. 3. [k] Ps. 95. 6. [l] Ps. 139. 14, 15, 16. [m] Job 10. 11, 12. [n] Heb. 12. 9. [o] Zech. 12. 1. [p] Jer. 38. 16. [q] Job 33. 4. [r] Job 38. 36. [s] Job 35. 10, 11. [t] Isa. 64. 8. [u] Ps. 22. 9, 10. [x] Ps. 71. 6.

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In thee, O God, we live and move, and have our being, for we are thy offspring.[a]

In thy hand our breath is, and thine are all our ways;[b] for the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh to direct his steps,[c] but our times are in thy hand.[d]

Thou art the God that hast fed us all our life long unto this day, and redeemed us from all evil.[e]

It is of thy mercy that we are not consumed, even because thy compassions fail not; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.[f]

If thou take away our breath we die, and return to the dust out of which we were taken.[g]

Who is he that saith and it cometh to pass, if thou commandest it not? Out of thy mouth, O thou the most High, both evil and good proceed.[h]

VII. We must avouch this God to be our God, and own our relation to him, his dominion over us, and property in us.

Our souls have said unto the Lord, Thou art our Lord, though our goodness extendeth not unto thee,[i] neither if we are righteous art thou the better.[k]

Thou art our King, O God:[l] *Other Lords besides thee have* had dominion over us, but from henceforth by thee only will we make mention of thy name.[m]

We avouch the Lord this Day to be our God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken to his voice, and give ourselves unto him, to be his peculiar people, that we may be a holy people unto the Lord our God;[n] and may be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory.[o]

O Lord, truly we are thy servants; we are thy servants, born in thy house, and thou hast loosed our bonds;[p] we are bought with a price, and therefore we are not our own,[q] but yield ourselves unto the Lord,[r] and join ourselves unto him in an everlasting covenant, that shall never be forgotten.[s]

We are thine, save us, for we seek thy precepts:[t] It is thine own, Lord, that we give thee, and that which cometh of thine hand.[u]

VIII. We must acknowledge it an unspeakable favour, and an inestimable privilege, that we are not only admitted, but invited and encouraged to draw nigh to GOD in prayer.

Thou hast commanded us to pray always, with all prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, and to watch thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints,[x] to continue in prayer,[y] and in every thing by prayer and supplication to make our requests known to God.[z]

Thou hast directed us to ask, and seek, and knock, and hast promised that we shall receive, we shall find, and it shall be opened to us.[a]

Thou hast appointed us a great High-Priest, in whose name we may come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need.[a]

Thou hast assured us, that while the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, the prayer of the upright is his delight;[b] and, that he that offers praise glorifies thee;[c] and the sacrifice of thanksgiving shall please the Lord better than that of an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs.[d]

Thou art he that hearest prayer, and therefore unto thee shall all flesh come.[e]

Thou savest, Seek ye my face, and our hearts answer, Thy face, Lord, will we seek.[f] For, should not a people seek unto their God?[g] Whither shall we go but to thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.[h]

IX. We must express the sense we have—of our own meanness, and unworthiness to draw near to GOD, and speak to him.

But will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth, that GOD whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,[i] with man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm?[k]

Who are we, O Lord God, and what is our Father's house, that thou hast brought us hitherto,[l] to *present ourselves before the Lord;* that we have through Christ an access by one Spirit unto the Father![m] And yet, as if that had been a small thing in thy sight, thou hast spoken concerning thy servants for a great while to come; and, Is this the manner of men, O Lord God?[l]

What is man, that thou art thus mindful of him, and the Son of man, that thou visitest him, and dost thus magnify him?[n]

O let not the Lord be angry, if we that are but dust and ashes, take upon us to speak unto the Lord of Glory.[o]

We are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servants;[p] nor is it meet to take the children's bread and cast it to such as we are, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table:[q] And thou art rich *in mercy* to all that call upon thee.[r]

X. We must humbly profess the desire of our hearts toward GOD, as our felicity and portion, and the fountain of life and all good to us.

Whom have we in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee, or in comparison of thee: When our flesh and our heart fail, be thou the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever;[s] the portion of our inheritance in the other world, and of our cup in this, *and then we will say, that* the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and that we have a goodly heritage.[t]

The desire of our souls is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; with our souls have we desired thee in the night, and with our spirits within us will we seek thee early.[u]

[a] Acts 17. 28. [b] Dan. 5. 23. [c] Jer. 10. 23. [d] Ps. 31. 15. [e] Gen. 48. 15, 16. [f] Lam. 3. 22, 23. [g] Ps. 104. 29. [h] Lam. 3. 37, 38. [i] Ps. 16. 2. [k] Job. 35. 7. [l] Ps. 44. 4. [m] Isa. 26. 13. [n] Deut. 26. 17, 18, 19. [o] Jer. 13. 11. [p] Ps. 116. 16. [q] 1 Cor. 6. 19. [r] 2 Chron. 30. 8. [s] Jer. 50. 5. [t] Ps. 119. 94. [u] 1 Chron. 29. 16. [x] Eph. 6. 18. [y] Col. 4. 2. [z] Phil. 4. 6. [a] Matt. 7. 7.

[a] Heb. 4. 16. [b] Pro. 15. 8. [c] Ps. 50. 23. [d] Ps. 69. 31. [e] Ps. 65. 2. [f] Ps. 27. 8. [g] Isa. 8. 19. [h] John 6. 68. [i] 2 Chron. 6. 18. [k] Job 25. 6. [l] 2 Sam. 7. 18, 19. [m] Eph. 2. 18. [n] Ps. 8. 4. [o] Gen. 18. 27, 30. [p] Gen. 32. 10. [q] Mat. 15. 26, 27. [r] Rom. 10. 12. [s] Ps. 73. 25, 26. [t] Ps. 16. 5, 6. [u] Isa. 26. 8, 9.

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As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so pant our souls after thee, O God; our souls thirst for God, for the living God, who will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with us, and our prayer to the God of our life.[a]

O that we may come hungering and thirsting after righteousness,[b] for thou fillest the hungry with good things, but the rich thou sendest empty away.[c]

Our souls thirst for thee, and our flesh longs for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, that we may see thy power and thy glory, as we have seen thee in the sanctuary. Thy loving kindness is better than life; our souls shall be satisfied with that as with marrow and fatness, and then our mouths shall praise thee with joyful lips.[d]

XI. We must likewise profess our believing hope and confidence—in GOD, and his all-sufficiency; in his power, providence, and promise.

In thee, O God, do we put our trust, let us never be ashamed;[e] yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.[f]

Truly our souls wait upon God, from him cometh our salvation; he only is our rock and our salvation: In him is our glory, our strength, and our refuge, and from him is our expectation.[g]

When refuge fails us, and none cares for our souls, we cry unto thee, O Lord, thou art our refuge and our portion in the land of the living.[h]

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God:[i] We will trust in thy mercy, O God, for ever and ever, and will wait on thy name, for it is good before thy saints.[k]

We have hoped in thy word, O remember thy word unto thy servants, upon which thou hast caused us to hope.[l]

XII. We must entreat GOD's favourable acceptance of us and our poor performances.

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? But this we say, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and that shall put gladness into our hearts, more than they have whose corn and wine encreaseth.[m]

We entreat thy favour with our whole heart,[n] for in this we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord.[o]

Hear our prayers, O Lord, give ear to our supplications; in thy faithfulness answer us;[p] and be nigh unto us in all that which we call upon thee for;[q] for thou never saidst to the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain.[r]

Thou that hearest the young ravens which cry,[s] be not silent to us, lest if thou be silent to us, we be like them that go down to the pit.[t]

Let our prayers be set before thee as incense, and the lifting up of our hands be acceptable in thy sight as the evening sacrifice.[u]

[a] Ps. 42. 1, 2, 8. [b] Mat. 5. 6. [c] Luke 1. 53. [d] Ps. 63 1, 2, 3, 5. [e] Ps. 31. 1. [f] Ps. 25. 3. [g] Ps. 62. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. [h] Ps. 142. 4, 5. [i] Ps. 20. 7. [k] Ps. 52. 8, 9. [l] Ps. 119. 74, 49. [m] Ps. 4. 6, 7. [n] Ps. 119. 58. [o] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [p] Ps. 143. 1. [q] Deut. 4. 7. [r] Isa. 45. 19. [s] Ps. 147. 9. [t] Ps. 28. 1. [u] Ps. 141. 2.

XIII. We must beg for the powerful assistance and influence of the blessed Spirit of grace in our prayers.

Lord, we know not what to pray for as we ought, but let thy Spirit help our infirmities, and make intercession for us.[a]

O pour upon us the spirit of grace and supplication,[b] the spirit of adoption, teaching us to cry Abba, Father;[c] that we may find in our hearts to pray this prayer:[d]—

"O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead us, let them guide us to thy holy hill and thy tabernacles; to God our exceeding joy."[e]

O Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.[f]

XIV. We must make the glory of GOD our highest end in all our prayers.

This is that which thou, O Lord, hast said; That thou wilt be sanctified in them that come nigh unto thee, and before all the people thou wilt be glorified;[g] we therefore worship before thee, O Lord, that we may glorify thy name;[h] and therefore we call upon thee, that thou may deliver us, and we may glorify thee.[i]

For of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things.[k]

XV. We must profess our entire reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ alone for acceptance with God, and come in his name.

We do not present our supplication before thee for our righteousness,[l] for we are before thee in our trespasses, and cannot stand before thee because of them:[m] But we make mention of *Christ's* righteousness,[n] even of his only, who is the Lord our righteousness.[o]

We know that even spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God only through Christ Jesus,[p] nor can we hope to receive any thing but what we ask of thee in his name,[q] and therefore make us accepted in the Beloved;[r] that Angel, who puts much incense to the prayers of saints, and offers them up upon the golden altar before the throne.[s]

We come in the name of the great High-Priest, who is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities,[t] and is therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, because he ever lives making intercession.[u]

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed,[x] in whom thou hast by a voice from Heaven declared thyself to be well pleased;[y] Lord, be well pleased with us in him.

[a] Rom. 8. 26. [b] Zech. 12. 10. [c] Rom. 8. 15. [d] 2 Sam. 7. 27. [e] Ps. 43. 3, 4. [f] Ps. 51. 15. [g] Lev. 10. 3. [h] Ps. 86. 9. [i] Ps. 50. 15. [k] Rom. 11. 36. [l] Dan. 9. 18. [m] Ezra 9. 15. [n] Ps. 71. 16. [o] Jer. 23. 6. [p] 1 Pet. 2. 5. [q] John 16. 23. [r] Eph. 1. 6. [s] Rev. 8. 3. [t] Heb. 4. 14. [u] Heb. 7. 25. [x] Ps. 84. 9. [y] Mat. 3. 17.

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CHAP. II.

Of the second Part of PRAYER, *which is: Confession of Sin, Complaints of ourselves, and humble Professions of Repentance.*

HAVING given Glory to GOD, which is *his* due; we must next take Shame to ourselves, which is *our* due, and humble ourselves before him in the sense of our own sinfulness and vileness. And herein, also we must *give glory to Him,*[a] as our JUDGE, by whom we deserve to be condemned, and yet hope, through Christ, to be acquitted and absolved.

In this part of our work,

I. WE must acknowledge the great reason we have to lie very low before GOD, and to be ashamed of ourselves when we come into his presence, and to be afraid of his wrath, having made ourselves both odious to his holiness, and obnoxious to his justice.

O our God! we are ashamed, and blush to lift up our faces before thee our God, for our iniquities are encreased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the Heavens.[b]

To us belong shame and confusion of face, because we have sinned against thee.[c]

Behold, we are vile, what shall we answer thee? We will lay our hand upon our mouth,[d] and put our mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope,[e] crying with the convicted Leper under the Law, Unclean, unclean.[f]

Thou puttest no trust in thy saints, and the Heavens are not clean in thy sight: How much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh iniquity like water.[g]

When our eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts, we have reason to cry out, Woe unto us, for we are undone.[h]

Dominion and fear are with thee, thou makest peace in thy high-places: There is not any number of thine armies, and upon whom doth not thy light arise? How then can man be justified with God, or, How can he be clean that is born of a woman?[i]

Thou, even thou, art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?[k] Even thou, our God, art a consuming fire,[l] and who knows the power of thine anger?[m]

If we justify ourselves, our own mouths shall condemn us; if we say we are perfect, that also shall prove us perverse; for if thou contend with us, we are not able to answer thee for one of a thousand.[n]

If we knew nothing by ourselves, yet were we not thereby justified, for he that judgeth us is the Lord;[o] who is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.[p]

But we ourselves know that we have sinned, Father, against Heaven, and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy children.[a]

II. WE must take hold of the great encouragement God has given us to humble ourselves before him with sorrow and shame, and to confess our sins.

If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand! But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; with thee there is mercy, yea, with our God there is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.[b]

Thy sacrifices, O God, are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;[c] nay, *though* thou art the high and lofty One that inhabitest eternity, whose name is Holy;[d] *though* the Heaven be thy throne, and the earth thy footstool, yet to this man wilt thou look, that is poor and humble, of a broken and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at thy word,[e] to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.[d]

Thou hast graciously assured us, that though they that cover their sins shall not prosper, yet those that confess and forsake them shall find mercy.[f] And when a poor penitent said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord, thou forgavest the iniquity of his sin; and for this shall every one that is godly, in like manner, pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found.[g]

We know, that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but thou hast said, that if we confess our sins, thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.[h]

III. WE must therefore confess and bewail our original corruption in the first place, that we were the children of apostate and rebellious parents, and the nature of man is depraved, and wretchedly degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude, and our nature is so.

Lord, thou madest man upright, but they have sought out many inventions;[i] and being in honour did not understand, and therefore abode not, but became like the beasts that perish.[k]

By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: By that one man's disobedience many were made sinners,[l] and we among the rest.

We are a seed of evil-doers;[m] our father was an Amorite, and our mother a Hittite,[n] and we ourselves were called (and not miscalled) transgressors from the womb, and thou knowest we would deal very treacherously.[o]

The nature of man was planted a choice and noble vine, wholly a right seed, but it is become the degenerate plant of a strange vine;[p] producing the grapes

[a] Josh. 7. 19. [b] Ezra 9. 6. [c] Dan. 9. 8. [d] Job. 40. 4. [e] Lam. 3. 29. [f] Lev. 13. 45. [g] Job 15. 15, 16. [h] Isa. 6. 5. [i] Job 25. 2, 3, 4. [k] Ps. 76. 7. [l] Heb. 12. 29. [m] Ps. 90. 12. [n] Job 9. 3, 20. 1 Cor. 4. 4. [p] 1 John 3. 20.

[a] Luke 15. 21. [b] Ps. 130. 3, 4, 7, 8. [c] Ps. 51. 17. [d] Isa. 57. 15. [e] Isa. 66. 1, 2. [f] Pro. 28. 13. [g] Ps. 32. 5, 6. [h] 1 John 1. 8, 9. [i] Eccl. 7. 29. [k] Ps. 49. 12, 20. [l] Rom. 5. 12, 19. [m] Is. 1. 4. [n] Ezek. 16. 3. [o] Is. 48. 8. [p] Jer. 2. 21.

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of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah.[a] How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed![b]

Behold, we were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mother conceive us.[c] For, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.[d] We are by nature children of wrath, because children of disobedience, even as others.[e]

All flesh have corrupted their way;[f] we are all gone aside, we are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.[g]

IV. We must lament our present corrupt dispositions to that which is evil, and our indisposedness to, and impotency in, that which is good. We must look into our hearts; and confess, with holy blushing,

1. The blindness of our understandings, and their unaptness to admit the rays of the divine light.

By nature our understandings are darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts.[h]

The things of the spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.[i]

We are wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge:[k] We know not, neither do we understand, we walk on in darkness.[l]

God speaketh once, yea, twice, but we perceive it not;[m] but hearing, we hear, and do not understand:[n] and we see men as trees walking.[o]

2. The stubbornness of our wills, and their unaptness to submit to the rules of the divine law.

We have within us a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and is not in subjection to the law of God, neither indeed can be.[p]

Thou hast written to us the great things of thy law, but they have been accounted by us as a strange thing,[q] and our corrupt hearts have been sometimes ready to say, What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?[r] —and that we should certainly do whatsoever thing goes forth of our own mouth.[s] For we have walked in the way of our own heart, and in the sight of our eyes,[t] fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind.[u]

Our neck hath been an iron sinew,[x] and we have made our heart as an adamant; we have refused to hearken, have pulled away the shoulder, and stopped our ears,[y] like the deaf adder, that will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.[z]

How have we hated instruction, and our heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of our teachers, nor inclined our ear to them that instructed us![a]

3. The vanity of our thoughts, their neglect of those things which they ought to be conversant with, and dwelling upon those things that are unworthy of them, and tend to corrupt our minds.

Every imagination of the thoughts of our heart is evil, only evil, and that continually,[a] and it has been so from our youth.[b]

O how long hath those vain thoughts lodged within us![c] Those thoughts of foolishness which are sin.[d] *From within,* out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts;[e] which devise mischief upon the bed,[f] and carry the heart with the fool's eyes into the ends of the earth.[g]

But God is not in all our thoughts,[h] it is well if he be in any: Of the rock that begat us we have been unmindful, and have forgotten the God that formed us:[i] We have forgotten him days without number,[k] and our hearts have walked after vanity,[l] and become vain. Our inward thought having been, that our houses should continue for ever; this our way is our folly.[m]

4. The carnality of our affections, their being placed upon wrong objects, and carried beyond due bounds.

We have set those affections on things beneath, which should have been set on things above,[n] where our treasure is,[o] and where Christ sits on the right hand of God, the things which we should seek.[n]

We have followed after lying vanities, and forsaken our own mercies;[p] having forsaken the fountain of living waters, for cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.[q]

We have panted after the dust of the earth,[r] and have been full of care what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be cloathed, the things after which the Gentiles seek, but have neglected the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.[s]

We have lifted up our souls unto vanity,[t] and set our eyes upon that which is not,[u] have looked at the things that are seen, which are temporal, but the things that are not seen, that are eternal, have been forgotten and postponed.[x]

5. The corruption of the whole man;—irregular appetites toward those things that are pleasing to sense; and inordinate passions, against those things that are displeasing; and an alienation of the mind from the principles, powers, and pleasures of the spiritual and divine life.

We are born of the flesh, and we are flesh;[r] Dust we are:[z] We have borne the image of the earthly;[a] and in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing. For if to will is present to us, yet how to perform that which is good we find not; for the good that we would do, we do it not; and the evil which we would not do, that we do.[b]

We have a law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the

[a] Deut. 32. 32. [b] Lam. 4. 1. [c] Ps. 51. 5. [d] Job 14. 4. [e] Eph. 2. 2, 3. [f] Gen. 6. 12. [g] Ps. 14. 3. [h] Eph. 4. 18. [i] 1 Cor. 2. 14. [k] Jer. 4. 22. [l] Ps. 82. 5. [m] Job 33. 14. [n] Mat. 13. 14. [o] Mark 8. 24. [p] Rom. 8. 7. [q] Hos. 8. 12. [r] Job 21. 15. [s] Jer. 44. 17. [t] Ecc. 11. 19. [u] Eph. 2. 3. [x] Isa. 48. 4. [y] Zech. 7. 11, 12. [z] Ps. 58. 4, 5. [a] Pro. 5. 12, 13.

[a] Gen. 6. 5. [b] Gen. 8. 21. [c] Jer. 4. 14. [d] Pro. 24. 9. [e] Mat. 15. 19. [f] Mic. 2. 1. [g] Pro. 17. 24. [h] Ps. 10. 4. [i] Deut. 32. 18. [k] Jer. 2. 32. [l] Jer. 2. 5. [m] Ps. 49. 11, 13. [n] Col. 3. 1, 2. [o] Mat. 6. 21. [p] Jonah 2. 8. [q] Jer. 2. 13. [r] Amos 2. 7. [s] Mat. 6. 31, 32, 33. [t] Ps. 24. 4. [u] Pro. 23. 5. [x] 2 Cor. 4. 18. [y] John 3. 6. [z] Gen. 3. 19. [a] 1 Cor. 15. 49. [b] Rom. 7. 18, 19.

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law of sin, that is in our members: So that when we would do good, evil is present with us,[a] and most easily besets us.[b]

The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in us, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.[c]

There is in us a bent to backslide from the living God:[d] Our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know them?[e] They start aside like a broken bow.[f]

V. We must lament and confess—our omissions of our duty, our neglect of it, and triflings in it; and, that we have done so little since we came into the world, of the great work we were sent into the world about, so very little to answer the end either of our creation or of our redemption, of our birth and of our baptism; and that we have profited no more by the means of grace.

We have been as fig-trees planted in the vineyard, and thou hast come many years seeking fruit from us, but hast found none;[g] therefore we might justly have been cut down and cast into the fire[h] for cumbering the ground:[g] Thou hast come looking for grapes, but behold wild grapes;[i] for we have been empty vines, bringing forth fruit unto ourselves.[k]

We have known to do good, but have not done it:[l] We have hid our Lord's money,[m] and therefore deserve the doom of the *wicked and slothful servant*.

We have been *unfaithful* stewards, that have wasted our Lord's goods,[n] for one sinner destroys much good.[o]

Many a price hath been put into our hand to get wisdom, which we have had no heart to,[p] or our heart has been at our left hand.[q]

Our childhood and youth were vanity,[r] and we have spent our years, as a tale that is told.[s]

We have not known, or improved, the day of our visitation,[t] have not provided meat in summer, nor gathered food in harvest, though we have had guides, overseers and rulers.[u]

We are slow of heart to *understand and* believe;[v] and whereas for the time we might have been teachers of others, we are yet to learn the first principles of the oracles of God, have need of milk, and cannot bear strong meat.[y]

We have cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God;[z] have not called upon thy name, nor stirred up ourselves to take hold on thee.[a]

We have come before thee as thy people come, and have sat before thee as thy people sit, and have heard thy words, when our hearts at the same time have been going after our covetousness.[b] And thus have we brought the torn, and the lame, and the sick, for sacrifice, have offered that to God, which we would not have offered to our governor; and have vowed and sacrificed to the Lord a corrupt thing, when we had in our flock a male.[a]

VI. We must likewise bewail our many actual transgressions, in thought, word, and deed.

We have sinned, Father, against thee;[b] we have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God;[c] for the God in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways, have we not glorified.[d]

Against thee, thee only, have we sinned, and have done much evil in thy sight;[e] neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he hath set before us,[f] though they are all holy, just, and good.[g]

Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou us from secret faults.[h]

In many things we all offend,[i] and our iniquities are more than the hairs of our head.[k]

As a fountain casteth out her waters, so do our hearts cast out wickedness;[l] and this hath been our manner from our youth up, that we have not obeyed thy voice.[m]

Out of the evil treasure of our hearts we have brought forth many evil things.[n]

1. We must confess and bewail the workings of pride in us.

We have reason to be humbled for the pride of our hearts,[o] that we have thought of ourselves above what hath been meet, and have not thought soberly,[p] nor walked humbly with our God.[q]

We have leaned to our own understanding,[r] and trusted to our own hearts,[s] and have sacrificed to our own net.[t]

We have sought our own glory more than the glory of him that sent us,[u] and have been puffed up with that for which we should have mourned.[x]

2 The breaking out of passion and rash anger.

We have not had the rule we ought to have had over our own spirits, which have therefore been as a city that is broken down and has no walls.[y]

We have been soon angry, and anger[z] hath rested in our bosoms:[a] And when our spirits have been provoked, we have spoken unadvisedly with our lips,[b] and have been guilty of that clamour and bitterness which should have been put far from us.[c]

3. Our covetousness and love of the world.

Our conversation has not been without covetousness,[d] nor have we learned in every state to be content with such things as we have.[e]

Who can say he is clear from that love of money which is the root of all evil,[f] that covetousness which is idolatry.[g]

We have sought great things to ourselves, when thou hast said, *Seek them not*.[h]

[a] Rom. 7. 21, 23. [b] Heb. 12. 1. [c] Is. 1. 6. [d] Hos. 11. 7. [e] Jer. 17. 9. [f] Hos. 7. 16. [g] Luke 13. 6, 7. [h] Mat. 3. 10. [i] Is. 5. 4. [k] Hosea 10. 1. [l] Jam. 4. 17. [m] Mat. 25. 18, 26. [n] Luke 16. 1. [o] Ecc. 9. 18. [p] Pro. 17. 16. [q] Ecc. 10. 2. [r] Ecc. 11. 10. [s] Ps. 90. 9. [t] Luke 19. 44. [u] Pro. 6. 7, 8. [v] Luke 24. 25. [y] Heb. 5. 12. [z] Job 15. 4. [a] Is. 64. 7. [b] Ezek. 33. 31.

[a] Mal. 1. 8, 14. [b] Luke 15. 18. [c] Rom. 3. 23. [d] Dan. 5. 23. [e] Psal. 51. 4. [f] Dan. 9. 10. [g] Rom. 7. 12. [h] Ps. 19. 12. [i] James 3. 2. [k] Ps. 40. 12. [l] Jer. 6. 7. [m] Jer. 22. 21. [n] Mat. 12. 35. [o] 2 Chro. 32. 26. [p] Rom. 12. 3. [q] Micah 6. 8. [r] Pro. 3. 5. [s] 28. 26. [t] Hab. 1. 16. [u] John 7. 18. [x] 1 Cor. 5. 2. [y] Pro. 25. 28. [z] 14. 17. [a] Ecc. 7. 9. [b] Ps. 106. 33. [c] Eph. 4. 31. [d] Heb. 13. 5. [e] Phil. 4. 11. [f] 1 Tim. 6. 10. [g] Col. 3. 5. [h] Jer. 45. 5.

4. Our

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4. Our sensuality and flesh-pleasing.

We have minded the things of the flesh more than the things of the spirit,[a] and have lived in pleasure on the earth, and have been wanton, and have nourished our hearts as in a day of slaughter.[b]

We have made provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts of it;[c] even those lusts which war against our souls:[d] and in many instances have acted as if we had been lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.[e]

When we did eat, and when we did drink, did we not eat to ourselves, and drink to ourselves?[f]

5. Our security and unmindfulness of the changes we are liable to in this world.

We have put far from us the evil day,[g] and in our prosperity have said we shall never be moved,[h] as if to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant.[i]

We have encouraged our souls to take their ease, to eat, drink, and be merry, as if we had goods laid up for many years, when perhaps this night our souls may be required of us.[k]

We have been ready to trust in uncertain riches more than in the living God;[l] to say to the gold, thou art our hope; and to the fine gold, thou art our confidence.[m]

6. Our fretfulness and impatience, and murmuring under our afflictions, our inordinate dejection, and distrust of God and his providence.

When thou hast chastised us, and we were chastised, we have been as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke[n] and though our own foolishness hath perverted our way, yet our heart hath fretted against the Lord;[o] and thus in our distress we have trespassed yet more against the Lord.[p]

We have either despised the chastening of the Lord, or fainted when we have been rebuked of him;[q] and if we faint in the day of adversity, our strength is small.[r]

We have said in our haste we are cast off from before thine eyes,[s] and that the Lord hath forsaken us, our God hath forgotten us,[t] as if God would be favourable no more, as if he had forgotten to be gracious, and had in anger shut up his tender mercies. This has been our infirmity.[u]

7. Our uncharitableness towards our brethren, and unpeaceableness with our relations, neighbours, and friends, and perhaps injustice towards them.

We have been verily guilty concerning our brother;[x] for we have not studied the things that make for peace, nor things wherewith we might edify one another.[y]

We have been ready to judge our brother, and to set at nought our brother, forgetting that we must all shortly stand before the judgment seat of Christ.[z]

Contrary to the royal law of charity we have vaunted ourselves, and been puffed up, have behaved ourselves unseemly, and sought our own; have been easily provoked, have rejoiced in iniquity,[a] and been secretly glad at calamities.[b]

We have been desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another,[c] when we should have considered one another, to provoke to love and to good works.[d]

The bowels of our compassion have been shut up from those that are in need;[e] and we have hidden ourselves from our own flesh.[f] Nay, perhaps our eye has been evil against our poor brother,[g] and we have despised the poor.[h]

And if in any thing we have gone beyond and defrauded our brother,[i] if we have walked with vanity, and our foot hath hasted to deceit, and any blot hath cleaved to our hands,[k] Lord, discover it to us, that if we have done iniquity, we may do so no more.[l]

8. Our tongue sins.

In the multitude of our words there wanteth not sin,[m] nor can a man full of talk be justified.[n]

While the lips of the righteous feed many,[o] our lips have poured out foolishness,[p] and spoken frowardness.[q]

Much corrupt communication hath proceeded out of our mouths;[q] that foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient,[r] and little of that which is good, and to the use of edifying, and which might minister grace unto the hearers.[s]

If for every idle word that men speak they must give an account, and by our words we must be justified, and if by our words we must be condemned,[s] woe unto us, for we are undone; for we are of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.[t]

What would become of us, if God should make our own tongues to fall upon us?[u]

9. Our spiritual slothfulness and decay.

We have been slothful in the business of religion, and not fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.[x]

The things which remain are ready to die, and our works have not been found perfect before God.[y]

We have observed the winds, and therefore have not sown; have regarded the clouds, and therefore have not reaped,[z] and with the sluggard have frighted ourselves with the fancy of a lion in the way, a lion in the streets, and have turned on our bed as the door on the hinges;[a] still crying, Yet a little sleep, a little slumber.[b]

We have lost our first love,[c] and where is now the blessedness, we sometimes spake of?[d]

Our goodness hath been as the morning cloud, and the early dew, which passeth away.[e]

And that which is at the bottom of all, is the evil

[a] Rom. 8. 5. [b] James 5. 5. [c] Rom. 13. 14. [d] 1 Pet. 2. 11. 2 Tim. 3. 3, 4. [f] Zech. 7. 6. [g] Amos 6. 3. [h] Ps. 30. 6. [i] Isa. 56. 12. [k] Luke 12. 19, 20. [l] 1 Tim. 6. 17. [m] Job 31. 24. [n] Jer. 31. 18. [o] Pro. 19. 3. [p] 2 Chro. 28. 22. [q] Pro. 3. 11. [r] 24. 10. [s] Ps. 31. 22. [t] Isa. 49. 14. [u] Ps. 77. 7, 8, 10. [x] Gen. 42. 21. [y] Rom. 14. 19. [z] 14. 10.

[a] 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. [b] Pro. 17. 5. [c] Gal. 5. 26. [d] Heb. 10. 24. [e] 1 John 3. 17. [f] Isa. 58. 7. [g] Deut. 15. 9. [h] James 2. 6. [i] Thes. 4. 6. [k] Job 31. 5, 7. [l] Job 34. 32. [m] Pro. 10. 19. [n] Job 11. 2. [o] Pro. 10. 21. 32. [p] Pro. 15. 2. [q] Eph. 4. 29. [r] Eph. 5. 4. [s] Mat. 12. 36, 37. [t] Isa. 6. 5. [u] Ps. 64. 8. [x] Rom. 12. 11. [y] Rev. 3. 2. [z] Ecc. 11. 4. [a] Pro. 26. 13, 14. [b] Pro. 6. 10. [c] Rev. 2. 4. [d] Gal. 4. 15. [e] Hos. 6. 4.

heart

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heart of unbelief in us, which inclines us to depart from the living God. [a]

VII. We must acknowledge the great evil that there is in sin, in our sin; the malignity of its nature, and its mischievousness to us.

1. The sinfulness of sin.

O that sin may appear sin to us, may appear in its own colours, and that by the commandment we may see it to be exceeding sinful, [b] because it is the transgression of the law. [c]

By every wilful sin we have in effect said, We will not have this man to reign over us: [d] and who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice? [e] And thus have we *reproached the Lord*, [f] and cast his laws behind our backs. [g]

2. The foolishness of sin.

O God, thou knowest our foolishness, and our sins are not hid from thee: [h] we were foolish in being disobedient, [i] and our lusts are foolish and hurtful. [k]

Foolishness was bound up in our hearts when we were children; [l] for though vain man would be wise, he is born like the wild ass's colt. [m]

Our way hath been our folly, [n] and in many instances we have done foolishly, very foolishly. [o]

So foolish have we been, and ignorant, and even as beasts before God. [p]

3. The unprofitableness of sin.

We have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited us not. [q]

What fruit have we now in those things whereof we have cause to be ashamed, seeing the end of those things is death? [r] And what are we profited, if we should gain the whole world, and lose our own souls? [s]

4. The deceitfulness of sin.

Sin hath deceived us, and by the commandment slain us; [t] for our hearts have been hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; [u] and we have been drawn away of our own lust, and enticed. [x]

It hath promised us liberty, but has made us the servants of corruption; [y] hath promised that we shall not surely die, and that we shall be as gods; [z] but it has flattered us, and spread a net for our feet. [a]

The pride of our heart particularly has deceived us. [b]

5. The offence which, by sin, we have given to the Holy GOD.

By breaking the law we have dishonoured God, [c] and have provoked the Holy one of Israel to anger [d] most bitterly. [e] And many a thing that we have done hath displeased the Lord. [f]

God has been broken by our whorish heart, and our eyes that have gone a whoring after our idols. [g]

We have tempted him, and proved him, and grieved him in the wilderness, [h] have rebelled and vexed his holy Spirit; [a] and pressed him with our iniquities, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves. [b]

We have grieved the Holy Spirit of God, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption. [c]

6. The damage which, by sin, we have done to our own souls, and, their great interests.

By our iniquities we have sold ourselves, [d] and in sinning against thee we have wronged our own souls. [e]

Our sins have separated between us and God, [f] and have kept good things from us; and by them our minds and consciences have been defiled. [g]

Our own wickedness hath corrected us, and backslidings have reproved us, and we cannot but know and see, that it is an evil thing, and bitter, that we have forsaken the Lord our God, and that his fear hath not been in us. [h]

O what fools are they that make a mock at sin! [i]

VIII. We must aggravate our sins, and take notice of those things which make them more heinous in the sight of GOD, and more dangerous to ourselves.

We bewail before thee all our sins, and all our transgressions in all our sins. [k]

1. The more knowledge we have of good and evil, the greater is our sin.

We have known our Master's will, but have not done it, and therefore deserve to be beaten with many stripes. [l]

We have known the way of the Lord, and the judgments of our God, and yet have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds. [m]

We have known the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, and yet have done them, and have had pleasure in them that do them. [n]

We have taught others, and yet have not taught ourselves; [o] and while we profess to know God, we have in works denied him. [p]

2. The greater profession we have made of religion, the greater hath been our sin.

We call ourselves of the holy city, and stay ourselves upon the God of Israel, and make mention of his name, but not in truth and righteousness. [q] For we have dishonoured that worthy name by which we are called, [r] and given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. [s]

We have named the name of Christ, and yet have not departed from iniquity. [t]

3. The more mercies we have received from God, the greater has been our sin.

Thou hast nourished and brought us up as children, but we have rebelled against thee. [u]

We have ill requited thee, O Lord, as foolish people and unwise: though thou art our Father, that made us, and bought us, and established us, yet our spot has not been the spot of thy children. [x]

[a] Heb. 3. 12. [b] Rom. 7. 13. [c] 1 John 3. 4. [d] Luke 19. 14. [e] Exod. 5. 2. [f] Numb. 15. 30. [g] Neh. 9. 26. [h] Ps. 69. 5. [i] Tit. 3. 3. [k] 1 Tim. 6. 9. [l] Pro. 22. 15. [m] Job 11. 12. [n] Ps. 49. 13. [o] 2 Sam. 24. 10. [p] Ps. 73. 22. [q] Job. 33. 27. [r] Rom. 6. 21. [s] Mat. 16. 26. [t] Rom. 7. 11. [u] Heb. 3. 13. [x] James 1. 14. [y] 2 Pet. 2. 19. [z] Gen. 3. 5, 6. [a] Pro. 29. 5. [b] Obad. 3. [c] Rom. 2. 23. [d] Isa. 1. 4. [e] Hos. 12. 14. [f] 2 Sam. 11. *ult.* [g] Ezek. 6. 9. [h] Ps. 95. 8, 9, 10.

[a] Isa. 63. 10. [b] Amos 2. 13. [c] Eph. 4. 30. [d] Isa. 50. 1. [e] Pro. 8. 36. [f] Isa. 59. 2. [g] Tit. 1. 15. [h] Jer. 2. 19. [i] Pro. 14. 9. [k] Lev. 16. 16. [l] Luke 12. 47. [m] Jer. 5. 4, 5. [n] Rom. 1. 32. [o] Rom. 2. 21. [p] Tit. 1. 16. [q] Isa. 48. 1, 2. [r] James 2. 7. [s] 2 Sam. 12. 14. [t] 2 Tim. 2. 19. [u] Isa. 1. 2. [x] Deut. 32. 5, 6.

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We have not rendered again according to the benefit done unto us.[a]

4. The fairer warning we have had from the word of God, and from our own consciences, concerning our danger of sin, and danger by sin, the greater is the sin, if we go on in it.

We have been often reproved, and yet have hardened our neck,[b] and have gone on frowardly in the way of our heart.[c]

Thou hast sent to us, saying, O do not this abominable thing which I hate; but we have not hearkened, nor inclined our ear.[d]

The word of God hath been to us precept upon precept, and line upon line;[e] and though we have beheld our natural faces in the glass, yet we have gone away, and straitway forgot what manner of men we were.[f]

5. The greater afflictions we have been under for sin, the greater is the sin, if we go on in it.

Thou hast stricken us, but we have not grieved; we have refused to receive correction, and have made our faces harder than a rock;[g] and the rod hath not driven the foolishness out of our hearts.[h]

Thou hast chastened us with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men,[i] yet we have not turned to him that smiteth us, nor have we sought the Lord of Hosts.[k]

When some have been overthrown as Sodom and Gomorrah were, we have been as brands plucked out of the fire, yet have we not returned unto thee, O Lord.[l] And when thy hand has been lifted up, we have not seen it.[m]

6. The more vows and promises we have made of better obedience, the greater has our sin been.

We have not performed the words of the covenant which we made before thee,[n] but as treacherous dealers, we have dealt treacherously.[o]

Did we not say we would not transgress,[p] we would not offend any more?[q] We did, and yet we have returned with the dog to his vomit;[r] have returned to folly after God hath spoken peace.[s]

IX. We must judge and condemn ourselves for our sins, and own ourselves liable to punishment.

And now, O our God, what shall we say after this, for we have forsaken thy commandments![t] We have sinned, what shall we do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?[u]

We know that the law curseth every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them;[x] that the wages of every sin is death;[y] and that for these things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.[z]

And we are all guilty before God;[a] the Scripture hath concluded us all under sin,[b] and therefore thou mightest justly be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping.[a]

If thou shouldest lay righteousness to the line, and judgment to the plummet,[b] thou mightest justly separate us unto all evil, according to all the curses of the covenant, and blot out our names from under heaven.[c]

Thou mightest justly swear in thy wrath, that we should never enter into thy rest;[d] mightest justly set us naked and bare, and take away our corn in the season thereof, and our wine in the season thereof,[e] and put into our hands the cup of trembling, and make us drink even the dregs of that cup.[f]

Thou art just in whatever thou art pleased to lay upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.[g] Nay, thou our God hast punished less than our iniquities have deserved.[h]

Thou therefore shalt be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest;[i] and we will accept of the punishment of our iniquity,[k] and humble ourselves under thy mighty hand,[l] and say, The Lord is righteous.[m]

Wherefore should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?[n] No, we will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him.[o]

X. We must give to God the glory of his patience and long-suffering towards us, and his willingness to be reconciled.

O the riches of the patience and forbearance of God![p] How long-suffering is he to us-ward! not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.[q]

Thou hast not dealt with us according to our sin, nor rewarded us after our iniquities,[r] but thou waitest to be gracious to us.[s]

Sentence against our evil works has not been executed speedily,[t] but thou hast given us space to repent,[u] and make our peace with thee, and callest even backsliding children to return to thee, and hast promised to heal their backsliding; and therefore, Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.[x]

Surely the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation;[y] and if the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not as at this time have shewed us such things as these.[z]

And O, that this goodness of God might lead us to repentance![a] for though we have trespassed against our God, yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.[b]

Thou hast said it, and hast confirmed it with an oath, that thou hast no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn and live:[c] therefore will we rend our hearts, and not our garments, and turn to the Lord our God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. Who

[a] 2 Chro. 32. 25. [b] Pro. 29. 1. [c] Isa. 57. 17. [d] Jer. 44. 4, 5. [e] Isa. 28. 13. [f] James 1. 23, 24. [g] Jer. 5. 3. [h] Pro. 22. 15. [i] 2 Sam. 7. 14. [k] Isa. 9. 13. [l] Amos 4. 11. [m] Isa. 26. 11. [n] Jer. 34. 18. [o] Isa. 24. 16. [p] Jer. 2. 20. [q] Job 34. 31. [r] 2 Pet. 2. 22. [s] Ps. 85. 8. [t] Ezra 9. 10. [u] Job 7. 20. [x] Gal. 3. 10. [y] Rom. 6. 23. [z] Eph. 5. 6. [a] Rom. 3. 19. [b] Gal. 3. 22.

[a] Ezra 9. 14. [b] Isa. 28. 17. [c] Deut. 29. 20, 21. [d] Ps. 95. *ult.* [e] Hos. 2. 3, 9. [f] Isa. 51. 22. [g] Neh. 9. 33. [h] Ezra 9. 13. [i] Ps. 51. 4. [k] Lev. 26. 43. [l] 1 Pet. 5. 6. [m] 2 Chro. 12. 6. [n] Lam. 3. 39. [o] Mic. 7. 9. [p] Rom. 2. 4. [q] 2 Pet. 3. 9. [r] Ps. 103. 10. [s] Isa. 30. 18. [t] Ecc. 8. 11. [u] Rev. 2. 21. [x] Jer. 3. 22, 23. [y] 2 Pet. 3. 15. [z] Judg. 13. 23. Rom. 2. 4. [a] Ezra 10. 2. [b] Ezek. 33. 11.

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knows if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him? [a]

XI. We must humbly profess our sorrow and shame for sin, and humbly engage ourselves in the strength of divine grace, that we will be better, and do better for the future.

Lord, we repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, [b] to which thou hast exalted thy Son Christ Jesus, to give repentance and remission of sins. [c]

We have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now our eye seeth thee; wherefore we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes; [d] therefore will we be like the doves of the valleys, every one mourning for his iniquities. [e]

O that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears, that we might weep day and night [f] for our transgressions, and might in such a manner sow in those tears, as that at last we may reap in joy; may now go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, and may in due time come again with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us. [g]

Our iniquities are gone over our heads as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for us; [h] but weary and heavy laden under this burthen we come to Christ, who has promised that in him we shall find rest for our souls. [i]

O that knowing every man the plague of his own heart, [k] we may look unto him whom we have pierced, and may mourn, and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for a first-born. [l] That we may sorrow after a godly sort, with that sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; [m] and that we may remember, and be confounded, and never open our mouth any more, because of our shame, when thou art pacified toward us. [n]

And, O that we may bring forth fruits meet for repentance! [o] and may never return again to folly! [p] for, what have we to do any more with idols? [q] Sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under the law, but under grace. [r]

We have gone astray like lost sheep; seek thy servants, for we do not forget thy commandments. [s]

CHAP. III.

Of the third Part of PRAYER, *which is Petition and Supplication for the good Things which we stand in need of:*

HAVING opened the wounds of sin, both the guilt of it, and the power of it, and its remainders in us; we must next seek—unto God—for the remedy, for healing and help, for from him alone it is to be expected, and he will for this be inquired of [t] by us. And now we must impress our hearts with a deep sense of the need we have of those mercies which we pray for, that we are undone, for ever undone, without them; and with a high esteem and value for them, that we are happy, we are made for ever, if we obtain them; that we may, like Jacob, wrestle with him, in prayer, as for our lives, and the lives of our souls. But we must not think in our prayers to prescribe to him, or by our importunity to move him. He knows us better than we know ourselves; and knows what he will do. [a] But, thus, we open our wants and our desires; and then refer ourselves to his wisdom and goodness: and hereby we give honour to him as our protector and benefactor, and take the way which he himself has appointed, of fetching in mercy from him, and by faith plead his promise with him; and if we are sincere herein, we are, through his grace, qualified according to the tenor of the New Covenant, to receive his favours, and are to be assured that we do, and shall receive them. [b]

And now, Lord, what wait we for? Truly our hope is even in thee: Deliver us from all our transgressions, that we may not be the reproach of the foolish. [c]

Lord, all our desire is before thee; and our groaning is not hid from thee; [d] even the groanings which cannot be uttered; for he that searcheth the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit. [e]

We do not think that we shall be heard for our much speaking; for our Father knows what things we have need of before we ask him; [f] but our master has told us, that whatsoever we ask the Father in his name, he will give it us. And he has said, Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. [g]

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. [h]

I. We must earnestly pray for the pardon and forgiveness of all our sins.

Lord, we come to thee, as the poor publican, that stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast; and we pray his prayer, God be merciful to us sinners. The God of infinite mercy be merciful to us. [i]

O wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin, for we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. O purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean, wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow: Hide thy face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. [k]

Be thou merciful to our unrighteousness, and our sins and our iniquities do thou remember no more. [l] O forgive us that great debt. [m]

Let us be justified freely by thy grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus, [n] from all those things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. [o]

O let not our iniquity be our ruin, [p] but let the Lord

[a] Joel 2. 13. 14. [b] Mat. 3. 2. [c] Acts 5. 31. [d] Job 42. 5, 6. [e] Ezek. 7. 16. [f] Jer. 9. 1. [g] Ps. 126. 5, 6. [h] Ps. 38. 4. [i] Mat. 11. 28. [k] 1 Kin. 8. 38. [l] Zech. 12. 10. [m] 2 Cor. 7. 10. [n] Ezek. 16. 63. [o] Mat. 3. 8. [p] Ps. 85. 8. [q] Hos. 14. 8. [r] Rom. 6. 14. [s] Ps. 119. *ult.* [t] Ezek. 36. 37.

[a] John 6. 6. [b] Mark 11. 24. [c] Ps. 39. 7, 8. [d] Ps. 38. 9. [e] Rom. 8. 26, 27. [f] Mat. 6. 7, 8. [g] John 16. 23, 24. [h] 1 John 5. 14. 15. [i] Luke 18. 13. [k] Ps. 51. 2, 3, 7. [l] Heb. 8. 12. [m] Mat. 18. 32. [n] Rom. 3. 24. [o] Acts 13. 39. [p] Ezek. 18. 30.

take

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take away our sin, that we may not die, not die eternally ;[a] that we may not be hurt of the second death.[b]

Blot out as a cloud our transgressions, and as a thick cloud our sins; for we return unto thee because thou hast redeemed us.[c]

Enter not into judgment with thy servants, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified.[d]

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; heal our backslidings, and love us freely, and let thine anger be turned away from us, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.[e]

Though our sins have been as scarlet, let them be as white as snow; and though they have been red like crimson, let them be as wool, that being willing and obedient, we may eat the good of the land.[f]

We will say unto God, Do not condemn us,[g] but deliver us from going down to the pit, for thou hast found the ransom.[h]

For the encouraging of our faith, and the exciting of our fervency, in this petition for the pardon of sin; we may plead with God,

1. The infinite goodness of his nature, his readiness to forgive sin, and his glorying in it.

Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and rich in mercy to all them that call upon thee. Thou art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.[i]

Thou art a God of pardons, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness,[k] that dost not always chide, nor keep thine anger for ever.[l]

Thou, even thou, art he that blottest out our transgressions for thine own sake, and wilt not remember our sins, which we are here to put thee in remembrance of, to plead with thee, and to declare, that we may be justified.[m]

And now, we beseech thee, let the power of our Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, the Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression. Pardon, we beseech thee, the iniquity of thy people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy; and as thou hast forgiven even until now.[n]

For who is a God like unto thee, that pardonest iniquity, and passest by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage; who retainest not thine anger for ever, because thou delightest in mercy. O that thou wouldst have compassion upon us, and subdue our iniquities, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.[o]

2. The merit and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we rely upon as our main plea in our petition for the pardon of sin.

We know that as thou art *gracious and merciful*, so thou art the righteous God that loveth righteousness,[p] and wilt by no means clear the guilty.[q] We cannot say, Have patience with us, and we will pay thee all;[r] for we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.[s] But Jesus Christ is made of God to us righteousness;[b] being made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.[c]

We have sinned, but we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.[d]

It is God that justifieth, who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, and now is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,[e] and whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel.[f]

We desire to count every thing loss for Christ, and dung that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having any righteousness of our own, but that which is through the faith of Christ.[g]

This is the name whereby we will call him, The Lord our righteousness.[h] In him, Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief.[i]

Lord, remember David and all his troubles, the Son of David. Remember all his offerings, and accept his burnt sacrifice;[k] and turn not away the face of thine anointed,[l] who by his own blood is entered into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.[m]

Hast not thou thyself sent forth thy Son Christ Jesus, to be a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood, to deliver thy righteousness for the remission of sins, to declare at this time thy righteousness, that thou mayest be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;[n] and we now receive the atonement.[o]

3. The promises God has made in his word to pardon and absolve all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Gospel.

Lord, is not this the word which thou hast spoken, that if the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, even to our God, that thou wilt abundantly pardon, wilt multiply to pardon?[p]

To thee the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against thee.[q]

Is not this the covenant which thou hast made with the house of Israel, that thou wilt take away their sins;[r] that thou wilt forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more;[s] that the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found?[t]

Hast thou not said, that if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep thy statutes, he shall live, he shall not die, all his transgressions shall not be mentioned unto him?[u]

Hast thou not appointed, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ's name unto all nations?[x]

[a] 1 Sam. 12. 19. [b] Rev. 2. 11. [c] Isa. 44. 22. [d] Ps. 143. 2. [e] Hos. 14. 2, 3. [f] Isa. 1. 18. [g] Job 10. 2. [h] Job 33. 24. [i] Ps. 86. 5, 15. [k] Neh. 9. 17. [l] Ps. 103. 9. [m] Isa. 43. 25, 26. [n] Numb. 14. 17, 18, 19. [o] Mic. 7. 18, 19. [p] Ps. 11. 7. [q] Exod. 34. 7 [r] Mat. 18. 26.

[a] Isa. 64. 6. [b] 1 Cor. 1. 30. [c] 2 Cor. 5. 21. [d] 1 John 2. 1, 2. [e] Rom. 8. 33, 34. [f] Heb. 12. 24. [g] Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9. [h] Jer. 23. 6. [i] Mark 9. 24. [k] Ps. 20. 3. [l] Ps. 132. 1, 10. [m] Heb. 9. 12, 24. [n] Rom. 3. 25, 26. [o] Rom. 5. 11. [p] Isa. 55. 7. [q] Dan. 9. 9. [r] Rom. 11. 27. [s] Jer. 31. 34. [t] Jer. 50. 20. [u] Ezek. 18. 21, 22. [x] Luke 24. 47.

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Didst thou not promise, that when the sins of Israel were put upon the head of the scape goat, they should be sent away into the wilderness, into a land not inhabited?[a] And as far as the east is from the west, so far dost thou remove our transgressions from us?[b]

O remember these words unto thy servants, upon which thou hast caused us to hope.[c]

4. Our own misery and danger because of sin.

For thy Name sake, O Lord, pardon our iniquity, for it is great;[d] for innumerable evils have compassed us about, our iniquities have taken hold upon us, so that we are not able to look up: be pleased, O Lord, to deliver us; O Lord, make haste to help us.[e]

O remember not against us former iniquities, let thy tender mercy speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name's sake.[f]

Remember not the sins of our youth, nor our transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou us, for thy goodness sake, O Lord.[g]

5. The blessed condition which they are in whose sins are pardoned.

O let us have the blessedness of those whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered; of that man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.[h]

O let us have redemption through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of thy grace, wherein thou hast abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.[i] That being in Christ Jesus, there may be no condemnation to us.[k]

That our sins, which are many, being forgiven us, we may go in peace:[l] And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, if the people that dwell therein be forgiven their iniquity.[m]

II. We must likewise pray, that God will be reconciled to us, that we may obtain his favour and blessing, and gracious acceptance.

(1.) That we may be at peace with God, and his anger may be turned away from us.

Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through him let us have access into that grace wherein believers stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.[n]

Be not thou a terror to us, for thou art our hope in the day of evil.[o]

In Christ Jesus let us, who sometimes were afar off, be made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, and that he might reconcile us to God by his cross, hath slain the enmity thereby, so making peace. Through him therefore let us, who had made ourselves strangers and foreigners, become fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.[p]

Fury is not in thee: who would set the briars and thorns against thee in battle? thou wouldst go through them, yea, thou wouldst burn them together; but thou hast encouraged us to take hold on thy strength, that we may make peace; and hast promised that we shall make peace:[q] O let us therefore acquaint ourselves with thee, and be at peace, that thereby good may come unto us.[b]

Heal us, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved; for thou art our praise.[c] Be not angry with us for ever, but receive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee. Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.[d]

(2.) That we may be taken into covenant with God, and admitted into relation to him.

Be thou to us a God, and take us to be to thee a people,[e] and make us a willing people in the day of thy power.[f]

Though we are no more worthy to be called thy children;[g] for how shouldest thou put us, who have been rebellious, among the children, and give us the pleasant land? but thou hast said that we shall call thee our father, and not turn away from thee.[h] Shall we not therefore from this time cry unto thee, Our Father, thou art the guide of our youth?[i]

Lord, we take hold of thy covenant,[k] to thee we join ourselves in a perpetual covenant;[l] O that thou wouldest cause us to pass under the rod, and bring us into the bond of the covenant,[m] that we may become thine.

Make with us an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.[n]

(3.) That we may have the favour of God, and an interest in his special love.

We entreat thy favour, O God, with our whole hearts: be merciful unto us according to thy word,[o] for in thy favour is life;[p] yea, thy loving kindness is better than life itself.[q]

Lord, make thy face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us; Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and give us peace.[r]

Remember us, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit us with thy salvation, that we may see the good of thy chosen, and may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, and may glory with thine inheritance.[s]

(4.) That we may have the blessing of God.

O God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us; yea, let God, even our own God, give us his blessing.[t]

The Lord that made heaven and earth, bless us out of Zion,[u] bless us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ Jesus.[x]

O that thou would bless us indeed![y] Command thy blessing upon us, even life for evermore;[z] for thou blessest, O Lord, and it shall be blessed.[a]

[a] Lev. 16. 21, 22. [b] Ps. 103. 12. [c] Ps. 119. 49. [d] Ps. 25. 11. [e] Ps. 40. 12, 13. [f] Ps. 79, 8, 9. [g] Ps. 25. 7. [h] Ps. 32. 1, 2. [i] Eph. 1. 7, 8. [k] Rom. 8. 1. [l] Luke 7. 47, 50. [m] Isa. 33. *ult* [n] Rom. 5. 1, 2. [o] Jer. 17. 17. [p] Eph. 2. 13, 14, 15, 16, 19.

[a] Is. 27. 4, 5. [b] Job 22. 21. [c] Jer. 17. 14. [d] Ps. 85, 5. 6, 7. [e] Heb. 8. 10. [f] Ps. 110. 3. [g] Luke 15. 19. [h] Jer. 3. 19. [i] Jer. 3. 4. [k] Is. 56. 4. [l] Jer. 50. 5. [m] Ezek. 20. 37. Ezek. 16. 8. [n] Is. 55. 3. [o] Ps. 119. 58. [p] Ps. 30. 5. [q] Ps. 63. 3. [r] Num. 6. 25, 26. [s] Ps. 106. 4, 5. [t] Ps. 67. 1, 6. [u] Ps. 134. 3. [x] Eph. 1. 3. [y] 1 Chron. 4. 10. [z] Ps. 133. 3. [a] 1 Chron. 17. 27.

Let

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Let us receive the blessing from the Lord, even righteousness from the God of our salvation. [a]

Hast thou but one blessing? Yea, thou hast many blessings: bless us, even us also, O our Father; [b] yea, let the blessing of Abraham come upon us, which comes upon the Gentiles through faith; [c] and the blessing of Jacob, for we would not let thee go, except thou bless us. [d]

(5.) THAT we may have the presence of God with us.

If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence; [e] never leave us nor forsake us. [f]

O cast us not away from thy presence, nor ever take thy holy Spirit away from us; [g] but let us always dwell with the upright in thy presence. [h]

3. WE must pray for the comfortable sense of our reconciliation to God, and our acceptance with him.

(1.) THAT we may have some evidence of the pardon of our sins, and of our adoption.

O make us to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which sin hath broken may rejoice. [i]

Say unto each of us, Son, Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee. [k]

Let the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from dead works, to serve thee the living God. [l]

Let thy Spirit witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. [m]

Say unto our souls, that thou art our salvation. [n]

(2.) THAT we may have a well-grounded peace of conscience; a holy security and serenity of mind, arising from a sense of our justification before God, and a good work wrought in us.

The Lord of peace himself give us peace, all peace, always, by all means; [o] that peace which Jesus Christ hath left with us, which he gives to us; such a peace as the world can neither give nor take away; such a peace, that our hearts may not be troubled or afraid. [p]

Let the work of righteousness in our souls be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever. [q]

Speak peace to thy people, and to thy saints, and let them not turn again to folly. [r]

O create the fruit of the lips peace, peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh, and restore comfort to thy mourners. [s]

Where the sons of peace are, let thy peace find them out, and rest upon them. [t]

Cause us to hear thy loving kindness, and to taste that thou art gracious, [u] for in thee do we trust. [x]

Let the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus; [a] and let that peace rule in our hearts, unto which we are called. [b]

Now the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. [c]

4. WE must pray for the grace of God, and all the kind and powerful influences and operations of that grace.

We come to the throne of grace, that we may obtain not only mercy to pardon, but grace to help in every time of need, grace for seasonable help. [d]

From the fulness that is in Jesus Christ, (in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell,) [e] let every one of us receive, and grace for grace. [f]

(1.) We must pray for grace to fortify us against every evil thought, word, and work. Having been earnest for the removing of the guilt of sin, that we may not die for it as a crime; we must be no less earnest for the breaking of the power of sin, that we may not die by it as a disease; but that it may be mortified in us.

O let no iniquity have dominion over us, because we are not under the law, but under grace. [g]

Let the flesh be crucified in us, with its affections and lusts; that walking in the Spirit, we may not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. [h]

Let our old man be crucified with Christ, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we may not serve sin; and let not sin reign in our mortal bodies, (in our immortal souls), that we should obey it in the lusts thereof; but being made free from sin, let us become the servants of righteousness. [i]

Let the law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, make us free from the law of sin and death. [k]

Give us grace to put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, that we may put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. [l]

That the world may be crucified to us, and we to the world, by the cross of Christ. [m]

And that the temptations of Satan may not overcome us.

We pray that we may not enter into temptation; [n] or, however, that no temptation may take us but such as is common to men; and let the faithful God never suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but with the temptation make way for us to escape. [o]

Put upon us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Let our loins be girt about with truth, put on us the breast-plate of righteousness, and let our feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Give us the shield of faith, wherewith we may quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and the helmet of salvation; and let the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, be always ready to us. [p]

[a] Ps. 24. 5. [b] Gen. 27. 38. [c] Gal. 3. 14. [d] Gen. 32. 26. [e] Exod. 33. 15. [f] Heb. 13. 5. [g] Ps. 51. 11. [h] Ps. 140. 13. [i] Ps. 51. 8 [k] Matt. 9. 2. [l] Heb. 9. 14. [m] Rom. 8. 16, 17. [n] Ps. 35. 3. [o] 2 Thess. 3. 16. [p] John 14. 27. [q] Is. 32. 17. [r] Ps. 85. 8. [s] Is. 57. 18, 19. [t] Luke 10. 6. [u] Ps. 143. 8. [x] 1 Pet. 2. 3.

[a] Phil. 4. 7. [b] Col. 3. 15. [c] Rom. 15. 13. [d] Heb. 4. 16. [e] Col. 1. 19. [f] John 1. 16. [g] Rom. 6. 14. [h] Gal. 5. 16, 24. [i] Rom. 6. 6, 12, 18. [k] Rom. 8. 2. [l] Eph. 4. 22, 24. [m] Gal. 6. 14. [n] Matt. 26. 41. [o] 1 Cor. 10. 13. [p] Eph. 6. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Enable

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Enable us so to resist the devil, as that he may flee from us;[a] to resist him stedfast in the faith.[b] And the God of peace tread Satan under our feet, and do it shortly.[c]

(2.) We must pray for grace to furnish us for every good thought, word, and work, that we may not only be kept from sin, but may be in every thing as we should be, and do as we should do.

Let Christ be made of God to us, not only righteousness, but wisdom, sanctification, and redemption.[d]

Let us be planted together in the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection, that as he was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.[e]

[1.] That the work of grace may be wrought there, where it is not yet begun.

Lord, teach transgressors thy ways, and let sinners be converted unto thee;[f] and let the disobedient be turned to the wisdom of the just, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord.[g]

Let those be quickened that are yet dead in trespasses and sins:[h] say unto them, Live; yea, say unto them, Live; and the time shall be a time of love.[i]

Open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified.[k]

By the blood of the covenant, send forth the prisoners out of the pit in which is no water, that they may turn to the strong hold, as prisoners of hope.[l]

Let the word of God prevail to the pulling down of strong holds, and the casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and let every thought be brought into obedience to Christ.[m]

[2.] That where it is begun it may be carried on, and at length perfected, and the foundation that is well laid may be happily built upon.

Fulfil in us all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power.[n]

Let the God that has begun a good work in us, perform it unto the day of Christ.[o]

Perfect, O God, that which concerns us: thy mercy, O Lord, endures for ever; forsake not the work of thine own hands.[p]

Lord, let thy grace be sufficient for us, and let thy strength be made perfect in weakness, that where we are weak, there we may be strong;[q] strong in the Lord, and the power of his might.[r]

(3.) More particularly we must pray for grace, to teach and instruct us, and make us knowing and intelligent in the things of God.

Give us so to cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding, to seek for it as silver, and to search for it as for hid treasure, that we may understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.[s]

Give us all to know thee, from the least even to the greatest,[a] and to follow on to know thee,[b] and so to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, as may be life eternal to us.[c]

Give us the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and may experience what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.[d]

Open thou our eyes, that we may see the wondrous things of thy law and gospel.[e]

Give us to know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed;[f] and let our knowledge grow up to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even of the Father, and of Christ.

Deal with thy servants, according to thy mercy, and teach us thy statutes; we are thy servants, give us understanding that we may know thy testimonies. Let our cry come before thee, O Lord, give us understanding according to thy word,[g] that good understanding which they have that do thy commandments, whose praise endureth for ever.[h]

(4.) To lead us into, and keep us in the way of truth, and if in any thing we are in an error, to rectify our mistake.

Let the Spirit of truth guide us into all truth,[i] and cause us to understand wherein we have erred.[k]

That which we see not teach thou us,[l] and enable us so to prove all things, as to hold fast that which is good.[m]

Lord, grant that we may not be as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Christ in all things, who is the head.[n]

Lord, give us so to do thy will, as that we may know of the doctrine whether it be of God;[o] and so to know the truth, that the truth may make us free, may make us free indeed.[p]

Enable us, we pray thee, to hold fast the form of sound words, which we have heard, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus,[q] and to continue in the things which we have learned, and been assured of.[r]

(5.) To help our memories, that the truths of God may be ready to us, whenever we have occasion to use them.

Lord, let thy Spirit teach us all things, and bring all things to our remembrance, whatsoever thou hast said unto us,[s] that the word of Christ may dwell richly in us, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.[t]

Lord, grant that we may give a more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip,[u] and may keep in memory what

[a] James 4. 7. [b] 1 Pet. 5. 9. [c] Rom. 16. 20. [d] 1 Cor. 1. 30. [e] Rom. 6. 4. [f] Ps. 51. 13. [g] Luke 1. 17. [h] Eph. 2. 1. [i] Ezek. 16. 6, 8. [k] Acts 26. 18. [l] Zech. 9. 11, 12. [m] 2 Cor. 10. 5. 2 Thess. 1. 11. [o] Phil. 1. 6. [p] Ps. 138. 8. [q] 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. [r] Eph. 6. 10. [s] Pro. 2. 3, 4, 5.

[a] Heb. 8. 11. [b] Hos. 6. 3. [c] John 17. 3. [d] Eph. 1. 17, 18, 19. [e] Ps. 119. 18. [f] Luke 1. 4. [g] Ps. 119. 124, 125, 169. [h] Ps. 111. 10. [i] Jol 16. 13. [k] Job 6. 24. [l] Job 34. 32. [m] 1 Thess. 5. 21. [n] Eph. 4. 14, 15. [o] John 7. 17. [p] John 8. 32. 36. [q] 2 Tim. 1. 13. [r] 2 Tim. 3. 14. [s] John 14. 26. [t] Col. 3. 16. [u] Heb. 2. 1.

hath

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hath been preached to us, and may not believe in vain.

Lord, make us ready andmighty in the scriptures,[a] that we may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works,[b] and being well instructed into the kingdom of heaven, may, as the good householder, bring out of our treasure things new and old.

(6.) To direct our consciences, to shew us the way of our duty, and to make us wise, knowing, judicious Christians.

Lord, give us a wise and an understanding heart,[c] that wisdom which, in all cases, is profitable to direct;[d] that wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand his way.[e]

This we pray, that our love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment, that we may discern things that differ, and may approve things that are excellent; that we may be sincere, and without offence unto the day of Christ, and may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.[f]

O that we may be filled with the knowledge of thy will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.[g]

Teach us thy way, O God, and lead us in a plain path, because of our observers.[h]

When we know not what to do, our eyes are up unto thee;[i] then let us hear the word behind us, saying, This is the way, walk in it, that we turn not to the right hand, or to the left.[k]

Order our steps in thy word, and let no iniquity have dominion over us.[l]

(7.) To sanctify our nature, to plant in us all holy principles and dispositions, and to increase every grace in us.

The very God of peace sanctify us wholly; and we pray God our whole spirit, and soul, and body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; for faithful is he that calleth us, who also will do it.[m]

Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us: cast us not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit away from us: restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free Spirit.[n]

Write thy law in our hearts, and put it in our inward part,[o] that we may be the epistles of Christ, written by the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart,[p] that the law of our God being in our heart, none of our steps may slide,[q] and we may delight to do thy will,[r] O God; may delight in the law of God after the inward man.[s]

O that we may obey from the heart, that form of doctrine into which we desire to be delivered,[t] as into mould, that our whole souls may be leavened by it;[u] and that we may not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind;[b] may not fashion ourselves after our former lusts in our ignorance, but, as obedient children, may be holy in all manner of conversation, as he which hath called us is holy.[c]

[1.] We must pray for faith.

Unto us, Lord, let it be given to believe;[d] for the faith by which we are saved is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.[e]

Lord, increase our faith,[f] and perfect what is lacking in it,[g] that we may be strong in faith, giving glory to God.[h]

Lord, give us so to be crucified with Christ, as that the life we now live in the flesh, we may live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us;[i] and so to bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, as that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies.[k]

As we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, enable us so to walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as we have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.[l]

Let every word of thine profit us, being mixed with faith,[m] by which we receive thy testimony, and set to our seal that God is true.[n]

We beseech thee, work in us that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen,[o] by which we may look above the things that are seen, that are temporal, and may look at the things that are not seen, that are eternal.[p]

Enable us by faith, to set the Lord always before us,[q] and to have our eyes ever towards him,[r] that we may act in every thing as seeing him that is invisible, and having a respect to the recompence of reward.[s]

Let our hearts be purified by faith,[t] and let it be our victory overcoming the world;[u] and let us be kept from fainting, by believing that we shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.[x]

[2.] We must pray for the fear of God.

Lord, work in us that fear of thee which is the beginning of wisdom,[y] which is the instruction of wisdom,[z] and which is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.[a]

Unite our hearts to fear thy name,[b] that we may keep thy commandments, which is the whole of man.[c]

O put thy fear into our hearts, that we may never depart from thee.[d] Let us all be devoted to thy fear;[e] and let us be in the fear of the Lord every day, and all the day long.[f]

3. We must pray, that the love of God and Christ may be rooted in us; and, in order thereunto, that the love of the world may be removed from us.

[a] Acts 18. 29. [b] 2 Tim. 3. 17. [c] 1 Kings 3. 9. [d] Ecc. 10 10. [e] Pro. 14. 8. [f] Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. [g] Col. 1. 9, 10. [h] Ps. 27. 11. [i] 2 Chro. 20. 12. [k] Is 30. 21. [l] Ps. 119. 133. [m] 1 Thess. 5. 23, 24. [n] Ps. 51. 10, 11, 12. [o] Heb. 8. 10. [p] 2 Cor. 3. 3. [q] Ps. 37. 31. [r] Ps. 40. 8. [s] Rom. 7. 22. [t] Rom. 6. 17.

[a] Luke 13. 21. [b] Rom. 12. 2. [c] 1 Pet. 1. 14. 15. [d] Phil. 1. 29. [e] Eph. 2. 8. [f] Luke 17. 5. [g] 1 Thess. 3. 10. [h] Rom. 4. 20. [i] Gal. 2. 20. [k] 2 Cor. 4. 10. [l] Col. 2. 6, 7. [m] Heb. 4. 2. [n] John 3. 33. [o] Heb. 11. 1. [p] 2 Cor. 4. 18. [q] Ps. 16. 8. [r] Ps. 25. 15. [s] Heb. 11. 26, 27. [t] Acts 15. 9. [u] 1 John 5. 4. [x] Ps. 27. 13. [y] Pro. 1. 7. [z] Pro. 15. 33. [a] Pro. 14. 27. [b] Ps. 86. 11. [c] Ecc. 12. 13. [d] Jer. 32. 40. [e] Ps. 119. 38. [f] Pro. 23. 17.

Give

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Give us grace, we beseech thee, to love Thee the Lord our God, with all our heart and soul, and mind and might, which is the first and great commandment;[a] to set our love upon thee,[b] and to delight ourselves always in thee; and therein we shall have the desire of our heart.[c]

Circumcise our hearts to love thee the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and with all our soul, that we may live.[d]

O that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.[e]

O that Jesus Christ may be very precious to us, as he is to all that believe,[f] that he may be in our account the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely, and that he may be our beloved and our friend:[g] that though we have not seen him, yet we may love him; and though now we see him not, yet believing, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.[h]

Let the love of Christ to us constrain us to live, not to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again.[i]

And Lord, grant that we may not love the world, nor the things that are in the world, because if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;[k] that we may set our affections on things above, and not on things that are on the earth.

[4.] We must pray, that our consciences may be always tender, and that we may live a life of repentance.

Lord, take away the stony heart out of our flesh, and give us a heart of flesh.[l]

Make us afraid of all appearances of evil,[m] and careful not to give Satan advantage against us, as being not ignorant of his devices.[n]

Lord, give us the happiness which they have who fear always,[o] that when we think we stand, we may take heed lest we fall.[p]

[5.] We must pray to God to work in us charity and brotherly love.

Lord, put upon us that charity which is the bond of perfectness,[q] that we may keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;[r] and may live in love and peace, that the God of love and peace may be with us.[s]

Lord, give us to love our neighbour as ourselves, with that love which is the fulfilling of the law;[t] to love one another with a pure heart, fervently,[u] that hereby all men may know that we are Christ's disciples.[x]

And as we are taught of God to love one another, give us to abound therein more and more,[y] and as we have opportunity to do good to all men,[z] and as much as in us lies to live peaceably with all men,[a] always following after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.[b]

Lord, make us able to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us, and to do good to them that hate us,[a] forbearing one another, and forgiving one another in love, as Christ forgave us.[b]

[6.] We must pray for the grace of self-denial.

Lord, give us grace to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily, and to follow Christ,[c] to keep under the body and bring it in subjection.[d]

Lord keep us from being lovers of our own selves,[e] from being wise in our own conceit, and leaning to our understanding.[f]

Lord, give us to seek not our own only, but every one his brother's welfare.[g]

And grant that none of us may live to ourselves, or die to ourselves, but whether we live or die, we may be the Lord's, and may live and die to him.[h]

[7.] We must pray for humility and meekness.

Lord, give us all to learn of Christ to be meek and lowly in heart, that we may find rest to our souls;[i] and that herein the same mind may be in us, that was also in Christ Jesus.[k]

Lord, hide pride from us,[l] and cloath us with humility,[m] and put upon us the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in thy sight is of great price.[n]

Lord, give us grace to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.[o]

Let anger never rest in our bosoms,[p] nor the sun ever go down upon our wrath;[q] but enable us to shew all meekness towards all men, because we ourselves also were sometimes foolish and disobedient.[r]

Let us be cloathed as becomes the elect of God, holy and beloved, with bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering,[s] that being merciful as our Father which is in heaven is merciful,[t] we may be perfect as he is perfect.[u]

[8.] We must pray for the grace of contentment and patience, and a holy indifference to all the things of sense and time.

Lord, teach us whatsoever state we are in therewith to be content;[x] let us know both how to be abased, and how to abound; every where and in all things, let us be instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need; And let godliness with contentment be great gain to us,[y] and a little with the fear of the Lord and quietness, is better than great treasure, and trouble therewith.[z]

Lord, grant that our conversation may be without covetousness,[a] and we may always be content with such things as we have; still saying, The will of the Lord be done.[b]

[a] Matt. 22. 37. [b] Ps. 91. 14. [c] Ps. 37. 4. [d] Deut. 30. 6. [e] Rom. 5. 5. [f] 1 Pet. 2. 7. [g] Cant. 5. 10. 16. [h] 1 Pet. 1. 8. [i] 2 Cor. 5. 14. [k] 1 John 2. 15. [l] Ezek. 11. 19. [m] 1 Thess. 5. 22. [n] 2 Cor. 2. 11. [o] Pro. 28. 14. [p] 1 Cor. 10. 12. [q] Col. 3. 14. [r] Eph. 4. 3. [s] 2 Cor. 13. 11. [t] Rom. 13. 9, 10. [u] 1 Pet. 1. 22. [x] John 13. 35. [y] 1 Thess. 4. 9, 10. [z] Gal. 6. 10. [a] Rom. 12. 18. [b] Rom. 14. 19.

[a] Matt. 5. 44. [b] Col. 3. 13. [c] Matt. 16. 24. [d] 1 Cor. 9. 27. [e] 2 Tim. 3. 2. [f] Pro. 3. 5, 7. [g] 1 Cor. 10. 24. [h] Rom. 14. 7, 8. [i] Matt. 11. 29. [k] Phil. 2. 5. [l] Job 33. 17. [m] 1 Pet. 5. 5. [n] 1 Pet. 3. 4. [o] Eph. 4. 1, 2. [p] Ecc. 7. 9. [q] Eph. 4. 26. [r] Tit. 3. 2, 3. [s] Col. 3. 12. [t] Luke 6. 36. [u] Mat. 5. *ult.* [x] Phil. 4. 11, 12. [y] 1 Tim. 6. 6. [z] Pro. 15. 16. [a] Heb. 13. 5. [b] Acts 21. 14.

Enable

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Enable us in our patience to possess our own souls;[a] and let patience always have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.[b]

Lord, give us grace to weep as though we wept not, and to rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and to buy as though we possessed not, and to use this world as not abusing it, because the time is short, and the fashion of this world passeth away.[c]

[9.] We must pray for the grace of hope; a hope in God and Christ, and a hope of eternal life.

Let patience work experience in us, and experience hope, such a hope as maketh not ashamed.[d] Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, let us have hope,[e] and be saved by hope.[f]

Let the God of Jacob be our help, and our hope always be in the Lord our God.[g]

Let us be begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,[h] and let that hope be to us as an anchor to the soul, sure and stedfast, entering into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered.[i]

Let us have Christ in us the hope of glory, and never be moved away from that hope of the gospel;[k] but enable us to give diligence unto the full assurance of hope, unto the end.[l]

(8.) We must pray for grace to preserve us from sin, and all appearances of it, and approaches towards it.

Now we pray to God that we may do no evil,[m] but may be blameless and harmless as the children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.[n]

Turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou us in thy way. Remove from us the way of lying, and grant us thy law graciously.[o]

Incline not our hearts to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with them that work iniquity, and let us not eat of their dainties.[p]

O cleanse us from our secret faults; Keep back thy servants also from presumptuous sins;[q] Let them not have dominion over us, but let us be upright, and innocent from the great transgressions; and grant that hereby we may prove ourselves upright before thee, by keeping ourselves from our own iniquity.[r]

Let the word be hid in our hearts, that we may not sin against thee,[s] and thy grace be at all times sufficient for us,[t] ready to us, and mighty in us, and never give us up to our own hearts lust, to walk in our own counsels.[u]

Enable us to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,[x] so circumspectly that we may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion[y] to blaspheme that worthy name by which we are called,[z] and with well-doing may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,[a] and may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour[a] in all things.

(9.) We must pray for grace to enable us both to govern our tongues well, and to use them well.

Lord, enable us to take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our tongue,[b] and to keep our mouth as it were with a bridle, that it may not be hasty to utter any thing.[c]

Set a watch, O Lord, before our mouth, keep the door of our lips,[d] that we may not offend in word.[e]

Let our speech be always with grace seasoned with salt,[f] and enable us always out of the good treasure of our heart to bring forth good things.[g] Let our mouth speak wisdom, and our tongue talk of judgment;[h] and let not thy words depart out of our mouth, nor out of the mouth of our seed, or our seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever.[i]

Enable us always to open our mouth with wisdom, and let the law of kindness be in our tongue.[k] Give us to know what is acceptable, that our tongues may be as choice silver, and our lips may feed many.[l]

(10.) We must pray for grace to direct and quicken us to, and to strengthen and assist us in our duty, in the whole course of our conversation.

Let the grace of God, which hath appeared to us, and to all men, bringing salvation, effectually teach us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.[m]

[1.] That we may be prudent and discreet in our duty.

Thou hast said, If any man lack wisdom, he must ask it of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.[n] Lord, we want wisdom, make us wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;[o] that wisdom may make our face shine,[p] and may be better to us than weapons of war.[q]

Enable us to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time.[r]

Give us to order all our affairs with discretion,[s] and to behave ourselves wisely, in a perfect way with a perfect heart.[t]

[2.] That we may be honest and sincere in our duty.

Let our wisdom be not that from beneath which is earthly, sensual, devilish, but wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.[u]

O that we may always have our conversation in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.[x]

[a] Luke 21. 19. [b] Jam. 1. 4. [c] 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. [d] Rom. 5. 4, 5 [e] Rom. 15. 4. [f] Rom. 8. 24. [g] Ps. 146. 5. [h] 1 Pet. 1. 3. [i] Heb. 6 19, 20. [k] Col. 1. 23, 27. [l] Heb. 6. 11. [m] 2 Cor. 13. 7. [n] Phil. 2. 15. [o] Ps. 119. 37, 29. [p] Ps. 141. 4. [q] Ps. 19 12, 13. [r] Ps. 18. 23. [s] Ps. 119. 11. [t] 2 Cor. 12. 9. [u] Ps. 81. 12. [x] Eph. 5. 15. [y] 2 Cor. 11. 12. [z] James 2. 7. [a] 1 Pet. 2. 15.

[a] Tit. 2. 10. [b] Ps. 39. 1. [c] Ecc. 5. 2. [d] Ps. 141. 3. [e] Jam. 3. 2. [f] Col. 4. 6. [g] Mat. 12. 35. [h] Ps. 37. 30. [i] Is. 59. 21. [k] Pro. 31. 26. [l] Pro. 10. 32, 20, 21. [m] Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. [n] Jam. 1. 5. [o] Matt. 10. 16. [p] Ecc. 8. 1. [q] Ecc. 9. 18. [r] Col. 4. 5. [s] Ps. 112. 5, [t] Ps. 101. 2. [u] Jam. 3. 15, 17. [x] 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Lord,

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Lord, uphold us in our integrity, and set us before thy face for ever,[a] and let integrity and uprightness preserve us, for we wait on thee.[b]

Let our hearts be sound in thy statutes, that we be not ashamed;[c] and let our eye be single, that our whole body may be full of light.[d]

[3.] THAT we may be active and diligent in our duty.

Lord, quicken us to work the works of him that sent us, while it is day, because the night comes wherein no man can work;[e] and what good our hand finds to do, to do it with all our might, because there is no work or knowledge in the grave, whither we are going.[f]

Lord, grant that we may never be slothful in any good business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;[g] stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.[h]

Lord, make us zealously affected in every good work,[i] and what we do enable us to do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.[k]

Lord, enable us to do the work of every day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires,[l] redeeming the time, because the days are evil,[m] that when our Lord comes, he may find us so doing[n]

[4.] THAT we may be resolute and courageous in our duty, as those who know that though we may be losers for Christ, we shall not be losers by him in the end.

Lord, teach us to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ,[o] that we may not fear the reproach of men, or their revilings,[p] nor be ashamed of Christ, or of his words,[q] knowing whom we have believed, even one who is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day.[r]

Though bonds and afflictions should abide us, Lord, grant that none of these things may move us, and that we may not count life itself dear to us, so we may finish our course with joy.[s]

Enable us in all things to approve ourselves to God, and then to pass by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, clad with the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,[t] as those who account it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment, for he that judgeth us is the Lord.[u]

[5.] THAT we may be pleasant and cheerful in our duty.

Lord, enable us to rejoice evermore,[x] to rejoice in the Lord always, because he hath again said unto us, Rejoice;[y] that we may go on our way rejoicing,[z] may eat our bread with joy, and drink our wine with a merry heart, as we shall have reason to do, if God now accepteth our works.[a]

Give us grace to serve thee the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the abundance of all things:[a] and to sing in the ways of the Lord, because great is the glory of our God.[b]

Let us have that cheerfulness of heart which doeth good like a medicine,[c] and deliver us from that heaviness which maketh the heart stoop,[d] and that sorrow of the world which worketh death.[e]

[6.] THAT we may do the duty of every condition of life, every event of providence, and every relation wherein we stand.

Lord, enable us in a day of prosperity to be joyful, and in a day of adversity to consider, because God hath set the one over against the other,[f] to add to our knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience.[g]

Give us grace to abide with thee in the calling wherein we are called;[h] and in all our ways to acknowledge thee, and be thou pleased to direct our steps.[i]

Let those who are called, being servants, be the Lord's freemen;[k] and those who are called, being free, be Christ's servants.

Let all in every relation dwell together in unity, that it may be as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.[l] O that we may dwell together as joint heirs of the grace of life, that our prayers may not be hindered.[m]

Give us grace to honour all men, to love the brotherhood, to fear God,[n] and to be subject to the higher powers, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.[o]

[7.] THAT we may be universally conscientious.

O that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.[p]

O that our ways were directed to keep thy commandments! And then shall we not be ashamed, when we have a respect to them all.[q]

Teach us, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and we shall keep it to the end. Give us understanding, and we shall keep thy law, yea, we shall observe it with our whole heart. Make us to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do we delight. Incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.[r]

Grant us, we pray thee, according to the riches of thy glory, that we may be strengthened with all might by thy Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with a divine fulness,[s] and may partake of a divine nature.[t]

And let the love of Christ constrain us to live not to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again.[u]

(11.) WE must pray for grace to make us wiser and better every day than other.

[a] Ps. 41. 12. [b] Ps. 25. 21. [c] Ps. 119. 80. [d] Matt. 6. 22, [e] John 9. 4. [f] Ecc. 9. 10. [g] Rom. 12. 11. [h] 1 Cor. 15. 58. [i] Gal. 4. 18. [k] Col. 3. 23. [l] Ezr. 3. 4. [m] Eph. 5. 16. [n] Luke 12. 43. [o] 2 Tim. 2. 3. [p] Isa. 51. 7. [q] Mark 8. 38. [r] 2 Tim. 1. 12. [s] Acts 20. 23, 24. [t] 2 Cor. 6. 4. 7. [u] 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. [x] 1 Thess. 5. 16. [y] Phil. 4. 4. [z] Acts 8. 39. [a] Ecc. 9. 7.

[a] Deut. 28. 47. [b] Ps. 138. 5. [c] Pro. 17. 22. [d] Pro. 12. 25. [e] 2 Cor. 7. 10. [f] Ecc. 7. 14. [g] 2 Pet. 1. 6. [h] 1 Cor. 7. 20. [i] Pro. 5. 6. [k] 1 Cor. 7. 21. [l] Ps. 133. 1, 3. [m] 1 Pet. 3. 7. [n] 1 Pet. 2. 17. [o] Rom. 13. 1, 5. [p] Col. 4. 12. [q] Ps. 119. 5, 6. [r] Ps. 119. 33, 34, 35, 36. [s] Eph. 3. 16, 17, 18, 19. [t] 2 Pet. 1. 4. [u] 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15.

Lord,

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Lord, give us to increase with the increases of God;[a] to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;[b] to hold on our way, and having clean hands, to grow stronger and stronger.[c]

Let our path be as the shining light, which shines more and more to the perfect day.[d]

We have not yet attained, nor are we already perfect; Lord, grant that therefore forgetting the things that are behind, we may reach forth to those things that are before, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.[e]

Be thou as the dew unto us, that we may grow as the lilly, and cast forth our roots as Lebanon; that our branches may spread, and our beauty be as the olive-tree.[f] And let the Sun of Righteousness arise upon us with healing under his wings, that we may go forth and grow up as the calves of the stall.[g]

(12.) We must pray for effectual support and comfort under all the crosses and afflictions that we meet with in this world.

We know that we are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; but in six troubles be thou pleased to deliver us, and in seven let no evil touch us.[h]

Let the Eternal God be our refuge, and underneath be the everlasting arms,[i] that the spirit thou hast made may not fail before thee, nor the soul that thou hast redeemed.[k]

Let us be strengthened with all might, according to thy glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.[l]

Let thy statutes be our songs in the house of our pilgrimage; and let thy testimonies which we have taken as a heritage for ever, be always the rejoicings of our hearts.[m]

When we are troubled on every side, yet let us not be distressed, and when we are perplexed, let us not be in despair,[n] but as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.[o]

(13.) We must pray for grace to preserve us to the end, and to fit us for whatever lies before us betwixt this and the grave.

Lord, deliver us from every evil work, and preserve us to thy heavenly kingdom,[p] being kept from falling, that we may be presented faultless at the coming of thy glory with exceeding joy.[q]

Lord, make us to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, that our hearts may be established unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.[r]

If Satan desire to have us, that he may sift us as wheat, yet let Christ's intercession prevail for us, that our faith fail not.[s]

Till we are taken out of the world, let us be kept from the evil, and sanctified through thy truth; thy word is truth.[t]

[a] Col. 2. 19. [b] 2 Pet. 3. 18. [c] Job 17. 9. [d] Pro. 4. 18. [e] Phil. 3. 12, 13, 14. [f] Hos. 14. 5, 6. [g] Mal. 4. 2. [h] Job 5. 7, 19. [i] Deut. 33. 27. [k] Isa. 57. 16. [l] Col. 1. 11. [m] Ps. 119. 54, 111. [n] 2 Cor. 4. 8. [o] 2 Cor. 6. 10. [p] 2 Tim. 4. 18. [q] Jude 24. [r] 1 Thess. 3. 12, 13. [s] Luke 22. 31, 32. [t] John 17. 15, 17.

Build us up, we pray thee, in our most holy faith, and keep us in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.[a]

Grant that we may continue to call upon thee as long as we live,[b] and till we die may never remove our integrity from us; and that our righteousness we may hold fast, and never let it go, and our hearts may not reproach us so long as we live.[c]

(14.) We must pray for grace to prepare us for death, and to carry us well through our dying moments.

Lord, make us to know our end, and the measure of our days, what it is, that we may know and consider how frail we are; and that our days are as a hand-breadth, and that every man at his best state is altogether vanity,[d] and our days upon earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding.[e]

Lord, teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom,[f] and make us to consider our latter end.[g]

Lord, make us always ready with our loins girded about, and our lights burning, because the Son of Man comes at an hour that we think not.[h]

Keep us all the days of our appointed time, waiting till our change comes; and then shalt thou call, and we will answer.[i]

Bring us to our grave as a shock of corn in its season;[k] satisfy us with life, whether it be longer or shorter, and shew us thy salvation.[l]

And when we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, be thou with us, that we may fear no evil, let thy rod and thy staff comfort us.[m]

Let goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life, and let us dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.[n] Mercy and truth be with us.[o]

Redeem our souls from the power of the grave, and receive us;[p] guide us by thy counsel, and afterwards receive us to glory.[q]

(15.) We must pray for grace to fit us for heaven, and that we may at length be put in possession of eternal life.

Lord, make us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light;[r] let God himself work in us to the self-same thing, and give us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.[s]

O that we may now have our conversation in heaven; that we may from thence with comfort look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.[t]

O that now we may set our affections on things above, and that our life may be hid with Christ in God, that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with him in glory;[u] that when he shall appear we may be like him, and may see him as he is,[x]

[a] Jude 20. 21. [b] Ps. 116. 2. [c] Job 27. 5, 6. [d] Ps. 39. 4, 5. [e] 1 Chro. 29. 15. [f] Ps. 90. 12. [g] Deut. 32. 29. [h] Luke 12. 35, 40. [i] Job 14. 14, 15. [k] Job 5. 26. [l] Ps. 91. 16. [m] Ps. 23. 4. [n] Ps. 23. 6. [o] 2 Sam. 15. 20. [p] Ps. 49. 15. [q] Ps. 73. 24. [r] Col. 1. 12. [s] 2 Cor. 5. 5. [t] Phil. 3. 20, 21. [u] Col. 3. 2, 3, 4. [x] 1 John 3. 2.

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may behold his face in righteousness, and when we awake may be satisfied with his likeness.[a]

When we fail, let us be received into everlasting habitations,[b] in the city that hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God,[c] that we may be together for ever with the Lord, to see as we are seen, and know as we are known.[d]

And in the mean time help us to comfort ourselves and one another with these words; and having this hope in us, to purify ourselves even as Christ is pure.[e]

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through Grace, comfort our hearts, and stablish us in every good word and work.[f]

(16.) We must pray for the good things of life, with an humble submission to the will of God.

Lord thou hast told us that Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come:[g] and that if we seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, other things shall be added to us;[h] and therefore we cast all our care about these things upon thee, who carest for us,[i] for our Heavenly Father knows that we have need of all these things.[k]

[1.] We must pray to be preserved from the calamities to which we are exposed.

Thou, Lord, art our refuge, and our fortress, and under thy wings will we trust, thy truth shall be our shield and buckler; let us therefore not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Having made the Lord our refuge, and the most High our habitation, let no evil befal us, nor any plague come nigh our dwelling.[l]

Let the Lord be our keeper, even he that keepeth Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps. Let the Lord be our shade on our right hand, that the sun may not smite us by day, nor the moon by night; let the Lord preserve us from all evil, the Lord preserve our souls; the Lord preserve our going out and coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore.[m]

Lord, make a hedge round about us, about our houses, and about all that we have round about;[n] and take sickness away from the midst of us.[o]

[2.] We must pray to be supplied with the comforts and supports we daily stand in need of.

O that the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon us, prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.[p] Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.[q]

Let our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace: let our garners be full, affording all manner of store;[r] and let there be no breaking in or going out, no complaining in our streets. Happy is the people that is in such a case, yea, rather, happy is the people whose God is the Lord.

Let us be blessed in the city, and blessed in the field, let our basket and our store be blessed, and let us be blessed when we come in, and when we go out.[s]

Let thy good Providence so order all events concerning us, that they may be made to work for good to us, as thou hast promised they shall to all that love thee, and are called according to thy purpose.[t]

Give us to trust in the Lord, and do good, and then we shall dwell in the land, and verily we shall be fed; and be thou pleased to bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon day.[u]

Let us be hid from the scourge of the tongue, and not be afraid of destruction when it cometh; let us be in league with the stones of the field, and let the beasts of the field be at peace with us; let us know that our tabernacle is in peace, and let us visit our habitation, and not sin.[x]

And if God will be with us, and will keep us in the way that we go, during our pilgrimage in this world, and will give us bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that we may come to our Heavenly Father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be our Lord.[y]

(17.) We must plead the promises of God for the enforcing of all our petitions, put these promises in suit, and refer ourselves to them.

Lord, thou hast given us many exceeding great and precious promises,[z] which are all yea and amen in Christ.[a] Now be it unto thy servants according to the word which thou hast spoken.[b]

Give us to draw water with joy out of those wells of salvation,[c] to suck and be satisfied from those breasts of consolation;[d] and now, O Lord God, let the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servants be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.[e]

Deal with us according to the tenor of the everlasting covenant, which is well ordered in all things, and sure, and which is all our salvation, and all our desire.[f]

Look upon us, and be merciful to us, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name,[g] and do more for us than we are able to ask or think,[h] and supply all our needs according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus.[i]

CHAP. IV.

Of the fourth Part of Prayer, *which is Thanksgivings for the Mercies we have received from God, and the many Favours of his we are interested in, and have hope for benefit by.*

Our errand at the throne of grace is not only to seek the favour of God, but to give unto him the glory due unto his name, and that not only by an awful adoration of his infinite perfec-

[a] Ps. 17. 15. [b] Luke 16. 9. [c] Heb. 11. 10. [d] 1 Cor. 13. 12. [e] 1 John 3. 3. [f] 2 Thess. 2. 16, 17. [g] 1 Tim. 4. 8. [h] Mat. 6. 33. [i] 1 Pet. 5. 7. [k] Mat. 6. 32. [l] Ps. 91. 2, 4, 9, 10. [m] Ps. 121. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. [n] Job 1. 10. [o] Ex. 23. 25. [p] Ps. 90. 17. [q] Ps. 118. 25. [r] Ps. 144. 12, 13. [s] Deut. 28. 3, 5, 6. [t] Rom. 8. 28. [u] Ps. 37. 3, 6. [x] Job 5. 21, 23, 24. [y] Gen. 28. 20, 21. [z] 2 Pet. 1. 4. [a] 2 Cor. 1. 20. [b] Luke 1. 38. [c] Isa. 12. 3. [d] Isa. 66. 11. [e] 2 Sam. 7. 25. [f] 2 Sam. 23. 5. [g] Ps. 119. 132. [h] Eph. 3. 20. [i] Phil. 4. 19.

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tions, but by a grateful acknowledgment of his goodness to us, which cannot indeed add any thing to his glory, but he is pleased to accept of it, and to reckon himself glorified by it, if it come from a heart that is humbly sensible of its own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, that values the gifts, and loves the giver of them.

1. We must stir up ourselves to praise God, with the consideration both of the reason and of the encouragement we have to praise him.

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks, for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.[a]

Let our souls bless the Lord, and let all that is within us bless his holy name; yea, let our souls bless the Lord, and not forget any of his benefits.[b]

We will praise the Lord, for it is good, it is pleasant, and praise is comely for the upright,[c] yea, it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High, to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.[d]

We will extol thee our God, O King, and will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will we bless thee, and will praise thy name for ever and ever; we will abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and sing of thy righteousness.[e]

We will sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. O let Israel rejoice in him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their king; Let the saints be joyful in glory, and let the high praises of God be in their hearts, and in their mouths.[f]

While we live we will bless the Lord, and will sing praise unto our God while we have any being;[g] and when we have no being on earth, we hope to have a being in heaven, to be doing it better.

We are here through Jesus Christ to offer the sacrifice of praise to thee, which we desire to do continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to thy name.[h] And thou hast said, that he that offers praise glorifies thee,[i] and that this also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.[k]

We will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the House of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses.[l]

(1.) We must be particular in our thanksgiving to God for the discoveries which he has made to us in his word of the goodness of his nature.

We give thanks unto the God of Gods, unto the Lord of Lords, for his mercy endures for ever.[m]

Thy goodness is thy glory, and it is for that which all thy works do praise thee, and thy saints do bless thee.[n]

Thou art gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great mercy,[a] and hast told us, that thou dost not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men, but though thou cause grief, yet thou wilt have compassion, according to the multitude of thy mercies.[b]

Thou takest pleasure in them that fear thee, in them that hope in thy mercy.[c]

(2.) For the many instances of goodness in his providence relating to our bodies, and the life that now is; and this,

With reference to all the creatures, and the world of mankind in general.

Thou hast stretched out the heavens like a curtain,[d] and in them thou hast set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,[e] And thou causeth thy sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.[f]

When we consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the sun, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained; Lord, what is man that thou thus visitest him.[g] For truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun:[h] all the glory be to the Father of lights,[i] who commandeth the morning, and causeth the day spring to know his place.[k]

Thou didst not leave thyself without witness among the heathen, in that thou didst good, and gavest them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.[l]

Thou coverest the heavens with clouds, and preparest rain for the earth, and makest grass to grow upon the mountains. Thou givest to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.[m]

Thou causest it to rain on the wilderness, where there is no man, to satisfy the desolate and waste ground.[n]

Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it, thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it: thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou blessest the springing thereof; thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness.[o]

Thou sendest the springs into the vallies which run among the hills; and they give drink to every beast of the field; and by them the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.[p]

Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever, and settest bounds to the waters of the sea, that they turn not again to cover the earth:[q] thou hast shut up the sea with doors, and broken up for it thy decreed place, saying, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, here shall thy proud waves be stayed.[r] And thou hast made good what thou

[a] Ps. 75. 1. [b] Ps. 103. 1, 2. [c] Ps. 147. 1. [d] Ps. 92. 1, 2. [e] Ps. 145. 1, 2, 7. [f] Ps. 149. 1, 2, 5, 6. [g] Ps. 146. 2. [h] Heb. 13. 15. [i] Ps. 50. *ult.* [k] Ps. 69. 31. [l] Isa. 63. 7. [m] Ps. 136. 2, 3. [n] Ps. 145. 10.

[a] Ps. 145. 8. [b] Lam. 3. 32, 33. [c] Ps. 147. 11. [d] Ps. 104. 2. [e] Ps. 19. 4, 5. [f] Mat. 5. 45. [g] Ps. 8. 3, 4. [h] Ecc. 11. 7. [i] Jam. 1. 17. [k] Job 38, 12. [l] Acts 14. 17. [m] Ps. 147. 8, 9. [n] Job 38. 26, 27. [o] Ps. 65. 9, 10, 11. [p] Ps. 104. 10, 11, 12. [q] Ps. 104. 5, 9. [r] Job 38. 8. 11.

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hast sworn, that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth.[a]

Thy covenant of the day and of the night is not broken,[b] but still thou givest the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night,[c] and art faithful to that covenant of providence, that while the earth remains, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.[d]

The heaven, even the heavens are thine, but the earth thou hast given to the children of men,[e] and thou hast put all things under their feet, and made them to have dominion over the works of thy hands;[f] so that the fear of man and the dread of man is upon every beast of the earth, and upon the fowl of the air, and into his hand they are delivered,[g] because thou hast a favour to him, and thy delights were with the sons of men.[h]

Thou causest the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, that thou mayest bring forth food out of the earth, wine that makes glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart.[i]

Thou givest to all life and breath, and all things,[k] and the earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy.[l]

All the creatures wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season; that thou givest them they gather, thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good: thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created, thou renewest the face of the earth. This thy glory shall endure for ever, and thou rejoicest in these works.[m]

It is through thy goodness, O Lord, that as one generation of mankind passeth away, another generation comes,[n] and that thou hast not blotted out the name of that corrupt and guilty race from under heaven.[o]

(3.) With reference to us in particular; we must give thanks that he has made us reasonable creatures, capable of knowing, loving, serving and enjoying him, and that he has not made us as the beasts that perish.

We will praise thee, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that our souls, our noble part, know right well;[p] for what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?[q]

Thou hast made us of that rank of beings which is little lower than the angels, and is crowned with glory and honour;[r] for there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding,[s] and the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord[t]

Our bodies are capable of being the temples of the Holy Ghost, and our souls of having the Spirit of God dwell in them; we therefore glorify thee with our bodies, and with our spirits which are thine.[u]

Thou, Lord, hast formed us for thyself, that we might shew forth thy praise.[x]

[a] Isa. 54. 9. [b] Jer. 33. 20. [c] Jer. 31. 35. [d] Gen. 8. 22. [e] Ps. 115. 16. [f] Ps. 8. 6. [g] Gen. 9. 2. [h] Pro. 8. 31. [i] Ps. 104. 14, 15. [k] Acts 17. 25. [l] Ps. 119. 64. [m] Ps. 104. 27, 28, 30, 31. [n] Ecc. 1. 4. [o] Deut. 29. 20. [p] Ps. 139. 14. [q] 1 Cor. 2. 11. [r] Ps. 8. 5. [s] Job 32. 8. [t] Pro. 20. 27. [u] 1 Cor. 6. 10, 20. [x] Isa. 43, 21.

[1.] We must give thanks for our preservation, that our lives are prolonged, and that the use of our reason and understanding, our limbs and senses are continued to us.

It was owing to thy good providence that we died not from the womb, and did not give up the ghost when we came out of the belly, that the knees prevented us, and the breasts that we should suck.[a]

Though we were called transgressors from the womb,[b] yet by thy power we have been born from the belly, and carried from the womb;[c] and thou holdest our souls in life, and sufferest not our foot to be moved.[d]

All our bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee,[e] for thou keepest all our bones, not one of them is broken.[f]

We lay us down and sleep, for thou, Lord, makest us to dwell in safety.[g]

Thou hast given thine angels a charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways, to bear us up in their hands, lest we dash our foot against a stone.[h] And they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation.[i]

[2.] For signal recoveries from danger by sickness, or otherwise.

When perhaps there has been but a step between us and death,[k] and we have received a sentence of death within ourselves,[l] and have been ready to say in the cutting off of our days we should go to the gates of the grave, and were deprived of the residue of our years, yet thou hast in love to our souls delivered them from the pit of corruption, and cast all our sins behind thy back.[m]

When the sorrows of death have compassed us, and the pains of hell have got hold upon us, we have called upon the name of the Lord, and have found that gracious is the Lord, and righteous, yea, our God is merciful; we have been brought low, and he hath helped us, and hath delivered our souls from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. We will therefore walk before the Lord in the land of the living.[n]

[3.] For the supports and comforts of this life, which have hitherto made the land of our pilgrimage easy and pleasant to us.

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.[o]

Thou makest us to lie down in green pastures, thou feedest us beside the still waters: thou preparest a table for us in the presence of our enemies, thou annointest our head, and our cup runs over.[p]

It may be we were sent forth without purse or script, but lacked we any thing? Nothing, Lord.[q]

The candle of God hath shined upon our head, and by his light we have walked through darkness, and the secret of God has been in our tabernacle.[r]

Thou hast given us all things richly to enjoy,[s] and into our hands hast brought plentifully.

[a] Job 3. 11, 12. [b] Isa 48. 8. [c] Isa. 46. 3. [d] Ps. 66. 9. [e] Ps. 35. 10. [f] Ps. 34. 20. [g] Ps. 3. 5. [h] Ps. 91. 11, 12. [i] Heb. 1. 14. [k] 1 Sam. 20. 3. [l] 2 Cor. 1. 9. [m] Isa. 38. 10, 17. [n] Ps. 116. 3, 4, 5, 6. 8, 9. [o] Ps. 68. 19. [p] Ps. 23. 2. 5. [q] Luke 22. 35. [r] Job 29. 3, 4. [s] 1 Tim. 6. 17.

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Many a time we have eaten and been filled, and have delighted ourselves with thy great goodness.[a]

When we remember all the way which the Lord our God hath led us for so many years in this wilderness,[b] we must here set up a stone *and call it Ebenezer*, for hitherto the Lord hath helped us.[c]

[4.] For success in our callings and affairs, comfort in relations, and comfortable places of abode.

It is God that girdeth us with strength, and maketh our way perfect,[d] that hath blessed the work of our hands,[e] and it may be so that though our beginning was small, yet our latter end hath greatly increased.[f]

Our houses have been safe from fear, and there hath been no rod of God upon us,[g] so that the voice of rejoicing and salvation hath been in our tabernacle[h] from day to day.

With our staff it may be we have passed over this Jordan, and now we are become two bands,[i] and it is God that setteth the solitary in families.[k]

If we have lived joyfully[l] with our relations, and they have been to us as the loving hind and as the pleasant roe,[m] we must give thee thanks for it, for every creature is that to us, and no more, than thou makest it to be.

[5.] For our share in the public plenty, peace, and tranquility.

When we have eaten and are full, we have reason to bless thee for the land which thou hast given us,[n] a land which the eyes of the Lord our God are always upon, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year.[o]

Thou makest peace in our borders, and fillest us with the finest of the wheat:[p] we are delivered from the noise of archers in the place of drawing water; there therefore will we rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even his righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages.[q]

We thank thee that the powers that are set over us are ministers of God to us for good, that they seek the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed.[r]

(4.) The goodness of his grace relating to our souls, and the life that is to come.

But especially blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.[s]

[1.] We must give thanks for his gracious design and contrivance of man's redemption and salvation, when he was lost and undone by sin.

O how wonderfully did the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appear, not by any works of righteousness which he had done, but according to his mercy he saved us.[t] We had destroyed ourselves, but in thee, and thee only, was our help.[u]

When we were cast out in the open field, and no eye pitied us, thou sawest us polluted in our own blood, and thou saidst unto us, Live; yea, thou saidst unto us, Live; and the time was a time of love.[a]

When the redemption of the soul was so precarious, as that it must have ceased for ever, and no man could by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him,[b] then thou wast pleased to find a ransom,[c] that we might be delivered from going down to the pit.

When we must needs die, and were as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, then didst thou devise means that the banished might not be for ever expelled from thee.[d]

When thou sparest not the angels that sinned, but didst cast them down to hell;[e] thou saidst concerning the race of mankind, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.[f]

Herein appears the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world for our glory.[g]

[2.] For the eternal purposes and counsels of God concerning man's redemption.

We are bound to give thanks always to thee, O God, because thou hast from the beginning chosen some to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit:[h] that there is a remnant according to the election of grace,[i] whom God hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before thee in love, having predestinated them to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto thyself, according to the good pleasure of thy will, to the praise of the glory of thy grace.[k]

Thine they were, and thou gavest them to Christ,[l] and this is thy will, that of all that thou hast given him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.[m]

[3.] For the appointing of the Redeemer, and God's gracious condescension to deal with men upon new terms, receding from the demands of the broken covenant of innocency.

We bless thee that when sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, and in them hadst no pleasure, that then the eternal Son of God said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,[n] and a body hast thou prepared me: and that as in the volume of the book it was written of him, he did delight to do thy will, O God, yea, thy law was within his heart.[o]

Thou hast laid help upon one that is mighty, one chosen out of the people: Thou hast found David thy servant, with thy holy oil thou hast anointed him, even with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and didst promise that with him thy hand should be established, and thy arm should strengthen him, and that thou

[a] Neh. 9. 25. [b] Deut. 8. 2. [c] 1 Sam. 7. 12. [d] Ps. 18. 32. [e] Job 1. 10. [f] Job 8. 7. [g] Job 21. 9. [h] Ps. 118. 15. [i] Gen. 32. 10. [k] Ps. 68. 6. [l] Ecc. 9. 9. [m] Pro. 5. 19. [n] Deut. 8. 10. [o] Deut. 11. 12. [p] Ps. 147. 14. [q] Judges 5. 11. [r] Est. 10. 3. [s] Eph. 1. 3. [t] Tit. 3. 4, 5. [u] Hos. 13. 9.

[a] Eze. 16. 5, 6, 8. [b] Ps. 49. 7, 8. [c] Job 33. 24. [d] 2 Sam. 14. 14. [e] 2 Pet. 2. 4. [f] Isa. 65. 8. [g] 1 Cor. 2. 7. [h] 2 Thes. 2. 13. [i] Rom. 11. 5. [k] Eph. 1. 4, 5, 6. [l] John 17. 6. [m] John 6. 30. [n] Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7. [o] Ps. 40. 7, 8.

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wouldest make him thy first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.[a]

We bless thee that the Father now judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that as he has life in himself, so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man:[b] that the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand;[c] and that the counsel of peace is between them both.[d]

That he is thy servant, whom thou dost uphold; thine elect, in whom thy soul delighteth;[e] thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased;[f] that thou hast given him for a covenant of the people,[g] and that through him we are not under the law, but under grace.[h]

That God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.[i]

[4.] For the early and ancient indications of the gracious design concerning fallen man.

We bless thee, that as soon as ever man had sinned, it was graciously promised, that the seed of the woman should break the sepent's head;[k] and that in the Old Testament sacrifices Jesus Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.[l]

And that by faith the elders, though they received not the promise, yet obtained a good report, for they obtained witness that they were righteous.[m]

We bless thee for the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed;[n] and to Jacob, that the Shiloh should come, and to him should the gathering of the people be:[o] and that the patriarch's rejoiced to see Christ's day, and they saw it and were glad.[p]

[5.] For the many glorious instances of God's favour to the Old Testament church.

We adore that wisdom, peace and goodness with which thou broughtest the vine out of Egypt, didst cast out the heathen and plant it; thou preparest room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.[q]

And they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them, but thy right hand, thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour to them.[r]

We bless thee, that to the Jews were committed the oracles of God,[s] that they had the adoption, the glory, and the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises:[t] And that there did not fail one word of all thy good promise, which thou promisedst by the hand of Moses thy servant.[u]

We bless thee for all which thou didst at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,[a] those holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,[b] and prophesied of the grace that should come unto us, testifying before-hand the suffering of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and that not to themselves only, but to us they ministered those great things, things which the angels themselves desire to look into.[c]

And especially we bless thee, that thou hast provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.[d]

[6.] For the wonderful and mysterious incarnation of the Son of God, and his coming into the word.

We bless thee, that when the fulness of time was come, thou didst send forth thy Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.[e]

That the Eternal Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and there were those who saw his glory, the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.[f] And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the flesh.

We bless thee, that to this end he was born, and for this cause he came into the world, that he might bear witness of the truth,[g] and we believe, and are sure, that he is that Christ, the Son of the living God;[h] that it is he that should come, and we are to look for no other.[i]

We bless thee, that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost;[k] that he is come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly,[l] and that for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil.[m]

Lord, we receive it as a faithful saying, and well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief.[n]

We bless thee, that forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that he took not on him the nature of angels, but our nature, and was in all things made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;[o] and that he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

And that the first begotten was brought into the world with a charge given to all the angels of God to worship him.[p]

[7.] For God's gracious owning of him in his undertaking, and in the carrying of it on.

We bless thee, that thou wast in Christ reconciling the world to thyself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and that thou hast committed unto us the word of reconciliation.[q]

[a] Ps. 89. 19, 20, 21, 27. [b] John 5. 22, 26, 27. [c] John 3. 35. [d] Zec. 6. 13. [e] Isa. 42. 1. [f] Mat. 17. 5. [g] Isa. 49. 8. [h] Rom. 6. 14. [i] John 3. 16. [k] Gen. 3. 15. [l] Rev. 13. 8. [m] Heb. 11. 2, 4, 39. [n] Gen. 12. 3. [o] Gen. 49. 10. [p] John 8. 56. [q] Ps. 80. 8, 9. [r] Ps. 44. 3. [s] Rom. 3. 2. [t] Rom. 9. 4. [u] 1 Kings 8. 56.

[a] Heb. 1. 1. [b] 2 Pet. 1. 21. [c] 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, 12. [d] Heb. 11. 40. [e] Gal. 4. 4, 5. [f] John 1. 14. [g] John 18. 37. [h] John 6. 69. Mat. 11. 3. [k] Luke 19. 10. [l] John 10. 10. [m] 1 John 3. 8. [n] 1 Tim. 1. 15. [o] Heb. 2. 11, 14, 16, 17. [p] Heb. 1. 6. [q] 2 Cor. 5. 19.

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That thou hast thyself given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.[a] That he was sanctified and sealed, and sent into the world,[b] and that the Father which sent him did not leave him alone, for he always did those things that pleased him.[c]

Glory be to God in the Highest, for in and through Jesus Christ there is on earth peace, and good will towards men.[d]

In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his Only Begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.[e]

We thank thee for the power thou hast given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as were given him.[f]

[8.] For his holy life, his excellent doctrine, and the glorious miracles he wrought to confirm his doctrine.

We bless thee for the assurance we have, that he is a teacher come from God, since no man could do those miracles which he did, except God were with him.[g]

That thou hast in these last days spoken unto us by thy Son,[h] whose doctrine was not his, but his that sent him,[i] and he spake as one having authority;[k] and that we are encouraged to come and learn of him, because he is meek and lowly in heart, and in learning of him we shall find rest to our souls.[l]

We bless thee, that he has left us an example, that we should follow his steps, in that he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, and when he was reviled he reviled not again;[m] and his meat and drink was to do the will of his Father;[n] in that he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.[o] O that we may be armed with the same mind,[p] and that as he was, so we may be, in this world;[q] and that we may so walk even as he walked.

We bless thee, that the works which he did, the same bore witness of him, that the Father had sent him,[r] that by his power the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the gospel preached to them,[s] and even the winds and the sea obeyed him,[t] for which we glorify the God of Israel. Doubtless this was the Son of God.[u]

[9.] For the great encouragements Christ gave to poor sinners to come to him.

We bless thee, that Jesus Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners (such as we are) to repentance, and had power on earth to forgive sin;[x] that he came to save his people from their sins;[y] and is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world,[z] and that he is (to his honour, and not to his reproach) a friend to publicans and sinners.[a]

We thank thee for the gracious invitation he gave to those who are weary and heavy laden to come to him for rest:[a] and for the assurance he has given, that whosoever comes unto him, he will in no wise cast him out.[b]

That he made a gracious offer, that whosoever thirsts might come unto him and drink.[c]

[10.] For the full satisfaction which he made to the justice of God for the sin of man, by the blood of his cross, for the purchases, victories, and triumphs of the cross, and for all the precious benefits which flow to us from the dying of our Lord Jesus.

Herein indeed God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,[d] that we might be reconciled to him by the death of his Son. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,[e] and not for our's only, but for the sins of the whole world;[f] that he tasted death for every man,[g] that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.

We bless thee, that by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,[h] that he has finished transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and hath brought in an everlasting righteousness.[i]

That he has redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us.[k]

That what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath done by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, who by a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh.[l]

That he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed; and that the Lord having laid upon him the iniquity of us all, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief.[m]

That appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, he did by the Eternal Spirit offer himself without spot unto God, and by his own blood entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.[n]

That he hath spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross, and hath blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, taking it out of the way, by nailing it to his cross.[o]

That he is our peace, who having broken down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, hath made himself of twain one new man, hath reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.[p]

That he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us unto our God kings and priests.[q]

[a] Isa. 55. 4. [b] John 10. 36. [c] John 8. 29. [d] Luke 2. 14. [e] 1 John 4. 9. [f] John 17. 2. [g] John 3. 2. [h] Heb. 1. 2. [i] John 7. 16. [k] Mat. 7. 29. [l] Mat. 11. 29. [m] 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, 23. [n] John 4. 34. [o] Heb. 7. 26. [p] 1 Pet. 4. 1. [q] 1 John 4. 17. [r] John 5. 36. [s] Mat. 11. 5. [t] Mat. 8. 27. [u] Mat. 27. 54. [x] Mat. 9. 6, 13. [y] Mat 1. 21. [z] John 1. 29. [a] Mat. 11. 19.

[a] Mat. 11. 28. [b] John 6. 37. [c] John 7. 37. [d] Rom. 5. 8. [e] 1 John 4. 10. [f] 1 John 2. 2. [g] Heb. 2. 9, 14. [h] Heb. 10. 14. [i] Dan. 9. 24. [k] Gal. 3. 13. [l] Rom. 8. 3. [m] Isa. 53. 5, 6, 10. [n] Heb. 9. 12. [o] Col. 2. 14, 15. [p] Eph. 2. 14, 15, 16. [q] Rev. 1. 5, 6.

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O the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge![a] That great love wherewith he loved us![b]

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; for he was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood.[c]

[11.] For his resurrection from the dead on the third day.

We thank thee, that as he was delivered for our offences, so he rose again for our justification,[d] and was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead.[e]

That though he was dead, yet he is alive, and lives for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death,[f] and being raised from the dead, he dies no more, death hath no more dominion over him.[g]

That now is Christ risen from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that slept, that as in Adam all died, so in Christ all might be made alive,[h] and every one in his own order.

That God suffered not his Holy One to see corruption, but loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible he should be holden of them, and so declared to all the house of Israel, that that same Jesus whom they crucified is both Lord and Christ.[i]

And that for this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living,[k] and that whether we wake or sleep, we might live together with him.[l]

[12.] For his ascension into heaven, and his sitting at God's right hand there.

We bless thee, that our Lord Jesus is ascended to his Father, and our Father, to his God and our God;[m] is ascended up on high, having led captivity captive, and hath received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.[n]

That as the forerunner he is for us entered,[o] entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us,[p] a Lamb as it had been slain standing in the midst of the throne.[q]

That he is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,[r] angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject to him.[s]

That he is gone before to prepare a place for us in his father's house, where there are many mansions; and though whither he is gone we cannot follow him now, yet we hope to follow him hereafter,[t] when he shall come again to receive us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.[u]

[13.] For the intercession which he ever lives to make in the virtue of his satisfaction.

We thank thee, that having borne the sins of many, he makes intercession for transgressors;[x] and prays not for those only that were given him when he was upon earth, but for all that shall believe on him through their word; that they all may be one.[a]

That we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous,[b] who is therefore able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God as a Father, by him as mediator, seeing he ever lives making intercession.[c]

That we have a High-Priest taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifice for sin, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, and that he is become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.[d]

[14.] For the dominion and sovereignty to which the Redeemer is exalted.

We thank thee, that because our Lord Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee might bow,[e] and every tongue confess (as we do at this time) that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

That all power is given unto him both in heaven and on earth,[f] that thou hast set him over the works of thy hands, and hast put all things in subjection under his feet, and so hast crowned him with glory and honour.[g]

That he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,[h] that the ancient of days has given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, an everlasting dominion, and a kingdom which shall not be destroyed.[i]

That the government is upon his shoulders, and that his name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace; and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.[k]

That thou hast set him as King upon thy holy hill of Zion,[l] and that he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever,[m] shall reign till he has put down all opposing rule, principality and power, till all his enemies are made his footstool, and then he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.[n]

[15.] For the assurance we have of his second coming to judge the world.

We bless thee, that thou hast appointed a day in which thou wilt judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom thou hast ordained, whereof thou hast given assurance unto all men, in that thou hast raised him from the dead.[o]

That in that day the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired

[a] Eph. 3. 19. [b] Eph. 2. 4. [c] Rev. 5. 9, 12. [d] Rom. 4. 25. [e] Rom. 1. 4. [f] Rev. 1. 18. [g] Rom. 6. 9. [h] 1 Cor. 15. 20, 22. [i] Acts 2. 24, 31, 36. [k] Rom. 14. 9. [l] 1 Thes. 5. 10. [m] John 20. 17. [n] Ps. 68. 18. [o] Heb. 6. 20. [p] Heb. 9. 24. [q] Rev. 5. 6. [r] Heb. 8. 1. [s] 1 Pet. 3. 22. [t] John 13. 36. [u] John 14. 2, 3. [x] Isa. 53. 12.

[a] John 17. 20, 21. [b] 1 John 2. 1. [c] Heb. 7. 25. [d] Heb. 5. 1, 2, 9. [e] Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10. [f] Mat. 28. 18. [g] Heb. 2. 7, 8, 9. [h] Rev. 19. 16. [i] Dan. 7. 14. [k] Isa. 9. 6, 7. Ps. 2. 6. [l] Luke 1. 33. [n] 1 Cor. 15. 24, 25, 28. [o] Acts 17. 31.

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by all them that believe;[a] for them that sleep in Jesus he will bring with him.[b]

That he shall then send forth his angels to gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity,[c] and to gather together his elect from the four winds,[d] and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

And we then, according to thy promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness: Lord, grant that, seeing we expect such things, we may give diligence to be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless:[e] and then, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.[f]

[16.] For the sending of the Holy Spirit to supply the want of Christ's bodily presence, to carry on his undertaking, and to prepare things for his second coming.

We bless thee, that when our Lord Jesus went away, he sent us another comforter to abide with us for ever, even the Spirit of Truth,[g] who shall glorify the Son, for he shall take of his and shall shew it unto us.[h]

That being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost;[i] he poured it forth as rivers of living water.[k]

Blessed be God for the signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which God bare witness to the great salvation.[l]

And blessed be God for the promise, that as earthly parents, though evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, so our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,[m] that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.[n]

[17.] For the covenant of grace made with us in Jesus Christ, and all the exceeding great and precious privileges of that covenant, and for the seals of it.

We thank thee, that in Jesus Christ thou hast made an everlasting covenant with us, even the sure mercies of David,[o] and that though the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, yet this covenant of thy peace shall never be removed.[p]

That thou hast given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of a divine nature:[q] and that Jesus Christ is the mediator of this better covenant, which is established upon better promises.[r]

That though thou chasten our transgression with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes, yet thy loving kindness thou wilt not utterly take away, nor cause thy faithfulness to fail, thy covenant thou wilt not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of thy lips.[s]

That being willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of thy counsel, thou hast confirmed it by an oath, That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.[a]

That baptism is appointed to be a seal of the righteousness which is by faith,[b] as circumcision was: that it assures us of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and that this promise is to us and our children.[c] And that the cup in the Lord's Supper is the blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins.[d]

[18.] For the writing of the Scriptures, and the preserving of them pure and entire to our day.

We thank thee, that we have the Scriptures to search, and that in them we have eternal life, and that they testify of Christ,[e] and that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.[f]

That whatsoever things were written afore-time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope:[g] and that we have this most sure word of prophesy, as a light shining in a dark place.[h]

That the vision is not become to us as the words of a book that is sealed,[i] but that we hear in our own tongue the wonderful works of God.[k]

We thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that the things which were hid from the wise and prudent, and which many prophets and kings desired to see, and might not,[l] are revealed to us babes; Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

[19.] For the institution of ordinances, and particularly that of the ministry.

We thank thee, that thou hast not only shewed thy word unto Jacob, but thy statutes and judgments unto Israel, unto us: Thou hast not dealt so with other nations, and as for thy judgments they have not known them.[m]

That the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them,[n] and that he has set his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore,[o] and there will meet the children of Israel.[p]

We thank thee, that thou hast made known unto us thy holy Sabbaths;[q] and that still there remains the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God.[r]

And that when the Lord Jesus ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men, not only prophets, apostles, and evangelists, but pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:[s] and that while they teach us to observe all things which Christ hath commanded, he has promised to be with them always, even unto the end of the world.[t]

[20.] For the planting of the Christian religion

[a] 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 10. [b] 1 Thes. 4. 14. [c] Mat. 13. 41. [d] Mat. 24. 31. [e] 2 Pet. 3. 13, 14. [f] Rev. 22. 20. [g] John 14. 16, 17. [h] John 16. 14. [i] Acts 2. 33. [k] John 7. 38. [l] Heb. 2. 4. [m] Luke 11. 13. [n] Eph. 1. 13, 14. [o] Isa. 55. 3. [p] Isa. 54. 10. [q] 2 Pet. 1. 4. [r] Heb. 8. 6. [s] Ps. 89. 32, 33, 34.

[a] Heb. 6. 17, 18. [b] Rom. 4. 11. [c] Acts 2. 38, 39. [d] Mat. 26. 28. [e] John 5. 39. [f] 2 Tim. 3. 16. [g] Rom. 15. 4. [h] 2 Pet. 1. 19. [i] Isa. 29. 11. [k] Acts 2. 11. [l] Luke 10. 21, 24. [m] Ps. 147. 19, 20. [n] Rev. 21. 3. [o] Ez. 37. 26. [p] Ex. 29. 43. [q] Neh. 9. 14. [r] Heb. 4. 9. [s] Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. [t] Mat. 28. 20.

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in the world, and the setting up of the gospel-church, notwithstanding all the oppositions of the powers of darkness.

We thank thee, that the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the commandment of the everlasting God, and the gospel which was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith,[a] was mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds:[b] that the Lord wrought with it, and confirmed the word by signs following;[c] so that Satan fell as lightning from heaven.[d]

That though the gospel was preached in much contention,[e] yet it grew and prevailed mightily,[f] and multitudes turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,[g] and to wait for his Son from heaven.

Now came salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ:[h] and the exalted Redeemer rode forth with his bow, and with his crown, conquering, and to conquer;[i] and nations were born at once.[k]

[21.] For the preservation of Christianity in the world unto this day.

We bless thee, that though the enemies of Israel have afflicted them from their youth up, have many a time afflicted them, yet they have not prevailed against them, though the ploughers have ploughed on their back, yet the righteous Lord has cut asunder the cords of the wicked.[l]

That Jesus Christ has built his church upon a rock, which the gates of hell cannot prevail against,[m] but his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.[n]

[22.] For the martyrs and confessors, the lights of the church, and the good examples of those who are gone before us to heaven.

We bless thee for all those who have been enabled to approve themselves to God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,[o] who when they have been brought before governors and kings for Christ's sake, it has turned to them for a testimony, and God has given them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist.[p]

That those who for Christ's sake were killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter, yet in all these things were more than conquerors, through him that loved us.[q]

That they overcame the Accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives unto the death.[r]

We bless thee for the cloud of witnesses with which we are compassed about,[s] for the footsteps of the flock,[t] for the elders that have obtained a good report,[u] and are now, through faith and patience, inheriting the promises.[x] Lord, give us to follow them, as they followed Christ.[y]

[23.] For the communion of saints, that spiritual communion which we have in faith and hope, and holy love, and in prayers and praises with all good Christians.

We bless thee, that if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another,[a] even with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's.[b]

That we, being many, are one bread and one body,[c] and that though there are diversities of gifts and administrations, and operations, yet there is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God, which worketh all in all.[d]

We thank thee, that all the children of God which were scattered abroad[e] are united in him who is the Head of the body, the Church;[f] so that they are all our brethren and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.[g]

[24.] For the prospect and hope of eternal life, when time and days shall be no more.

We thank thee for the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him;[h] the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.

That having here no continuing city,[i] we are encouraged to seek the better country, that is, the heavenly, the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.[k]

That we are in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, hath promised;[l] and that all true believers through grace have eternal life abiding in them.[m]

(5.) We must give God thanks for the spiritual mercies bestowed upon us in particular, especially if we are called with an effectual call, and have a good work of grace begun in us.

[1.] We must bless God for the strivings of his Spirit with us, and the admonitions and checks of our own consciences.

We bless thee, that thou hast not given us over to a reprobate mind,[n] that our consciences are not seared,[o] that thou hast not said, concerning us, They are joined to idols, let them alone,[p] but that thy Spirit is yet striving with us.[q]

We thank thee for the work of the law written in our hearts, our own consciences also bearing witness, and our own thoughts between themselves accusing or excusing one another.[r]

[2.] We must bless God if there be a saving change wrought in us by his Blessed Spirit.

And has God, by his grace, translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son?[s] Has he called us into the fellowship of Jesus Christ,[t] and made us nigh by his blood, who by nature were afar off?[u] Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory.[x]

We give thanks to God always for those to whom

[a] Rom. 16. 25, 26. [b] 2 Cor. 10. 4. [c] Mark 16. 20. [d] Luke 10. 18. [e] 1 Thes. 2. 2. [f] Acts 19. 20. [g] 1 Thes. 1. 9. [h] Rev. 12. 10. [i] Rev. 6. 2. [k] Isa. 66. 8. [l] Ps. 129. 1, 2, 3, 4. [m] Mat. 16. 18. [n] Ps. 89. 29. [o] 2 Cor. 6. 4. [p] Luke 21. 12, 13, 15. [q] Rom. 8. 36, 37. [r] Rev. 12. 11. [s] Heb. 12. 1. [t] Cant. 1. 8. [u] Heb. 11. 2. [x] Heb. 6. 12. [y] 1 Cor. 11. 1.

[a] 1 John 1. 7. [b] 1 Cor. 1. 2. [c] 1 Cor. 10. 17. [d] 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. [e] John 11. 52. [f] Col. 1. 18. [g] Rev. 1. 9. [h] James 1. 12. [i] Heb. 13. 14. [k] Heb. 11. 10, 16. [l] Tit. 1. 2. [m] 1 John 5. 13. [n] Rom. 1. 28. [o] 1 Tim. 4. 2. [p] Hos. 4. 17. [q] Gen. 6. 3. [r] Rom. 2. 15. [s] Col. 1. 13. [t] 1 Cor. 1. 9. [u] Eph. 2. 13. [x] Ps. 115. 1.

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the gospel is come, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.[a]

Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving kindness thou hast drawn us,[b] drawn us with the cords of a man, and the bands of love.[c]

When the strong man armed kept his palace in our hearts, and his goods were in peace, it was a stronger than he that came upon him, and took from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided the spoil.[d]

[3.] We must give thanks for the remission of our sins, and the peace of our consciences.

We bless thee for the redemption we have through Christ's blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of thy grace, wherein thou hast abounded towards us.[e]

That thou hast forgiven all our iniquities, and healed all our diseases;[f] and hast in love to our souls delivered them from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all our sins behind thy back.[g]

When thou broughtest us into the wilderness, yet there thou spakest comfortably to us, and gavest us our vineyards from thence; and the valley of Achor for a door of hope.[h]

[4.] For the powerful influences of the divine grace, to sanctify and preserve us, to prevent our falling into sin, and to strengthen us in doing our duty.

Thou hast not quenched the smoaking flax, nor broke the bruised reed,[i] nor despised the day of small things,[k] but having obtained help of God we continue hitherto.[l]

In the day when we cried thou hast answered us, and hast strengthened us with strength in our souls.[m]

We have been continually with thee, thou hast holden us by the right hand, when our feet were almost gone, and our steps had well nigh slipped.[n]

We have reason never to forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened us; and unless thy law had been our delight, we should many a time have perished in our afflictions;[o] for thy statutes have been our songs in the house of our pilgrimage.

Unless the Lord had been our help, our souls had almost dwelt in silence: but when we said, Our foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held us up: and in the multitude of our thoughts within us, thy comforts have been the delight of our souls.[p]

[5.] For sweet communion with God in holy ordinances, and the communications of his favour.

We have been abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou hast made us drink of the river of thy pleasures: for with thee is the fountain of life, in thy light shall we see light.[q]

Thou hast brought us to thy mountain, and made us joyful in thy house of prayer,[r] and we have found it good for us to draw near to God.[s]

We have had reason to say, A day in thy courts is better than a thousand, and it is better to be doorkeepers in the house of our God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness; for the Lord God is a sun and shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.[t]

We have sitten down under thy shadow with delight, and thy fruit hath been sweet unto our taste; thou hast brought us into the banqueting house, and thy banner over us has been love.[u]

[6.] For gracious answers to our prayers.

We have reason to love thee, O Lord, because thou hast heard the voice of our supplications, and because thou hast inclined thine ear unto us, we will therefore call upon thee as long as we live.[x]

Out of the depths have we cried unto thee, O Lord,[y] and thou hast heard our vows, and given us the heritage of those that fear thy name.[z]

Nay, before we have called thou hast answered, and while we have been yet speaking, thou hast heard,[a] and hast said, Here I am,[b] and hast been nigh unto us in all that which we call upon thee for.[c]

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, and cause thine ear to hear.[d]

Blessed be God, who hath not turned away our prayer, or his mercy from us,[e] for we have prayed and have gone away, and our countenances has been no more sad.[f]

[7.] For support under our afflictions, and spiritual benefit and advantage by them.

Thou hast comforted us in all our tribulation,[g] hast considered our trouble, and known our souls in adversity, and shewed us thy marvellous kindness, as in a strong city.[h]

When afflictions have abounded, consolations have much more abounded.[i]

Though no affliction, for the present, hath been joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it hath yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and hath proved to be for our profit, that we might be partakers of thy holiness.[k]

We have had reason to say, that it was good for us we were afflicted, that we might learn thy commandments; for before we were afflicted we went astray, but afterwards have kept thy word.[l]

It has been but for a season, and when there was need, that we were in heaviness, through manifold temptations: and we beg, that all the trials of our faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet be-

[a] 1 Thes. 1. 2, 5. [b] Jer. 31. 3. [c] Hos. 11. 4. [d] Luke 11. 21, 22. [e] Eph. 1. 7, 8. [f] Ps. 103. 3. [g] Isa. 38. 17. [h] Hos. 2. 14, 15. [i] Mat. 12. 20. [k] Zec. 4. 10. [l] Acts 26. 22. [m] Ps. 138. 3. [n] Ps. 73. 2. [o] Ps. 192. 92, 93. [p] Ps. 94. 17, 18, 19. [q] Ps. 36. 8, 9.

[a] Is. 56. 7. [b] Ps. 73. 28. [c] Ps. 84. 10, 11, 12. [d] Cant. 2. 3, 4. [e] Ps. 116. 1, 2. [f] Ps. 130. 1. [g] Ps. 61, 5. [h] Isa. 65. 25. [i] Isa. 58. 9. [k] Deut. 4. 7. [l] Ps. 10. 17. [m] Ps. 66. 20. [n] 1 Sam. 1. 18. [o] 2 Cor. 1. 4. [p] Ps. 31. 7, 21. [q] 2 Cor. 1. 5. [r] Heb. 12. 10, 11. [s] Ps. 119. 67, 71.

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lieving we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and are longing to receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.[a]

[8.] For the performance of God's promises.

Thou hast dealt well with thy servants, O Lord, according to thy word,[b] and thou hast been ever mindful of thy covenant, the word which thou hast commanded to a thousand generations.[c]

There hath not failed one word of all the good promises which thou hast promised to David thy servant, and Israel thy people.[d]

And now, what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us? Let our souls return to him, and repose in him, as their rest, because he hath dealt bountifully with us; we will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord:[e] for the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.[f]

We will bless the Lord at all times, yea, his praise shall continually be in our mouths;[g] we will sing unto the Lord as long as we live;[h] and we hope to be shortly with those blessed ones who dwell in his house above, and are still praising him, and who rest not day or night from saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.[i]

CHAP. V.

Of the fifth Part of PRAYER, *which is Intercession, or Address and Supplication to God for Others.*

OUR Lord Jesus has taught us to pray, not only with, but for others: and the apostle hath appointed us to make supplication for all saints;[k] and many of his prayers in his epistles are for his friends: and we must not think, that when we are in this part of prayer, we may be less fervent, and be more indifferent, because we ourselves are not immediately concerned in it, but rather, let a holy fire of love, both to God and man, here make our devotions yet more warm and lively.

1. WE must pray for the whole world of mankind, the lost world;[l] and thus we must honour all men, and according to our capacity do good to all men.[m]

We pray, as we are taught, for all men, believing that this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, and of Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for all.[n]

O look with compassion upon the world that lies in wickedness,[o] and let the prince of this world be cast out,[p] that has blinded their minds.[q]

O let thy way be known upon earth,[r] that barbarous nations may be civilized, and those who live without God in the world[s] may be brought to the service of the living God; and thus let thy saving health be known unto all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, yea, let all the people praise thee: O, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.[a]

O let thy salvation, and thy righteousness be openly shewed in the sight of the heathen, and let all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God.[b]

O give thy son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession[c] for thou hast said, It is a light thing for him to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel, but thou wilt give him for a light to the Gentiles.[d]

Let all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.[e]

2. FOR the propagating of the gospel in foreign parts, and the enlargement of the church, by the bringing in of many to it.

O let the gospel be preached unto every creature;[f] for how shall men believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preachers? And how shall they preach except they be sent?[g] And who shall send forth labourers, but the Lord of the harvest?[h]

Let the people which sit in darkness see a great light, and to them which sit in the region and shadow of death let light spring up.[i]

Add unto thy church daily such as shall be saved;[k] enlarge the place of its tent, lengthen its cords, and strengthen its stakes.[l]

Bring thy seed from the east, and gather them from the west; say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring thy sons from far, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth.[m] Let them come with acceptance to thine altar, and glorify the house of thy glory; let them fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows.[n]

In every place let incense be offered to thy name, and pure offerings; and from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, let thy name be great among the Gentiles;[o] and let the offering up of the Gentiles be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.[p]

O let the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.[q]

3. FOR the conversion of the Jews.

Let the branches which are broken off not abide still in unbelief, but be grafted in again into their own olive tree. And though blindness is in part happened to Israel, yet let the fulness of the Gentiles come in, and let all Israel be saved.[r]

Let them be made to look unto him whom they have pierced,[s] and that they may turn to the Lord, let the veil which is upon their hearts be taken away.[t]

[a] 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. [b] Ps. 119. 65. [c] Ps. 105. 8. [d] 1 Kings 8 56, 66. [e] Ps. 116. 7, 12, 13. [f] Ps. 100. 5. [g] Ps. 34. 1. [h] Ps. 104 33. [i] Rev. 4. 8. [k] Eph. 6. 18. [l] 1 Pet. 2. 17. [m] Gal. 6. 10. [n] 1 Tim. 2. 1, 3, 4, 6. [o] 1 John 5. 19. [p] 1 John 12. 31. [q] 2 Cor. 4. 4. [r] Ps. 67. 2. [s] Eph. 2. 12.

[a] Ps. 67. 3, 4. [b] Ps. 98. 2, 3. [c] Ps. 2. 8. [d] Isa. 49, 6. [e] Rev. 11. 15. [f] Mark 16. 15. [g] Rom. 10. 14, 15. [h] Mat. 9, 38. [i] Mat. 4. 16. [k] Acts 2. 47. [l] Isa. 54. 2. [m] Isa. 43. 5, 6. [n] Isa. 60. 7, 8. [o] Mal. 1. 11. [p] Rom. 15. 16. [q] Is. 11. 9. [r] Rom. 11. 23, 24, 25, 26. [s] Zec. 12. 10. [t] 2 Cor. 3. 16.

4. FOR

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4 For the Eastern Churches, that are groaning under the yoke of Mahometan tyranny.

Let the churches of Asia, that were golden candlesticks,[a] which the Lord Jesus delighted to walk in the midst of;[b] be again made so.

Restore unto them their liberties, as at first, and their privileges, as at the beginning; purely purge away their dross, and take away all their tin,[c] and turn again their captivity as the streams of the south.[d]

5. For the churches in the plantations.

Be thou the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of those that are afar off beyond the sea;[e] and let them have the blessing which came upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren, even to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.[f]

Create peace to those that are afar off, as well as to those that are nigh.[g]

And let those that suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand, call the people to the mountain, that they may offer sacrifices of righteousness.[h]

6. For the universal church, wherever dispersed, and for all the interests of it.

Our heart's desire and prayer to God for the gospel-Israel is, that it may be saved.[i]

Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem.[k] Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces. For our brethren and companions sake, we will now say, peace be within her.[l]

O that we may see the good of the gospel-Jerusalem all the days of our life, and peace upon Israel.[m] And that thus we may have reason to answer the messengers of the nations, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust to that.[n]

Save thy people, O Lord, and bless thine heritage: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.[o] Give strength unto thy people, and bless thy people with peace;[p] with thy favour do thou compass them as with a shield.[q]

Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;[r] for thou knowest them that are thine: and give to all that name the name of Christ, to depart from iniquity.[s]

We pray for all that believe in Christ, that they all may be one;[t] and since there is one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and father of all,[u] give to all Christians to be of one heart,[x] and one way.

Let the word of the Lord in all places, have a free course, and let it be glorified.[y]

7. For the conviction and conversion of atheists, deists, and infidels, and of all that are out of the way of truth, and of profane scoffers, and those that disgrace Christianity by their vicious and immoral lives.

O teach transgressors thy ways, and let sinners be converted unto thee.[a]

O give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, the truth as it is in Jesus,[b] the truth which is according to godliness,[c] that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.[d]

Let those who are as sheep going astray, return to Jesus Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.[e]

Shew those fools their folly and misery, that have said in their hearts, there is no God, and that are corrupt, and have done abominable work.[f]

Lord maintain the honour of the scripture, the law, and the testimony, and convince those who speak not according to that word, that it is because there is no light in them;[g] magnify that word above all thy name;[h] magnify the law, magnify the gospel, and make both honouable.[i]

Let those that will not be won by the word, be won by the conversation of Christians,[k] which we beg may be such in every thing, that they who believe not may be convinced of all, and judged of all, may be brought to worship God, and to report that God is with them of a truth.[l]

8. For the amending of every thing that is amiss in the church, the reviving of primitive christianity, and the power of godliness, and in order thereunto the pouring out of the Spirit.

Lord let thy Spirit be poured out upon thy churches from on high, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field,[m] then judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it.[n]

Let what is wanting be set in order,[o] and let every plant that is not of our heavenly father's planting, be plucked up.[p]

Let the Lord whom we seek come to his temple like a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, and let him purify the sons of Levi, and all the seed of Israel, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness,[q] pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years.

Let pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the father,[r] flourish and prevail every where! that kingdom of God among men, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.[s] O revive this work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years made known,[t] and let our times be times of reformation.[u]

9. For the breaking of the power of all the enemies of the church, and the defeating of all their designs against her.

Let all that set themselves, and take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, who would

[a] Rev. 1. 11, 12. [b] Rev. 2. 1. [c] Isa. 1. 25, 26. [d] Ps. 126. 4. [e] Ps. 65. 5. [f] Gen. 49. 26. [g] Isa. 57. 19. [h] Deut. 33. 19. [i] Rom. 10. 1. [k] Ps. 51. 18. [l] Ps. 122. 7, 8. [m] Ps. 128. 5, 6. [n] Isa. 14. 32. [o] Ps. 28. 9. [p] Ps. 29. 11. [q] Ps. 5. 12. [r] Eph. 6. 24. [s] 2 Tim. 2. 19. [t] John 17. 20, 21. [u] Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6. [x] Jer. 32. 39. [y] 2 Thes. 3. 1.

[a] Ps. 51. 13. [b] Eph. 4. 21. [c] Tit. 1. 1. [d] 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. [e] 1 Pet. 2. 25. [f] Ps. 14. 1. [g] Isa. 8. 20. [h] Ps. 138. 2. [i] Isa. 42. 21. [k] 1 Pet. 3. 1. [l] 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. [m] Isa. 32. 15. [n] Ps. 94. 15. [o] Tit. 1. 5. [p] Mat. 15. 13. [q] Mal. 3. 3. [r] Jam. 1. 27. [s] Rom. 14. 17. [t] Hab. 3. 2. [u] Heb. 9. 10.

break

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break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from them, imagine a vain thing. Let him that sits in heaven laugh at them, and have them in derision; speak unto them in thy wrath, and vex them in thy sore displeasure.[a] Give them, O Lord, what thou wilt give them; give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts.[b]

O our God, make them like a wheel, and as stubble before the wind; fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord, and that men may know, that thou whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth.[c]

Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men,[d] and wherein the proud enemies of thy church deal proudly, make it to appear that thou art above them.[e]

Let them be confounded, and turned back, that hate Zion, and be as the grass upon the house tops, which withereth before it groweth up.[f]

Let no weapon formed against thy church prosper, and let every tongue that riseth against it in judgment be condemned.[g]

Make Jerusalem a burthensome stone for all people, and let all that burthen themselves with it be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth should be gathered together against it;[h] so let all thy enemies perish, O Lord, but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goes forth in his strength.[i]

Lord, let the man of sin be consumed with the spirit of thy mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of thy coming: and let those be undeceived that have been long under the power of strong delusions to believe a a lie, and let them receive the truth in the love of it.[k]

Let Babylon fall, and sink like a mill-stone into the sea;[l] and let the kings of the earth, that have given their power and honour to the beast,[m] be wrought upon at length to bring it into the new Jerusalem.[n]

10. For the relief of suffering churches, and the support, comfort, and deliverance of all that are persecuted for righteousness.

We desire in our prayers to remember them that are in bonds for the testimony of Jesus, as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body.[o] O send from above, and deliver them from those that hate them, and bring them forth into a large place.[p]

O let not the rod of the wicked rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.[q]

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old, and make the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over.[r]

For the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, now do thou arise, O Lord, and set them in safety from them that puff at them.[s]

O strengthen the patience and faith of thy suffering saints,[a] that they may hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.[b]

O let the year of thy redeemed come,[c] and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.[d]

O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion; and when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.[e]

O let not the oppressed return ashamed, but let the poor and needy praise thy name.[f]

Lord, arise, and have mercy upon Zion, and let the time to favour her, yea, the set time come; yea, let the Lord build up Zion, and appear in his glory. Lord, regard the prayer of the destitute, and do not despise their prayer.[g]

O Lord God, cease we beseech thee: By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?[h] O cause thy face to shine upon that part of thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.[i]

Let the sorrowful sighing of thy prisoners come before thee, and according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that for thy name's sake are appointed to die.[k]

Let those whose teachers are removed into corners, again see their teachers, though they have the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction.[l]

11. For the nations of Europe, and the countries about us.

Thou, Lord, art the Governor among the nations;[m] Who shall not fear thee, O King of nations?[n] Thou sittest in the throne judging right; judge the world therefore in righteousness, and minister judgment to the people in uprightness.[o]

Lord, hasten the time when thou wilt make wars to cease to the ends of the earth;[p] when nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom, but swords shall be beaten into plow-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and they shall not learn war any more.[q]

Make kings nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers to the Israel of God.[r]

And in the days of these kings let the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed,[s] even the kingdom of the Redeemer. And whatever counsels there are in men's hearts, Lord, let thy counsel stand,[t] and do thou fulfil the thoughts of thy heart unto all generations.[u]

12. For our own land and nation, the happy islands of Great Britain and Ireland, which we ought in a special manner to seek the welfare of, that in the peace thereof we may have peace.

(1.) We must be thankful to God for his mercies to our land.

We bless thee, that thou hast planted us in a very fruitful hill,[x] and hast not made the wilderness our ha-

[a] Ps. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. [b] Hos. 9. 14. [c] Ps. 83. 13, 16, 18. [d] Ps. 9. 20. [e] Ex. 18. 11. [f] Ps. 129. 5, 6. [g] Isa. 54. 17. [h] Zec. 12. 3. [i] Judg. 5. 31. [k] 2 Thes. 2. 3, 8, 10, 11. [l] Rev. 18. 2, 21. [m] Rev. 17. 17. [n] Rev. 21. 24. [o] Heb. 13. 3. [p] Ps. 18. 16, 17, 19. [q] Ps. 125. 3. [r] Isa. 51. 9, 10. [s] Ps. 12. 5.

[a] Rev. 13. 10. [b] Lam. 3. 26. [c] Isa. 63. 4. [d] Isa. 34. 8. [e] Ps. 14. 7. [f] Ps. 74. 21. [g] Ps. 102. 13, 16, 17. [h] Amos 7. 5. [i] Dan. 9. 17. [k] Ps. 79. 11. [l] Isa. 30. 20. [m] Ps. 22. 28. [n] Jer. 10. 7. [o] Ps. 9. 4, 8. [p] Ps. 46. 9. [q] Isa. 2. 4. [r] Isa. 49. 23. [s] Dan. 2. 44. [t] Pro. 19. 21. [u] Ps. 33. 11. [x] Is. 5. 1.

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bitation, or the barren land our dwelling,[s] but our land yields her increase.[t]

Lord, thou hast dealt favourably with our land.[u] We have heard with our ears, and our Fathers have told us what work thou didst for us in their days, and in the times of old:[x] and as we have heard, so have we seen; for we have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.[y]

Thou hast given us a pleasant land,[z] it is Immanuel's land,[a] it is a valley of vision,[b] thou hast set up thy tabernacle among us, and thy sanctuary is in the midst of us.[c]

We dwell safely under our own vines and fig-trees,[d] and there is peace to him that goeth out, and to him that comes in.[e]

And because the Lord loved our people, therefore he hath set a good government over us, to do judgment and justice;[f] to be a terror to evil doers, and a protection and praise to them that do well.[g]

(2.) We must be humble before God for our national sins and provocations.

But we are a sinful people, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers;[h] and a great deal of reason we have to sigh and cry for the abominations that are committed among us.[i]

Iniquity abounds among us, and the love of many is waxed cold.[k]

We have not been forsaken, nor forgotten of our God, though our land be full of sin against the Holy One of Israel.[l]

(3.) We must pray earnestly for the favour of God to us, and the tokens of his presence among us, as that in which the happiness of our nation is bound up.

O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble: be not thou as a stranger in our land, or a way-faring man that turns aside to tarry but for a night; but be thou always in the midst of us; we are called by thy name, O leave us not,—Though our iniquities testify against us, yet do thou it for thy name's sakes; though our backslidings are many, and we have sinned against thee.[m]

Turn us to thee, O Lord God of Hosts, and then cause thy face to shine, and we shall be safe. O stir up thy strength, and come and save us.[n]

Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation; yea, let that salvation be nigh them that fear thee, that glory may dwell in our land. Let mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other: let truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven; yea, let the Lord give that which is good: let righteousness go before him, and set us in the way of his steps.[o]

(4.) For the continuance of the gospel among us, and the means of grace, and a national profession of Christ's holy religion.

O let the throne of Christ endure for ever among us,[p] even the place of thy sanctuary, that glorious high throne from the beginning.[q]

Let our candlestick never be removed out of its place, though we have deserved it should, because we have left our first love.[r] Never do to us as thou didst to thy place which was in Shiloh, where thou didst set thy name at the first.[s]

Let us never know what a famine of the word means; nor ever be put to wander from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, to seek the word of God.[t]

Let wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times, and strength of salvation, and let the fear of the Lord be our treasure:[u] let the righteous flourish among us, and let there be those that shall fear thee in our land as long as the sun and moon endure; throughout all generations,[x] may there be abundance of peace, and may the children which shall be created praise the Lord.[y]

(5.) For the continuance of our outward peace and tranquillity, our liberty and plenty, for the prosperity of our trade, and a blessing upon the fruits of the earth.

Let God himself be a wall of fire round about us, and the glory in the midst of us,[z] yea, let his gospel be our glory, and upon all that glory let there be a defence; and create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night.[a]

Peace be within our borders, and prosperity within our palaces,[b] the prosperity both of merchandise and husbandry, that Zebulon may rejoice in his going out, and Issachar in his tents.[c]

Appoint salvation to us for walls and bulwarks, and in order to that let the gates be opened, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.[d]

Make our officers peace, and our exactors righteousness; let violence never be heard in our gates, wasting or destruction in our borders, but let our walls be called salvation, and our gates praise:[e] never let our land be termed forsaken and desolate, but let the Lord delight in us,[f] and let our land be married to him.[g]

Let our peace be as a river, and in order to that, our righteousness as the waves of the sea.[h] Let that righteousness abound among us which exalteth a nation, and deliver us from sin, which is a reproach to any people.[i]

Never make our heaven as brass, and our earth as iron,[k] nor take away thy corn in the season thereof, and thy wine in the season thereof,[l] but give us rain moderately,[m] the former and the latter rain in due season, and reserve unto us the appointed weeks of harvest,[n] giving us fair weather also in its season. Let our land yield her increase, and the trees their fruit,

[s] Job 39. 6. [t] Ps. 85. 12. [u] Ps. 85. 1. [x] Ps. 44. 1. [y] Ps. 48. 8, 9. [z] Jer. 3. 19. [a] Isa. 8. 8. [b] Isa. 22. 1. [c] Ezek. 37. 26, 27. [d] 1 Kings 4. 25. [e] 2 Chro. 15. 5. [f] 1 Kings 10. 9. [g] Rom. 13. 3. [h] Isa. 1. 4. [i] Ezek. 9. 4. [k] Mat. 24. 12. [l] Jer. 51. 5. [m] Jer. 14. 7, 8, 9. [n] Ps. 80. 2, 3. [o] Ps. 85. 7, to 13.

[p] Ps. 45. 6. [q] Jer. 17. 12. [r] Rev. 2. 4, 5. [s] Jer. 7. 12, 14. [t] Amos 8. 11, 12. [u] Isa. 33. 6. [x] Ps. 72. 5, 7. [y] Ps. 102. 18. [z] Zech. 2. 5. [a] Isa. 4. 5. [b] Ps. 122. 7. [c] Deut. 33. 18. [d] Isa. 26. 1, 2. [e] Isa. 60. 17, 18. [f] Isa. 62. 4. [g] Isa. 48. 18. [h] Pro. 14. 34. [i] Deut. 28. 23. [k] Hos. 2. 9. [l] Joel 2. 23. [m] Jer. 5. 24.

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that we may eat bread to the full, and dwell in our land safely.[a]

Abundantly bless our provision, and satisfy our poor with bread,[b] that they which have gathered it may eat and praise the Lord.[c] Blow not thou upon it, for then when we look for much, it will come to little,[d] but bless our blessings, that all nations may call us blessed, and a delightsome land.[e]

(6.) For the success of all endeavours for the reformation of manners, the suppression of vice and profaneness, and the support of religion and virtue, and the bringing of them into reputation.

O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish the just, O thou righteous God, that triest the hearts and reins.[f] Spirit many to rise up from thee against the evil doers, and to stand up for thee against the workers of iniquity.[g]

Let the Redeemer come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob;[h] and let the filth of Jerusalem be purged from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning.[i]

Let all iniquity stop her mouth,[k] and let the infection of that plague be stayed, by executing judgment.[l]

Let those who are striving against sin never be weary or faint in their minds.[m]

Cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land,[n] and turn to the people a pure language, that they may call on the name of the Lord.[o]

Make us high above all nations in praise, and in name, and in honour, by making us a holy people unto the Lord our God.[p]

(7.) For the healing of our unhappy divisions, and the making up of our breaches.

For the divisions that are among us, there are great searchings of heart;[q] for there are three against two, and two against three in a house.[r] But is the breach wide as the sea which cannot be healed?[s] Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of *our* people recovered?[t] Lord, heal the breaches of our land, for because of them it shaketh.[u]

We beg, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there be no divisions among us, but that we may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.[x]

Now the God of patience and consolation grant us to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,[y] and promote the common salvation.[z]

Lord, keep us from judging one another, and despising one another, and give us to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another;[a] that living in love and peace, the God of love and peace may be with us.[b]

[a] Lev. 26. 4, 5. [b] Ps. 132. 15. [c] Isa. 62. 9. [d] Hag. 1. 9. [e] Mal. 3. 10, 12. [f] Ps. 7. 9. [g] Ps. 94. 16. [h] Rom. 11. 26. [i] Isa. 4. 4. [k] Ps. 107. 42. [l] Ps. 106. 30. [m] Heb. 12. 3, 4. [n] Zech. 13. 2. [o] Zeph. 3. 9. [p] Deut. 26. 19. [q] Judg. 5. 16. [r] Luke 12. 52. [s] Lam. 2. 8. [t] Jer. 8. 22. [u] Ps. 60. 2. [x] 1 Cor. 1. 10. [y] Rom. 15. 5, 6. [z] Jude 3. [a] Rom. 14. 3, 19. [b] 2 Cor. 13. 11.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but every thing in lowliness of mind,[a] and grant that the moderation may be known unto all men, because the Lord is at hand.[b]

(8.) For victory and success against our enemies abroad, that seek our ruin.

Rise, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let those that hate thee flee before thee, but return, O Lord, to the many thousands of thine Israel.[c]

Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. Through God let our forces do valiantly; yea, let God himself tread down our enemies;[d] and give them as dust to our sword, and as driven stubble to our bow.[e]

Let us be a people saved by the Lord, as the shield of our help, and the sword of our excellency;[f] and make our enemies sensible that the Lord fighteth for us against them.[g]

Those who jeopard their lives for us in the high places of the field,[h] teach their hands to war, and their fingers to fight, give them the shield of thy salvation, and let thy right hand hold them up,[i] and cover their heads in the day of battle.[k]

(9.) For our Sovereign Lord the King, that God will protect his person, preserve his health, and continue his life and government long a public blessing.

Give the King thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness, that he may judge the poor of the people, may save the children of the needy, and may break in pieces the oppressor.[l]

Let his throne be established with righteousness,[m] and upheld with mercy.[n] Give him long life and length of days for ever and ever, and let his glory be great in thy salvation, and make him exceeding glad with thy countenance: through the tender mercy of the most High let him not be moved.[o]

Clothe his enemies with shame, but upon himself let the crown flourish,[p] and continue him long, very long, a nursing father to thine Israel.[q]

(10.) For the succession in the Protestant line, that a blessing may attend it, that the entail of the crown may prove a successful expedient for the establishing of peace and truth in our days, the securing of them to posterity, and the extinguishing the hopes of our Popish adversaries, and all their aiders and abettors.

Lord, preserve to the Lamb which thou hast ordained for thine Anointed,[r] that the generation to come may know thee, even the children which shall be born, that they may set their hope in God, and keep his commandments.[s]

Let the Protestant succession abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth which may preserve it, so will we sing praise unto thy name for ever.[t] Thus let the Lord save Sion, and build the cities of

[a] Phil. 2. 3. [b] Phil. 4. 5. [c] Num. 10. 33, 36. [d] Ps. 60. 11, 12. [e] Isa. 41. 2. [f] Deut. 33. 29. [g] Exod. 14. 25. [h] Judg. 5. 18. [i] Ps. 18. 34, 35. [k] Ps. 140. 7. [l] Ps. 72. 1, 4. [m] Pro. 25. 5. [n] Pro. 20. 28. [o] Ps. 21. 4, 5, 6, 7. [p] Ps. 132. 18. [q] Isa. 49. 23. [r] Ps. 132. 17. [s] Ps. 78. 6, 7. [t] Ps. 61. 7, 8.

Judah,

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Judah, and the seed of thy servants shall inherit it, and they that love thy name shall dwell therein.[a]

Let their design who would make a captain to return into Egypt,[b] be again defeated, and let not the deadly wound that hath been given to the beast be healed any more.[c]

Let our eyes see Jerusalem, the city of our solemnities, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: let none of the stakes thereof be removed, nor any of the cords thereof be broken, but let the glorious Lord be to us a place of broad waters and streams; for the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.[d]

(11.) For the privy-counsellors, the ministers of state, the members of parliament, the ambassadors, and envoys abroad, and all that are employed in the conduct of public affairs.

Counsel our counsellors, and teach our senators wisdom:[e] O give them a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, to make them of quick understanding, in the fear of the Lord.[f]

O remove not the speech of the trusty, nor take away the understanding of the aged,[g] nor ever let the things that belong to the nation's peace be hid from the eyes[h] of those that are intrusted with the nation's counsels.

Make it to appear that thou standest in the congregation of the mighty, and judgest among the Gods,[i] and that when the princes of the people are gathered together,[k] even the people of the God of Abraham, the God of Abraham himself is among them; and let the shields of the earth belong unto the Lord, that he may be greatly exalted.

Let those that be of us build the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, that they may be called the repairers of the breaches, and restorers of paths to dwell in.[l]

(12.) For the magistrates, the judge, and justices of peace in the several counties and corporations.

Make those that rule over us, just, ruling in the fear of God;[m] and let those that judge remember, that they judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with them in the judgment, that therefore the fear of the Lord may be upon them.[n]

Make them able men and men of truth, fearing God, and hating covetousness,[o] that judgment may run down like a river, and righteousness as a mighty stream.[p]

Enable our magistrates to defend the poor and fatherless, to do justice for the afflicted and needy, to deliver the poor and needy, and to rid them out of the hand of the wicked,[q] and let rulers never be a terror to good works,[r] but to the evil.[s]

(13.) For all the ministers of God's holy word and sacraments, the masters of assemblies.

Teach thy ministers how they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God,[a] that they may not preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,[b] and may study to shew themselves approved to God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.[c]

Make them mighty in the Scriptures,[d] that thence they may be thoroughly furnished for every good work,[e] in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, and sincerity,[f] and sound speech, which cannot be condemned.

Enable them to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, to meditate upon these things, to give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word,[g] to give themselves wholly to them; and to continue in them, that they may both save themselves and those that hear them.[h]

Let utterance be given to them, that they may open their mouths boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, that thereof they may speak as they ought to speak,[i] as able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit,[k] and let them obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful.[l]

Let the arms of their hands be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob;[m] and let them be full of power by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, to shew thy people their transgressions,[n] and the house of Jacob their sins.[o]

Make them sound in the faith,[p] and enable them always to speak the things which become sound doctrine,[q] with meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; and let not the servants of the Lord strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach.[r]

Make them good examples to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity;[s] and let them be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,[t] and let holiness to the Lord[u] be written upon their foreheads.

Lord, grant that they may not labour in vain, or spend their strength for nought, and in vain,[x] but let the hand of the Lord be with them, that many may believe, and turn to the Lord.[y]

(14.) For all the universities, schools, and nurseries of learning.

Let the schools of the prophets be replenished with every good gift and every perfect gift from above, from the Father of lights.[z]

Cast salt into those fountains,[a] and heal the waters thereof, that from thence may issue streams which shall make glad the city of our God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.[b]

(15.) For the common people of the land.

Give grace to all the subjects of this land, that we may under the government God has set over us, live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty,[c]

[a] Ps. 69. 35, 36. [b] Num. 14. 4. [c] Rev. 13. 12. [d] Isa. 33. 20, 21, 22. [e] Ps. 105. 22. [f] Isa. 11. 2, 3. [g] Job 12. 20. [h] Luke 19. 42. [i] Ps. 82. 1. [k] Ps. 49. 7. [l] Isa. 58. 12. [m] 2 Sam. 23. 3. [n] 2 Chro. 19. 6, 7. [o] Exod. 18. 21. [p] Amos 5. 24. [q] Ps. 82. 3, 4. [r] 1 Pet. 2. 14. [s] Rom. 13. 4.

[a] 1 Tim. 3. 15. [b] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [c] 2 Tim. 2. 15. [d] Acts 18. 24. [e] 2 Tim. 3. 17. [f] Tit. 2. 7. [g] Acts 6. 4. [h] 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15, 16. [i] Eph. 6. 19, 20. [k] 2 Cor. 3. 6. [l] 1 Cor. 7. 25. [m] Gen. 49. 24. [n] Mic. 3. 8. [o] Isa. 58. 1. [p] Tit. 1. 13. [q] Tit. 2. 1. [r] 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. [s] 1 Tim. 4. 12. [t] Isa. 52. 11. [u] Exod. 28. 36. [x] Isa. 49. 4. [y] Acts 11. 21. [z] James 1. 17. [a] 2 Kings 2. 21. [b] Ps. 46. 4. [c] 1 Tim. 2. 2.

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dwelling together in unity, that the Lord may command a blessing upon us, even life for evermore.

Let all of every denomination that fear God and work righteousness be accepted of him;[a] yea, let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified, that hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.[b]

(16.) For those who are young, and setting out in the world.

Lord, give to those who are young to remember their Creator in the days of their youth,[c] that thereby they may be kept from the vanity which childhood and youth are subject to, and may be restrained from walking in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, by considering, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment.[d]

Lord, make young people sober-minded,[e] and let the word of God abide in them, that they may be strong, and may overcome the wicked One.[f]

From the womb of the morning let Christ have the dew of the youth,[g] and let him be formed in the hearts of those who are young.[h]

Keep those who are setting out in the world from the corruption that is in the world through lust;[i] and give to those who have been well educated to hold fast the form of sound words,[k] and to continue in the things which they have learned.[l]

(17.) For those who are old, and are of long standing in profession.

There are some who are old disciples of Jesus Christ;[m] Lord, give them still to bring forth fruit in old age, to shew that the Lord is upright, that he is their rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.[n] Now the evil days are come, and the years of which they say there is no pleasure in them,[o] let thy comforts delight their souls.[p]

Even to their old age be thou He, and to the hoary hairs do thou carry them thou hast made, we beseech thee bear, yea, do thou carry and deliver them.[q]

Those whom thou hast taught from their youth up, and who have hitherto declared all thy wondrous works, now also when they are old and grey-headed leave them not, cast them not off in their old age, fail them not when their strength fails.[r]

Let every hoary head be a crown of glory to those who have it, being found in the way of righteousness,[s] and give them to know whom they have believed.[t]

(18.) For those who are rich and prosperous in the world, some of whom perhaps need prayers as much as those that request them.

Lord, keep those that are rich in the world from being high-minded, and trusting in uncertain riches, and give them to trust in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: that they may do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; that they may lay up in store for themselves a good security for the time to come.[a]

Though it is hard for those that are rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven, yet with thee this is possible.[b]

(19.) For those who are poor and in affliction, for such we have always with us.

Lord, make those who are poor in the world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom,[c] and give to them to receive the gospel.[d]

O that the poor of the flock may wait upon thee, and may know the word of the Lord.[e]

Many are the troubles of the righteous, good Lord, deliver them out of them all,[f] and though no affliction for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward let it yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.[g]

(20.) For our enemies, and those who hate us.

Lord, give us to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us.[h]

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do;[i] and lay not their malice against us to their charge,[k] and work in us a disposition to forbear and forgive in love,[l] as thou requirest we should when we pray.[m]

And grant that our ways may so please the Lord, that even our enemies may be at peace with us.[n] Let the wolf and the lamb lie down together, and let there be none to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain; let not Ephraim envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim.[o]

(21.) For our friends and those that love us.

And we wish for all those whom we love in the truth, that they may prosper, and be in health, especially that their souls may prosper.[p]

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with their spirits.[q]

CHAP. VI.

Of Addresses to GOD *upon Particular Occasions, whether domestic or public.*

IT is made our duty, and prescribed as a remedy against disquieting care, that in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, we should make our requests known to God.[r] And it is part of the παῤῥησία,—*the boldness,*[s] *the liberty of speech,* (so the word signifies) which is allowed us in our access to God, that we may be particular in opening our case, and seeking to him for relief; that according as the sore and the grief is, accordingly the prayer and the supplication may be by any man, or by the people of Israel.[t] Not that God needs to be particularly informed of our condition, he knows it better than

[a] Acts 10. 35. [b] Ps. 35. 27. [c] Ecc. 12. 1. [d] Ecc. 11. 9, 10. [e] Tit. 2. 6. [f] 1 John 2. 14. [g] Ps. 110. 3. [h] Gal. 4. 19. [i] 2 Pet. 1. 4. [k] 2 Tim. 1. 13. [l] 2 Tim. 3. 14. [m] Acts 21. 16. [n] Ps. 92. 14, 15. [o] Ecc. 12. 1. [p] Ps. 94. 19. [q] Isa. 46. 4. [r] Ps. 71. 9, 17, 18. [s] Pro. 16. 31. [t] 2 Tim. 1. 12.

[a] 1 Tim. 6. 17, 19. [b] Matt. 19. 26. [c] Matt. 11. 5. [d] James 2. 5. [e] Zec. 11. 11. [f] Ps. 34. 19. [g] Heb. 12. 11. [h] Matt. 5. 44. [i] Luke 23. 34. [k] Acts 7. 60. [l] Col. 3. 13. [m] Mark 11. 25. [n] Pro. 16. 7. [o] Isa. 11. 6, 9, 13. [p] 3 John 2. [q] Philem. 25. [r] Phil 4. 6. [s] Heb. 10. 19. [t] 2 Chro. 6. 29.

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we ourselves do, and our souls too in our adversity, but it is his will that we should thus acknowledge him in all our ways,[a] and wait upon him for the direction of every step,[b] not prescribing, but subscribing to infinite wisdom, humbly shewing him our wants, burthens, and desires, and then referring ourselves to him, to do for us as he thinks fit.

We shall mention some of the occasions of particular address to God, more or less usual, which may either be the principal matter of a whole prayer, or inserted in our other prayers, and in some cases that are more peculiar to ministers, or others, in common to them with masters of families and private christians. As there may be something particular,

1. In our morning prayers.

Our voice shalt thou now hear in the morning, in the morning will we direct our prayer unto thee, and will look up;[c] for our souls wait for thee, O Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, yea, more than they that watch for the morning;[d] and we will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; for thou hast been our defence.[e]

It is thou, O God, who hast commanded the morning, and caused the day-spring to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and it is turned as clay to the seal.[f]

The day is thine, the night also is thine, thou hast prepared the light and the sun.[g]

With the light of the morning let the day-spring from on high visit us, to give us the knowledge of salvation, through the tender mercy of our God;[h] and let the sun of righteousness arise upon our souls with healing under his wings;[i] and our path be as the shining light, which shines more and more to the perfect day.[k]

It is of thy mercy, O Lord, that we are not consumed, even because thy compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness:[l] and if weeping sometimes endures for a night, joy comes in the morning.[m]

We thank thee that we have laid us down,[n] have had where to lay our head,[o] and have not been wandering in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth:[p] and that we have slept, and have not been full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day, that wearisome nights are not appointed to us, and we are not saying at our lying down, When shall we arise, and the night be gone? But our bed comforts us, and our couch eases our complaint[q]—Thou givest us sleep as thou givest it to thy beloved;[r] and having laid us down and slept, we have waked again; thou hast enlightened our eyes, so that we have not slept the sleep of death.[s]

Thou hast preserved us from the pestilence that walketh in darkness,[a] and from the malice of the rulers of the darkness of this world,[b] the roaring Lion that goes about seeking to devour.[c]—He that keeps Israel, and neither slumbers nor sleeps,[d] has kept us, and so we have been safe.

But we cannot say with thy servant David, that when we awake we are still with thee,[e] or that our eyes have prevented the night-watches, that we might meditate on thy word;[f] but vain thoughts still lodge within us.[g] O pardon our sins, and cause us to hear thy loving kindness this morning, for in thee do we trust; cause us to know the way wherein we should walk, for we lift up our souls unto thee: and teach us to do thy will, for thou art our God. Thy Spirit is good, lead us into the way and land of uprightness.[h]

And now let the Lord preserve and keep us from all evil this day,' yea, let the Lord preserve our souls: Lord, preserve our going out and coming in;[i] give thine angels charge concerning us, to bear us up in their hands, and keep us in all our ways.[k] And give us grace to do the work of the day in its day, as the duty of the day requires.[l]

2. In our evening prayers.

Thou, O God, makest the out-goings of the evening, as well as of the morning, to rejoice;[m] for thereby thou callest us from our work and our labour,[n] and biddest us rest a while.[o] And now let our souls return to thee, and repose in that as our rest, because thou hast dealt bountifully with us;[p] so shall our sleep be sweet to us.[q]

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with his benefits,[r] who has this day preserved our going out and coming in:[s] and now we have received from thee our daily bread, we pray, Father, forgive us our trespasses.[t]

And we will lie us down and sleep; for thou, Lord, makest us to dwell in safety.[u] Make a hedge of protection (we pray thee) about us, and about our house, and about all that we have round about.[x] Let the angels of God encamp round about us to deliver us;[y] that we may lie down, and none may make us afraid.[z]

Into thy hands we commit our spirits;[a] that in slumberings upon the bed,[b] our ears may be opened, and instruction sealed; and let the Lord give us counsel, and let our reins instruct us in the night-season.[c] Visit us in the night, and try us,[d] and enable us to commune with our own hearts upon our bed.[e]

Give us to remember thee upon our bed, and to meditate upon thee in the night-watches,[f] with the saints who are joyful in glory, and who sing aloud upon their beds.[g]

3. In craving a blessing before meat.

Thou, O Lord, givest food to all flesh, for thy mercy endures for ever.[h] The eyes of all wait on thee;[i] but

[a] Pro. 3. 6. [b] Ps. 37. 23. [c] Ps. 5. 3. [d] Ps. 130. 6. [e] Ps. 59. 16. [f] Job 38. 12, 13, 14. [g] Ps. 74. 16. [h] Luke 1. 77, 78. [i] Mal. 4. 2. [k] Pro. 4. 18. [l] Lam. 3. 22, 23. [m] Ps. 30. 5. [n] Ps. 3. 5. [o] Mat. 8. 20. [p] Heb. 11. 38. [q] Job 7. 3, 4, 13. [r] Ps. 127. 2. [s] Ps. 13. 3.

[a] Ps. 91. 6. [b] Eph. 6. 12. [c] 1 Pet. 5. 8. [d] Ps. 121. 4. [e] Ps. 139. 18. [f] Ps. 119. 148. [g] Jer. 4. 14. [h] Ps. 143. 8, 10. [i] Ps 121. 7, 8. [k] Ps. 91. 11, 12. [l] Ezr. 8. 4. [m] Ps. 65. 8. [n] Ps. 104. 23. [o] Mark 6. 31. [p] Ps. 116. 7. [q] Jer. 31. 26. [r] Ps. 68. 19. [s] Ps. 121. 8. [t] Mat. 6. 11, 12. [u] Ps. 4. 8. [x] Job 1. 10. [y] Ps. 34. 7. [z] Job 11. 19. [a] Ps. 31. 5. [b] Job 33. 15. [c] Ps. 16. 7. [d] Ps. 17. 3. [e] Ps. 4. 4. [f] Ps. 63. 6. [g] Ps. 149. 5. [h] Ps. 136. 25. [i] Ps. 145. 15.

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especially thou givest meat to them that fear thee, being ever mindful of thy covenant.[a]

Thou art our life, and the length of our days,[b] the God that hath fed us all our life long unto this day:[c] Thou givest us all things richly to enjoy,[d] though we serve thee but poorly. Thou hast not only given us every green herb, and the fruits of the trees to be to us for meat,[e] but every moving thing that liveth, even as the green herb.[f]

And blessed be God, that now under the gospel we are taught to call nothing common or unclean,[g] and that it is not that which goes into the man, that defiles the man,[h] but that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused; for God hath created it to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.[i]

We acknowledge we are not worthy of the least crumb that falls from the table[k] of thy Providence: Thou mightest justly take away from us the stay of bread and the stay of water,[l] and make us to eat our bread by weight, and to drink our water by measure, and with astonishment;[m] because when we have been fed to the full, we have forgotten God our Maker.[n] But let our sins be pardoned, we pray thee, that our table may not become a snare before us, nor that be made a trap, which should have been for our welfare.[o]

We know that every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer;[p] and that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;[q] and therefore according to our master's example, we look up to heaven, and pray for a blessing[r] upon our food, Abundantly bless our provision.[s]

Lord, grant that we may not feed ourselves without fear,[t] that we may not make a God of our belly,[u] that our hearts may never be overcharged with surfeiting or drunkenness,[x] but that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we may do all to the glory of God.[y]

4. In returning thanks after our meat.

Now we have eaten and are full, we bless thee for the good land thou hast given us.[z] Thou preparest a table for us in the presence of our enemies, thou anointest our head, and our cup runs over.[a]

Thou, Lord, art the portion of our inheritance and of our cup, thou maintainest our lot, so that we have reason to say, The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage.[b]

Especially we bless thee for the bread of life, which came down from heaven, which was given for the life of the world: Lord, evermore give us that bread, and wisdom to labour less for the meat which perisheth, and more for that which endures to everlasting life.[c]

The Lord give food to the hungry,[d] and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.

[a] Ps. 111. 5. [b] Deut. 30. 20. [c] Gen. 48. 15. [d] 1 Tim. 6. 17. [e] Gen. 1. 29. [f] Gen. 9. 3. [g] Acts 10. 15. [h] Matt. 15. 11. [i] 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4. [k] Matt. 15. 27. [l] Isa. 3. 1. [m] Ezek. 4. 16. [n] Deut. 32. 15. [o] Ps. 69. 22. [p] 1 Tim. 4. 5. [q] Matt. 4. 4. [r] Matt. 14. 19. [s] Ps. 132. 15. [t] Jud. 12. [u] Phil. 3. 19. [x] Luke 21. 34. [y] 1 Cor. 10. 31. [z] Deut. 8. 10. [a] Ps. 23. 5. [b] Ps. 16. 5, 6. [c] John 6. 27, 33, 34. [d] Ps. 146. 7.

Let us be of those blessed ones that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,[a] that shall eat of the hidden manna.[b]

5. When we are going a journey.

Lord, keep us in the way that we go,[c] and let no evil thing befal us:[d] let us have a prosperous journey by the will of God,[e] and with thy favour let us be compassed wherever we go as with a shield.[f]

Let us walk in our way safely, and let not our foot stumble,[g] or dash against a stone.[h]

Direct our way in every thing,[i] and enable us to order all our affairs with discretion,[k] and the Lord send us good speed, and shew kindness to us.[l]

And the Lord watch between us, when we are absent one from the other.[m]

6. When we return from a journey.

Blessed be the Lord God of Abraham, who hath not left us destitute of his mercy and his truth.[n]

All our bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee,[o] for thou keepest all our bones.[p]

It is God that girdeth us with strength, and maketh our way perfect.[q]

7. On the evening before the Lord's Day.

Now give us to remember that to-morrow is the sabbath of the Lord,[r] and that it is a high day,[s] holy of the Lord and honourable,[t] and give us grace so to sanctify ourselves, that to-morrow the Lord may do wonders among us;[u] and to mind the work of our preparation now the Sabbath draws on.[x]

When thou sawest every thing that thou hast made in six days, behold all was very good,[y] but in many things we have all offended.[z] O that by repentance and faith in Christ's blood we may wash not our feet only, but also our hands and our head,[a] and our heart, and so may compass thine altar, O Lord.[b]

Now give us to rest from all our own works,[c] and to leave all our worldly cares at the bottom of the hill, while we go up into the mount to worship God, and return again to them.[d]

8. On the morning of the Lord's Day.

We bless thee, Lord, who hath shewed us light,[e] and that the light we see is the Lord's; that we see no more of the days of the son of man,[f] a day to be spent in thy courts, which is better than a thousand elsewhere.[g]

We thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that the things which were hid from the wise and prudent are revealed unto us babes, even so, Father, because it seemed good in thine eyes; that our eyes see and our ears hear that which many prophets and kings desired to see, desired to hear, and might not;[h] that life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.[i]

[a] Luke 14. 15. [b] Rev. 2. 17. [c] Gen. 28. 20. [d] Ps. 91. 10. [e] Rom. 1. 10. [f] Ps. 5. 12. [g] Pro. 3. 23. [h] Ps. 91. 12. [i] 1 Thes. 3. 11. [k] Ps. 112. 5. [l] Gen. 24. 12. [m] Gen. 31. 49. [n] Gen. 24. 27. [o] Ps. 35. 10. [p] Ps. 34. 20. [q] Ps. 18. 32. [r] Exod. 16. 23. [s] John 19. 31. [t] Isa. 58. 13. [u] Josh. 3. 5. [x] Luke 23. 54. [y] Gen. 1. 31. [z] James 3. 2. [a] John 13. 19. [b] Ps. 26. 6. [c] Heb. 4. 10. [d] Gen. 22. 5. [e] Ps. 118. 27. [f] Luke 17. 22. [g] Ps. 84. 10. [h] Luke 10. 21, 23, 24. [i] 2 Tim. 1. 10.

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And now, O that we may be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day![a] That we may call the Sabbath a delight,[b] and may honour the Son of Man, who is Lord also of the Sabbath-day,[c] not doing our own ways, or finding our own pleasure, or speaking our own words.

9. At the entrance upon the public worship on the Lord's Day, by the masters of the assemblies.

Thou, O God, art greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about thee.[d] O give us grace to worship thee with reverence and godly fear, because thou our God art a consuming fire.[e]

This is that which thou hast said, That thou wilt be sanctified in them which come nigh unto thee; and before all the people thou wilt be glorified.[f] Thou art the Lord that sanctified us,[g] sanctify us by the truth,[h] that we may sanctify thee in our hearts, and make thee our fear and our dread.[i]

We come together to give glory to the Great Jehovah, who in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, and therefore blessed a Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.[k] Our help stands in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.[l]

O let us be new creatures,[m] thy workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works:[n] and let that God who on the first day of the world commanded the light to shine out of darkness, on this first day of the week shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.[o]

We come together to give glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to sanctify this Sabbath to his honour, who was the stone that the builders refused, but is now become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the Day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.[p] He is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive.[q]

O that we may this day experience the power of Christ's resurrection,[r] and may be planted together in the likeness of it, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life,[s] and may sit with him in heavenly places;[t] and by seeking the things that are above,[u] may make it to appear that we are risen with him.

We come together to give glory to the Blessed Spirit of grace, and to celebrate the memorial of the giving of that promise of the Father,[x] in whom the apostles received power on the first day of the week,[y] as on that day Christ arose.

O that we may this day be filled with the Holy Ghost, and that the fruit of the Spirit in us may be in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.[a]

We come together to testify our communion with the universal church, that though we are many, yet we are one;[b] that we worship one and the same God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, in the name of one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him;[c] under the conduct of the same Spirit, one and the self-same Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he will,[d] walking by the same rule,[e] looking for the same blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour.[f]

10. In our preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Now we are invited to come eat of Wisdom's bread, and drink of the wine that she has mingled,[g] give us to hunger and thirst after righteousness;[h] and being called to the marriage supper of the Lamb,[i] give us the wedding garment.[k]

Awake, O north wind, and come thou south and blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow forth; and then let our beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.[l]

Draw us, and we will run after thee; bring us into thy chambers, that there we may be glad and rejoice in thee, and may remember thy love more than wine. And when the King sits at his table, let our spikenard send forth the smell thereof.[m]

And the good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.[n] Hear our prayers, and heal the people.

11. In the celebrating of the Lord's Supper.

O let this cup of blessing, which we bless, be the communion of the blood of Christ; let this bread which we break be the communion of the body of Christ,[o] and enable us herein to shew the Lord's death till he come.[p]

Now let us be joined to the Lord in an everlasting covenant;[q] so joined to the Lord, as to become one spirit with him.[r] Now let us be made partakers of Christ, by holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end.[s]

Let Christ's flesh be meat indeed to us, and his blood drink indeed; and give us so by faith to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, that he may dwell in us, and we in him, and we may live by him.[t]

Let the cross of Christ, which is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, be to us the wisdom of God, and the power of God.[u]

Seal to us the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost,[x] and the promise of eternal life,[y] and enable us to take this cup of salvation, and to call on the name of the Lord.[z]

[a] Rev. 1. 10. [b] Isa. 58. 13. [c] Mark 2. 28. [d] Ps. 89. 7. [e] Heb. 12. 28, 29. [f] Lev. 10. 3. [g] Ezek. 20. 12. [h] John 17. 17. [i] Isa. 8. 13. [k] Exod. 20. 11. [l] Ps. 124. 8. [m] 2 Cor. 5. 17. [n] Eph. 2. 10. [o] 2 Cor. 4. 6. [p] Ps. 118. 22, 23, 24. [q] Rev. 2. 8. [r] Phil. 3. 10. [s] Rom. 6. 4, 5. [t] Eph. 2. 6. [u] Col. 3. 1. [x] Acts 1. 4. [y] Acts 2. 1.

[a] Eph. 5. 18. [b] 1 Cor. 10. 17. [c] 1 Cor. 8. 6. [d] 1 Cor. 12. 11. [e] Gal. 6. 16. [f] Tit. 2. 13. [g] Pro. 9. 5. [h] Matt. 5. 6. [i] Rev. 19. 9. [k] Matt. 22. 11. [l] Cant. 4. 16. [m] Cant. 1. 4, 12. [n] 2 Chr. 30. 18, 19. [o] 1 Cor. 10. 16. [p] 1 Cor. 11. 20. [q] Jer. 50. 5. [r] 1 Cor. 6. 17. [s] Heb. 3. 14. [t] John 6. 55, 56, 57. [u] 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. [x] Acts 2. 38. [y] 1 John 2. 25. [z] Ps. 116. 13.

12. After

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12. After the celebrating of the Lord's Supper.

And now, Lord, give us to hold fast that which we have received, that no man take our crown:[a] and keep it always in the imagination of the thoughts of our hearts, and prepare our hearts unto thee.[b]

Give us grace, as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him,[c] that our conversation may be in every thing as becomes his gospel.[d]

O that we may now bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, so as that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body,[e] that to us to live may be Christ.[f]

Thy vows are upon us, O God,[g] O that we may be daily performing our vows.[h]

13. Upon occasion of the baptism of a child.

To thee, O God, whose all souls are, the souls of the parents, and the souls of the children,[i] we present this child a living sacrifice, which we desire may be holy and acceptable,[k] and that it may be given up and dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.[l]

It is conceived in sin,[m] but there is a fountain opened;[n] O wash the soul of this child in that fountain, now it is by thine appointment washed with pure water.[o]

It is one of the children of the covenant,[p] one of the children that is born unto thee,[q] it is thy servant,[r] born in thy house: O make good thy ancient covenant, that thou wilt be a God to believers, and to their seed;[s] for this blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles,[t] and the promise is still to us, and to our children.[u]

Thou hast encouraged us to bring little children to thee; for thou hast said, that of such is the kingdom of God. Blessed Jesus, take up this child in the arms of thy power and grace, put thy hands upon it, and bless it;[x] let it be a vessel of honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use,[y] and owned as one of thine in that day when thou makest up thy jewels.[z]

O pour thy Spirit upon our seed, thy blessing upon our offspring, that they may spring up as willows by the water-courses, and may come to subscribe with their own hands unto the Lord, and to sirname themselves by the name of Israel.[a]

14. Upon occasion of a funeral.

Lord, give us to find it good for us to go to the house of mourning,[b] that we may be reminded thereby of the end of all men, and may lay it to our heart, and may be so wise as to consider our latter end;[c] for we also must be gathered to our people, as our neighbours and brethren are gathered;[d] and though whither those who are dead in Christ are gone we cannot follow them now,[e] yet grant that we may follow them afterwards, every one in his own order.[f]

We know that thou wilt bring us to death, and to the house appointed for all living;[a] but let us not see death, till by faith we have seen the Lord Christ, and then let us depart in peace according to the word.[b] And when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, let us have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.[c]

And give us to know that our Redeemer liveth, and that though after our skin, worms destroy these bodies, yet in our flesh we shall see God, whom we shall see for ourselves, and our eyes shall behold, and not another.[d]

15. Upon occasion of marriage.

Give to those who marry to marry in the Lord,[e] and let the Lord Jesus by his grace come to the marriage, and turn the water into wine.[f]

Make them helps meet for each other,[g] and instrumental to promote one anothers salvation;[h] and give them to live in holy love, that they may dwell in God, and God in them.[i]

Let the wife be as a fruitful vine by the side of the house,[k] and the husband dwell with the wife as a man of knowledge; and let them dwell together as joint-heirs of the grace of life, that their prayers be not hindered.[l] And make us all meet for that world where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.[m]

16. Upon occasion of the ordaining of ministers.

Let the things of God be committed to faithful men, who may be able also to teach others;[n] and make others such burning and shining lights,[o] that it may appear it was Christ Jesus who put them into the ministry;[p] and let not hands be suddenly laid on any.[q]

Give to those who are ordained to take heed to the ministry which they have received of the Lord, that they fulfil it,[r] and to make full proof of it by watching in all things.[s]

Let those who in Christ's name are to preach repentance and remission of sins, be endued with power from on high;[t] give them another Spirit,[u] and make them good ministers of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine.[x]

17. Upon occasion of the want of rain.

Thou hast kept back the rain from us, and caused it to rain upon one city, and not upon another, yet have we not returned unto thee.[y]

But thou hast said, When heaven is shut up that there is no rain, because we have sinned against thee, if we confess thy name, and turn from our sins, thou wilt hear from heaven, and forgive our sin, and give rain upon our land.[z]

We ask of thee the former and latter rain,[a] and depend upon thee for it; for there are not any of the

[a] Rev. 3. 11. [b] 1 Chr. 29. 18. [c] Col. 2. 6. [d] Phil. 1. 27. [e] 2 Cor. 4. 10. [f] Phil. 1. 21. [g] Ps. 56. 12 [h] Ps. 61. 8. [i] Ezek. 18. 4. [k] Rom. 12. 1. [l] Matt. 28. 19. [m] Ps. 51. 5. [n] Zec. 13. 1. [o] Heb. 10. 22. [p] Acts 3. 25. [q] Ezek. 16. 20. [r] Ps. 110. 16. [s] Gen. 17. 7. [t] Gal. 3. 14. [u] Acts 2. 39. [x] Mark 10. 14, 16. [y] 2 Tim. 2. 21. [z] Mal. 3. 17. [a] Isa. 44. 3, 4, 5. [b] Ecc. 7. 2. [c] Deut. 32. 29. [d] Num. 27. 13. [e] John 13. 36. [f] 1 Cor. 15. 23.

[a] Job 30. 23. [b] Luke 2. 26, 29. [c] 2 Cor. 5. 1. [d] Job 19. 25, 26, 27. [e] 1 Cor. 7. 39. [f] John 2. 1. [g] Gen. 2. 18. [h] 1 Cor. 7. 16. [i] 1 John 4. 16. [k] Ps. 128. 3. [l] 1 Pet. 3. 7. [m] Luke 20. 35. [n] 2 Tim. 2. 2. [o] John 5. 35. [p] 2 Tim. 1. 18. [q] 1 Tim. 5. 22. [r] Col. 4. 17. [s] 2 Tim. 4. 5. [t] Luke 24. 47, 49. [u] 1 Sam. 10. 9. [x] 1 Tim. 4. 6. [y] Amos 4. 7. [z] 1 Kings 8. 35, 36. [a] Zec. 10. 1.

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vanities of the heathen that can give rain, nor can the heavens give showers, but we wait on thee, for thou hast made all these things.[a]

18. Upon occasion of excessive rain.

Let the rain thou sendest be in mercy to our land,[b] and not for correction; not a sweeping rain, which leaveth no food.[c]

Thou hast sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more return to cover the earth;[d] let fair weather therefore come out of the north, for with thee is terrible Majesty.[e]

19. Upon occasion of infectious diseases.

Take sickness away from the midst of us,[f] and deliver us from the noisome pestilence.[g]

Appoint the destroying angel to put up his sword into the sheath, and to stay his hand.[h]

20. Upon occasion of fire.

Thou callest to contend by fire,[i] we bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled:[k] O Lord God, cease, we beseech thee,[l] and let the fire be quenched, as that kindled in Israel was at the prayer of Moses.[m]

21. Upon occasion of great storms.

Lord, thou hast the winds in thy hands,[n] and bringest them out of thy treasures,[o] even stormy winds fulfil thy word:[p] O preserve us and our habitations, that we be not buried in the ruins of them, as Job's children were.[q]

22. Upon occasion of the cares, and burthens, and afflictions of particular persons; as,

(1.) When we pray with or for those that are troubled in mind, and melancholy, and under doubts and fears about their spiritual state.

Lord, enable those that fear thee, and obey the voice of thy servant, but walk in darkness, and have no light, to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay themselves upon their God;[r] and at evening-time let it be light.[s]

O strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees, say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.[t] Answer them with good words, and comfortable words,[u] saying unto them, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you;[x] Be of good cheer, It is I; be not afraid,[y] I am your salvation;[z] and make them to hear this voice of joy and gladness, that broken bones may rejoice.[a]

Let those who now remember God, and are troubled, whose spirits are overwhelmed,[b] and whose souls refuse to be comforted, be enabled to trust in thy mercy, so that at length they may rejoice in thy salvation; though thou slay them, yet to trust in thee.[c]

Though deep calls unto deep, and all thy waves and thy billows go over them, yet do thou command thy loving-kindness for them in the day-time, and in the night let thy song be with them, and their prayer to the God of their life; though their souls are cast down and disquieted within them, give them to hope in God, that they shall yet praise him, and let them find him the health of their countenance, and their God.[a]

O renew a right spirit within them, cast them not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from them, but restore unto them the joy of thy salvation, and uphold them with thy free Spirit, that their tongues may sing aloud of thy righteousness,[b] and shew forth thy salvation.[c]

O bring them out of this horrible pit, and this miry clay, and set their feet upon a rock, establishing their goings, and put a new song in their mouth, even praises to our God:[d] O comfort them again now after the time that thou hast afflicted them.[e]

Though for a small moment thou hast forsaken them, and hid thy face from them, yet gather them, and have mercy on them with everlasting kindness.[f]

O let thy Spirit witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God;[g] and by the blood of Christ let them be purged from an evil conscience.[h]

Lord, rebuke the tempter, even the accuser of the brethren, the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke him, and let the poor, tempted, troubled souls, be as brands plucked out of the burning.

2. Those who are under convictions of sin, and begin to be concerned about their souls, and their salvation, and to inquire after Christ.

Those who are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward,[i] that are lamenting after the Lord,[k] and are pricked to the heart for sin,[l] O shew them the good and the right way,[m] and lead them in it.

To those who are asking what they shall do to inherit eternal life,[n] discover Christ as the way, the truth, and the life,[o] the only true and living way.

O do not quench the smoaking flax, nor break the bruised reed, but bring forth judgment unto victory.[p] Let the great Shepherd of the sheep gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead them,[q] and help them against their unbelief.[r]

Let not the red Dragon devour the manchild as soon as it is born, but let it be caught up to God, and to his throne.[s]

3. When we pray with, or for those who are sick and weak, and distempered in body, that those who are sick, and in sin, may be convinced; those who are sick, and in Christ, comforted.

Lord, thou hast appointed those that are sick to be prayed for, and prayed with, and hast promised, that the prayer of faith shall save the sick;[t] Lord, help us to pray in faith for the sick, and as being ourselves also in the body.

When our Lord Jesus was here upon earth, we find that they brought to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and he healed all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people:[u] and he has still the same power over bo-

[a] Jer. 14. 22. [b] Job 37. 13. [c] Pro. 28. 3. [d] Isa. 54. 9. [e] Job 37. 22. [f] Exod. 23. 25. [g] Ps. 91. 3. [h] 2 Sam. 24. 16. [i] Amos 7. 4. [k] Lev. 10. 6. [l] Amos 7. 5. [m] Num. 11. 2. [n] Pro. 30 4. [o] Ps. 135. 7. [p] Ps. 148. 8. [q] Job 1. 19. Isa. 50. 10. [r] Zec 14. 7. [s] Isa. 35. 3, 4. [t] Zec. 1. 13. [x] Matt. 9. 2. Mark 6. 50. [y] Ps. 35. 3 [z] Ps. 51. 8. [a] Ps. 77. 2, 3. [b] Job 13. 15.

[a] Ps. 42. 7, 8, 11. [b] Ps. 51. 10, 11, 12, 14. [c] Ps. 71. 15. [d] Ps. 40. 2, 3. [e] Ps. 90. 15. [f] Isa. 54. 7, 8. [g] Rom. 8. 16. [h] Heb. 10. 22. [i] Jer. 50. 5. [k] 1 Sam. 7. 2. [l] Acts 2. 37. [m] 1 Sam. 12. 23. [n] Mat. 19. 16. [o] John 14. 6. [p] Mat. 12. 20. [q] Isa. 40. 11. [r] Mark 9. 24. [s] Rev. 12. 4, 5. [t] James 5. 14, 15. [u] Mat. 4. 23, 24.

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dily diseases that ever he had; he says to them, Go, and they go; Come, and they come; Do this, and they do it; and can speak the word, and they shall be healed.[a] He is still touched with the feeling of our infirmities:[b] and in the belief of this we do by prayer bring our friends that are sick, and lay them before him.[c]

Lord, grant that those who are sick may neither despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him;[d] but that they may both hear the rod, and him that has appointed it,[e] and may kiss the rod, and accept of the punishment of their iniquity.[f]

Give them to see, that affliction cometh not forth out of the dust, nor springs out of the ground;[g] that they may therefore seek unto God, to the Lord more than to the physicians,[h] because unto God the Lord belong the issues of life and death.[i]

Lord, shew them wherefore thou contendest with them,[k] and give them in their affliction to humble themselves greatly before the God of their fathers,[l] and to repent and turn from every evil way, and make their ways and their doings good,[m] that being judged and chastened of the Lord, they may not be condemned with the world.[n] By the sickness of the body, and the sadness of the countenance, let the heart be made better.[o]

O Lord, rebuke them not in thine anger, neither chasten them in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon them, O Lord, for they are weak. Lord, heal them, for their bones are vexed, their souls also are sore vexed. Return, O Lord, and deliver their souls, save them for thy mercy's sake;[p] and lay no more upon them than thou wilt enable them to bear, and enable them to bear what thou dost lay upon them.[q]

When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth. Surely every man is vanity. But remove thy stroke, we pray thee, from those that are even consumed by the blow of thine hand: O spare a little, that they may recover strength before they go hence, and be no more seen.[r]

Those who are chastened with pain upon their bed, and the multitude of their bones with strong pain, so that their life abhorreth bread, and their soul dainty meat, shew them thine uprightness, be gracious to them. Deliver them from going down to the pit, for thou hast found a ransom.[s]

Let the eternal God be their refuge, and underneath them be the everlasting arms.[t] Consider their frame, remember that they are but dust.[u]

O deliver those that are thine in the time of trouble, preserve them, and keep them alive: O strengthen them upon their bed of languishing, and make their bed in their sickness: be merciful to them, and heal their souls, for they have sinned.[x]

O turn to them, and have mercy upon them, bring them out of their distresses, look upon their affliction and their pain, but especially forgive all their sin.[a]

Make thy face to shine upon them; save them for thy mercy's sake.[b] The God that comforteth them that are cast down,[c] comfort them; and let the soul dwell at ease in thee,[d] when the body lies in pain.

If it be the beginning of a distemper,—Lord, set bounds to this sickness, and say, Hitherto shall it come, and no further;[e] let it not prevail to extremity, but in measure, when it shooteth forth, do thou debate, and stay thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind; and by this let iniquity be purged, and let this be all the fruit, even the taking away of sin.[f]

If it have continued long,—Lord, let patience have its perfect work,[g] even unto long-suffering, that those who have been long in the furnace may continue hoping, and quietly waiting for the salvation of the Lord:[h] let tribulation work patience, and patience experience, and experience a hope that maketh not ashamed,[i] and enable them to call even this affliction light, and but for a moment, seeing it to work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.[k]

If there be hopes of recovery,—Lord, when thou hast tried them, let them come forth like gold;[l] let their souls live, and they shall praise thee, let thy judgments help them:[m] O deal bountifully with them, that they may live and keep thy word. In love to their souls deliver them from the pit of corruption, and cast all their sins behind thy back.[n] Recover them and make them to live. Speak the word, and they shall be healed;[o] say unto them, Live, yea, say unto them, Live, and the time shall be a time of love.[p] Father, if it be possible, let the cup pass away; however, not as we will, but as thou wilt. The will of the Lord be done.[q] Perfect that which concerns them. Thy mercy, O Lord, endures for ever; forsake not the work of thine own hands,[r] but whether they live or die let them be the Lord's.[s]

If they be in appearance at the point of death,—Now the flesh and the heart are failing, Lord, be thou the strength of the heart,[t] and an everlasting portion: in the valley of the shadow of death,[u] Lord, be thou present, as the good Shepherd, with a guiding rod, and a supporting staff. O do not fail them nor forsake them now:[x] be a very present help.[y] Into thy hands we commit the departing spirit,[z] as into the hands of a faithful Creator,[a] by the hands of him who has redeemed it. Let it be carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.[b] Let it be presented to thee without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.[c] Lord Jesus, receive this precious soul,[d] let it come to the spirits of just men made perfect;[e] when it is absent from the body, let it be present with the Lord![f] This day

[a] Mat. 8. 8, 9. [b] Heb. 4. 15. [c] Luke 5. 18. [d] Heb. 12. 5. [e] Mic. 6. 9. [f] Lev. 26. 41. [g] Job 5. 6. [h] 2 Chro. 16. 12. [i] Ps. 68. 20. [k] Job 10. 2. [l] 2 Chro. 33. 12. [m] Jer. 18. 11. [n] 1 Cor. 11. 32. [o] Ecc. 7. 3. [p] Ps. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4. [q] 1 Cor. 10. 13. [r] Ps. 39. 10, 11, 13. [s] Job 33. 19, 20, 23, 24. [t] Deut. 33. 27. [u] Ps. 103. 14. [x] Ps. 41. 1, 2, 3, 4.

[a] Ps. 25. 16, 17, 18. [b] Ps. 31. 16. [c] 2 Cor. 7. 6. [d] Ps. 25. 13. [e] Job 38. 11. [f] Isa. 27. 8, 9. [g] James 1. 4. [h] Lam. 3. 26. [i] Rom. 5. 3, 4, 5. [k] 2 Cor. 4. 17. [l] Job 23. 10. [m] Ps. 119. 175. [n] Isa. 38. 16, 17. [o] Mat. 8. 8. [p] Ezek. 16. 6, 8. [q] Mat. 26. 39. [r] Ps. 138. 8. [s] Rom. 14. 8. [t] Ps. 73. 26. [u] Ps. 23. 4. [x] Heb. 13. 5. [y] Ps. 46. 1. [z] Ps. 31. 5. [a] 1 Pet. 4. 19. [b] Luke 16. 22. [c] Eph. 5. 27. [d] Acts 7. 59. [e] Heb. 12. 23. [f] 2 Cor. 5. 8.

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let it be with thee in paradise.[a] Now let it be for ever comforted,[b] and perfectly freed from sin;[c] and prepare us to draw after, as there are innumerable before,[d] that we may be together for ever with the Lord, there where there shall be no more death, and where all tears shall be wiped away.[e]

4. When we pray with, or for those that are deprived of the use of their reason.

O look with pity upon those who are put out of the possession of their own souls,[f] whose judgment is taken away,[g] so that their soul chuseth strangling and death rather than life.[h] O restore them to themselves,[i] and their right mind.[k] Deliver them from doing themselves any harm.[l] And whatever afflictions thou layest upon any of us in this world, preserve to us the use of our reason, and the peace of our consciences.

5. When we pray with, or for sick children.

Lord, we see death reigning even over them that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;[m] but Jesus Christ hath abolished death,[n] and admitted even little children into the kingdom of God.[o] O let sick children be pitied by thee,[p] as they are by their earthly parents. They are come forth like flowers, O let them not be cut down again.[q] Turn from them, that they may rest till they shall have accomplished as a hireling their day. Be gracious to us, and let the children live.[r] However, Father, thy will be done.[s] O let their spirits be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[t]

6. When we pray with, or for families, where death is, especially such as have lost their head.

Visit the houses of mourning, as our Saviour did, and comfort them, by assuring them that Christ is the resurrection and the life,[u] that their relations which are removed from them, are not dead, but sleep;[x] and that they shall rise again, that they may not sorrow as those that have no hope:[y] and enable them to trust in the living God,[z] the rock of ages,[a] and enjoy the fountains of living waters, when creatures prove broken reeds and broken cisterns.[b]

Be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widows, O God, in thy holy habitation.[c] With thee let the fatherless find mercy;[d] keep them alive, and let the widows trust in thee,[e] that they may be widows indeed, who being desolate, trust in God, and continue instant in prayer night and day.[f] And where father and mother have forsaken,[g] let the Lord take up the children, and not leave them orphans,[h] but come to them.

7. When we pray with, or for those women that are near the time of travail, or in travail.

Lord, thou hast passed this sentence upon the woman that was first in the transgression,[i] that in sorrow she shall bring forth children.[k] But let this handmaid of thine be saved in child-bearing, and continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.[a] Enable her to cast her burthen upon the Lord, and let the Lord sustain her;[b] and what time she is afraid, grant that she may trust in thee,[c] and may encourage herself in the Lord her God.[d] O let not the root be dried up from beneath, nor let the branch be withered or cut off;[e] but let both live before thee. Be thou her strong habitation, her rock, and her fortress, give commandment to save her.[f] And when travail comes upon her, which she cannot escape,[g] be pleased, O Lord, to deliver her: O Lord make haste to help her; be thou thyself her help and deliverer, make no tarrying, O our God.[h] Let her be safely delivered, and remember the anguish no more, for joy that a child is born into the world,[i] is born unto thee.

8. When we pray with, or for those that are recovered from sickness, or are delivered in child-bearing, and desire to give thanks unto God for his mercy.

We will extol thee, O Lord, upon the account of those whom thou hast lifted up, whose souls thou hast brought up from the grave, and kept them alive, that they should not go down to the pit.[k] Those who were brought low thou hast helped, hast delivered their souls from death, their eyes from tears, and their feet from falling. Now give them grace to walk before thee in the land of the living, to offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, to call upon thy name, and to pay their vows unto the Lord.[l]

The grave cannot thus praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth; but the living, the living they shall praise thee, as we do this day.[m] Lord, grant that those who are delivered from death may not be as the nine lepers, who did not return to give thanks;[n] or as Hezekiah, who rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him;[o] but that they may so offer praise, as to glorify thee, and so order their conversation, as to see the salvation of God.[p]

Those whom the Lord hath chastened sore, yet he has not delivered over unto death: O that they may therefore praise him, who is become their salvation.[q]

9. When we pray with, or for those parents whose children are a grief to them, or such as they are in fear about.

Lord, give to parents the desire of their souls concerning their children, which is to see them walking in the truth;[r] form Christ in their souls.[s] O give them betimes to know the God of their fathers, and to serve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.[t] Let children of the youth, that are as arrows in the hand, be directed aright, that those parents may have reason to think themselves happy that have their quiver full of them, and they may never be arrows in the heart.[u]

Let those foolish children, who are the grief of the father, and the heaviness of her that bare them,[x] who

[a] Luke 23. 43. [b] Luke 16. 25. [c] Rom. 6. 7. [d] Job 21. 33. [e] Rev. 21. 4. [f] Luke 21. 19. [g] Job 27. 2. [h] Job 7. 15. [i] Luke 15. 17. [k] Mat. 5. 15. [l] Acts 16. 28. [m] Rom. 5. 14. [n] 2 Tim. 1. 10. [o] Mat. 18. 3. [p] Ps. 103. 13. [q] Job 14. 2, 6. [r] 2 Sam. 12. 22. [s] Acts 21. 14. [t] 1 Cor. 5. 5. [u] John 11. 25. [x] Mat. 9. 24. [y] 1 Thess. 4. 13. [z] 1 Tim. 6. 17. [a] Ps. 26. 4. [b] Jer. 2. 13. [c] Ps. 68. 5. [d] Hos. 14. 3. [e] Jer. 49. 11. [f] 1 Tim. 5. 5. [g] Ps. 27. 10. [h] John 14. 18. [i] 1 Tim. 2. 14. [k] Gen. 3. 16.

[a] 1 Tim. 2. 15. [b] Ps. 55. 22. [c] Ps. 56. 3. [d] 1 Sam. 30. 6. [e] Job 18. 16. [f] Ps. 71. 3. [g] 1 Thess. 5. 3. [h] Ps. 40. 13, 17. [i] John 16. 21. [k] Ps. 30. 1, 3. [l] Ps. 116. 6, 8, 9, 17, 18. [m] Isa. 38. 18, 19. [n] Luke 17. 18. [o] 2 Chro. 32. 25. [p] Ps. 50. 23. [q] Ps. 118. 18, 21. [r] 2 John 4. [s] Gal. 4. 19. [t] 1 Chro. 28. 9. [u] Ps. 127. 4, 5. [x] Pro. 17. 25.

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mock at their parents, and despise to obey[a] them, be brought to repentance; and let those who have been unprofitable, now at length be made profitable.[b] O turn the hearts of the children to their fathers,[c] even the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that they may be made ready a people prepared for the Lord.[d] O shew them their work, and their transgression, that they have exceeded,[e] and open their ear to discipline.[f]

10. When we pray with, or for those that are in prison.

Those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron, because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most high, give them grace to cry unto thee in their trouble,[g] and in a day of adversity to consider.[h]

In their captivity give them to bethink themselves, to humble themselves, and pray, and seek thy face, to repent, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely,[i] and to return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul; and bring their souls out of prison, that they may praise thy name.[k] Bring them into the glorious liberty of the children of God, out of the bondage of corruption.[l] Let the Son make them free, and then they shall be free indeed.[m]

Those who are wrongfully imprisoned, be thou with them, as thou wast with Joseph in the prison, and shew them mercy.[n] Hear the poor, and despise not thy prisoners,[o] but let their sorrowful sighing come before thee, and according to the greatness of thy power preserve those that are unjustly appointed to die.

11. When we pray with, or for condemned malefactors, that have but a little while to live.

O look with pity upon those, the number of whose months is to be cut off in the midst[p] for their sin: O give them repentance unto salvation,[q] as thou didst to the thief upon the cross, that they may own the justice of God in all that is brought upon them, that he has done right, but they have done wickedly.[r] O turn them, and they shall be turned,[s] that being instructed they may smite upon the thigh, and may be ashamed, yea, even confounded, because they do bear the reproach of their own iniquity. O pluck them as brands out of the fire;[t] let them be delivered from the wrath to come.[u]

Enable them to give glory to God by making confession,[x] that they may find mercy, and that others may hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously.[y]

Lord Jesus, remember them now thou art in thy kingdom.[z] O let them not be hurt of the second death.[a] Deliver them from going down to that pit.[b] Though the flesh be destroyed, O let the spirit be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.[c] The God of infinite mercy be merciful to these sinners,[d]—sinners against their own souls.[e]

[a] Pro. 30. 17. [b] Philem. 11. [c] Mal. 4. 6. [d] Luke 1. 17. [e] Job 36. 9. [f] Isa. 48. 8, 9. [g] Ps. 107. 10, 11, 13. [h] Ecc. 7. 14. [i] 1 Kin. 8. 47. [k] Ps. 142. 7. [l] Rom. 8. 21. [m] John 8. 36. [n] Gen. 39. 21. [o] Ps. 69. 33. [p] Job 21. 21. [q] 2 Cor. 7. 10. [r] Neh. 9. 33. [s] Jer. 31. 18, 19. [t] Jude 23. [u] 1 Thes. 1. 10. [x] Josh. 7. 19. [y] Deut. 17. 13. [z] Luke 23. 42. [a] Rev. 2. 11. [b] Job 33. 24. [c] 1 Cor. 5. 5. [d] Luke 18. 13. [e] Num. 16. 38.

12. When we pray with, or for those who are at sea.

Let those who go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, observe the works of the Lord there, and his wonders in the deep:[a] and acknowledge what a Great God he is whom the winds and the seas obey;[b] who hath placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over.[c]

O preserve them through the paths of the seas,[d] and in perils by waters, and perils by robbers.[e] If the stormy wind be raised, which lifteth up the waves, so that they are at their wit's end, deliver them out of their distresses, make the storm a calm, and bring them to their desired haven: and, O that those who are delivered may praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.[f]

CHAP. VII.

Of the Conclusion of our Prayers.

We are commanded to pray always, to pray without ceasing, to continue in prayer, because we must always have in us a disposition to this duty, must be constant to it, and never grow weary of it, or throw it up; and yet we cannot be always praying, we must come down from this mount; nor may we be over long, so as to make the duty a task, or a toil to ourselves, or those who join with us. We have other work that calls for our attendance. Jacob wrestles with the angel; but he must go, for the day breaks. We must therefore think of concluding. The prayers of David the son of Jesse must be ended. But how shall we conclude, so as to have the impressions of the duty keep always in the imagination of the thought of our heart.

1. We may then sum up our requests in some comprehensive petitions, as the conclusion of the whole matter.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Christ Jesus.[g]

Now the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.[h]

And the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered a while, make us perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle us.[i]

And now, Lord, what wait we for? Truly our hope

[a] Ps. 107. 23, 24. [b] Matt. 8. 27. [c] Jer. 5. 22. [d] Ps. 8. 8. [e] 2 Cor. 11. 26. [f] Ps. 107. 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. [g] Heb. 13. 20, 21. [h] 2 Thes. 3. 5. [i] 1 Pet. 5. 10.

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is even in thee,[a] and on thee do we depend to be to us a God All-sufficient.[b]

Do for us exceeding abundantly above what we are able to ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:[c] and supply all our need according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus.[d]

2. We may then beg for the audience and acceptance of our poor weak prayers, for Christ's sake.

Now the God of Israel grant us the things we have requested of him.[e]

Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.[f]

Let thine eyes be open unto the supplication of thy servants, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call unto thee for; for they be thy people and thine inheritance.[g]

O our God, let thine ears be attent unto the prayers that we have made: O turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant;[h] even Jesus, who is at thy right hand making intercession for us.

Lord, thou hast assured us, that whatever we ask the Father in Christ's name, he will give it us:[i] we ask all these things in that name, that powerful name, which is above every name;[k] that precious name, which is as ointment poured forth.[l] O make thy face to shine upon us for the Lord's sake,[m] who is the Son of thy love, and whom thou hearest always.[n] Good Lord, give us to hear him, and be well pleased with us in him.[o]

3. We may then beg for the forgiveness of what has been amiss in our prayers.

Lord, we have not prayed as we ought;[p] who is there that does good, and sins not?[q] Even when we would do good, evil is present with us; and if to will be present, yet how to perform that which is good, we know not;[r] for the good that we would, we do not; so that thou mightest justly refuse to hear even when we make many prayers.[s] But we have a Great High-Priest, who bears the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts;[t] for his sake take away all that iniquity from us, even all the iniquity of our holy things, and receive us graciously, and love us freely;[u] and deal not with us after our folly.[x]

4. We may then recommend ourselves to the conduct, protection, and government of the divine grace, in the further services that lie before us, and in the whole course of our conversation.

And now let us be enabled to go from strength to strength, until we appear before God in Zion, and while we pass through this valley of Baca, let it be made a well, and let the rain of the divine grace and blessing fill the pools.[a]

Now speak, Lord, for thy servants hear.[b] What saith our Lord unto his servants?[c] Grant that we may not turn away our ear from hearing the law; for then our prayers will be an abomination;[d] but may hearken unto God, that he may hearken unto us.[e]

And now the Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers; let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments;[f] and let our hearts be perfect with the Lord our God all our days, and continue so till the end be, that then we may rest, and may stand in our lot, and let it be a blessed lot in the end of the days.[g]

5. We may conclude all with doxologies or solemn praises of God, ascribing honour and glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and sealing up all our praises and prayers with an affectionate Amen.

Now, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting,[h] Amen and Amen.

For ever blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.[i] Yea, let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah.[k]

To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever, Amen.[l]

Now to God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, be Glory for ever and ever, Amen.[m]

To God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen.[n]

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, Amen.[o] To him be honour and power everlasting,[p] to him be glory and dominion, Amen.[q]

Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever, Amen.[r]

Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God, Amen, Hallelujah.[s]

And now, we prostrate our souls before the throne, and worship God, saying, Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.[t]

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the

[a] Ps. 39. 7. [b] Gen. 17. 1. [c] Eph. 3. 20. [d] Phil. 4. 19. [e] 1 Sam. 1. 17. [f] Ps. 19. 14. [g] 1 Kings 8. 52. [h] 2 Chro. 6. 40, 42 [i] John 16. 23. [k] Phil. 2. 9. [l] Cant. 1. 3. [m] Dan. 9. 17. [n] John 11. 42. [o] Matt. 17. 5. [p] Rom. 8. 26. [q] Ecc. 7. 20. [r] Rom. 7. 18, 19. [s] Isa. 1. 15. [t] Exod. 28. 38. [u] Hos. 14. 2. [x] Job 42. 8.

[a] Ps. 84. 6, 7. [b] 1 Sam. 3. 9. [c] Josh. 5. 14. [d] Pro. 28. 9. [e] Judg 9. 7. [f] 1 Kings 8. 57, 58. [g] Dan. 12. 13. [h] Ps. 41. 13. [i] Ps. 72. 18, 19. [k] Ps. 106. 48. [l] Rom. 16. 27. [m] Gal. 1. 3, 4, 5. [n] Eph. 3. 21. [o] 1 Tim. 1. 17. [p] 1 Tim. 6. 16. [q] 1 Pet. 5. 11. [r] Jude 24, 25. [s] Rev. 19. 1, 4. [t] Rev. 7. 11, 12.

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Lamb for ever and ever;[a] and let the whole creation say, Amen, Amen.

6. It is very proper to sum up our prayers in that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples.

Our Father which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.[b]

CHAP. VIII.

A Paraphrase on the LORD'S PRAYER, *in Scripture Expressions.*

THE Lord's Prayer being intended not only for a form of prayer itself, but a rule of direction, a plan or model in miniature, by which we may frame our prayers; and the expressions being remarkably concise, and yet vastly comprehensive, it will be of good use sometimes to lay it before us, and observing the method and order of it, to dilate upon the several passages and petitions of it, that when we use it only as a form, we may use it the more intelligently; of which we shall only here give a specimen in the assistance we may have from some other scriptures.

Our Father which art in Heaven.

O Lord our God, doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; O Lord, thou art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting;[c] and we will from this time cry unto thee, our Father, thou art the guide of our youth.[d]

Have we not all one Father, has not one God created us?[e] Thou art the Father of our spirits, to whom we ought to be in subjection and live.[f]

Thou art the Father of lights,[g] and the Father of mercies,[h] and the God of all consolation: the eternal Father,[i] of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things.[k]

Thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,[l] whose Glory was that of the only begotten of the Father, who is in his bosom, by him as one brought up with him, daily his delight, and rejoicing always before him.[n]

Thou art in Christ our Father, and the Father of all believers, whom thou hast predestinated to the adoption of children,[o] and into whose hearts thou hast sent the Spirit of the Son, teaching them to cry, Abba Father.[p] Behold what manner of love the Father, hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God.[a] That the Lord God Almighty should be to us a Father, and we should be to him for sons and daughters;[b] and that as many as receive Christ, to them thou shouldst give power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which are born, not of the will of man, but of God,[c] and his grace.

O that we may receive the adoption of sons,[d] and that as obedient and genuine children we may fashion ourselves according to the example of him who hath called us, who is holy;[e] and may be followers of God as dear children,[f] and conformed to the image of his Son, who is the first-born among many brethren.[g]

Enable us to come to thee with humble boldness and confidence,[h] as to a Father, a tender Father, who spares us as a man spares his son that serves him;[i] and as having an advocate with the Father,[k] who yet has told us, that the Father himself loves us.[l]

Thou art a Father, but where is thine honour?[m] Lord, give us grace to serve thee as becomes children, with reverence and godly fear.[n]

Thou art a Father; and if earthly parents, being evil, yet know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?[o] Lord, give us the spirit of grace and supplication.[p]

We come to thee as prodigal children, who have gone from our Father's house into a far country; but we will arise and go to our Father, for in his house there is bread enough, and to spare, and if we continue at a distance from him, we perish with hunger. Father, we have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and are no more worthy to be called thy children, make us even as thy hired servants.[q]

Thou art our Father in Heaven, and therefore unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our souls. Unto thee we lift up our eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. As the eyes of a servant are to the hand of his master, and the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress, so do our eyes wait upon thee, O Lord our God;[r] a God whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain,[s] and yet to whom we may have access, having a High-priest that is passed into the heavens, as our fore-runner.[t]

Thou, O God, dwellest in the high and holy place,[u] and holy and reverend is thy name.[x] God is in heaven, and we upon earth,[y] therefore should we chuse out words to reason with him;[z] and yet through a mediator we have boldness to enter into the holiest.[a]

Look down, we pray thee, from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory,[b] and have compassion upon us, and help us.[c]

Heaven is the firmament of thy power: O hear us

[a] Rev. 5. 13. [b] Mat. 6. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. [c] Isa. 63. 16. [d] Jer. 3. 4. [e] Mal. 2. 10. [f] Heb. 12. 9. [g] Jam. 1. 17. [h] 2 Cor. 1. 3. [i] Isa. 9. 6. [k] Rom. 11. 36. [l] Eph. 1. 3. [m] John 1. 14, 18. [n] Pro. 8. 30. [o] Eph. 1. 5. [p] Gal. 4. 6.

[a] 1 John 3. 1. [b] 2 Cor. 6. 18. [c] John 1. 12, 13. [d] Gal. 4. 5. [e] 1 Pet. 1. 14, 15. [f] Eph. 5. 1. [g] Rom. 8. 29. [h] Eph. 3. 12. [i] Mal. 3. 17. [k] 1 John 2. 1. [l] John 16. 27. [m] Mal. 1. 6. [n] Heb. 12. 28. [o] Luke 11. 13. [p] Zech. 12. 10. [q] Luke 15. 13, 17, 18, 19. [r] Ps. 86. 4. Ps. 123. 1, 2. [s] 1 Kings 8. 27. [t] Heb. 4. 14. [u] Isa. 57. 15. [x] Ps. 111. 9. [y] Ecc. 5. 2. [z] Job 9. 14. [a] Heb. 10. 19. [b] Isa. 63. 15. [c] Mark 9. 22.

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from thy holy heaven, with the saving strength of thy right hand; send us help from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of Zion.[a]

And, O that since heaven is our Father's house,[b] we may have our conversation there,[c] and may seek the things that are above.[d]

Hallowed be thy Name.

And now, what is our petition, and what is our request?[e] What would we that thou shouldest do for us?[f] This is our hearts' desire and prayer[g] in the first place, Father in Heaven, let thy name be sanctified.[h] We pray that thou mayest be glorified as a Holy God.

We desire to exalt the Lord our God, to worship at his footstool, at his holy hill, and to praise his great and terrible name, for it is holy, for the Lord our God is holy.[i] Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.[k]

We glory in thy holy name, and therefore shall our hearts rejoice,[l] because we have trusted in that holy name of thine,[m] to which we will always give thanks, and triumph in thy praise.[n]

Lord, enable us to glorify thy holy name for evermore, by praising thee with all our hearts,[o] and by bringing forth much fruit, for herein is our heavenly Father glorified.[p] O that we may be to our God for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory,[q] that being called out of darkness into his marvellous light, to be to him a peculiar people, we may shew forth the praises of him that hath called us.[r]

O that we may be thy children, the work of thy hands, that we may sanctify thy name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and fear the God of Israel,[s] and may be to the praise of his glory.[t]

Enable us, as we have received the gift, so to minister the same as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: and if we suffer, enable us to suffer as Christians, and to glorify God therein;[u] for this is our earnest expectation and hope, that always Jesus Christ may be magnified in our bodies in life and death.[x]

Lord, enable others to glorify thee, let even the strong people glorify thee, and the city of the terrible nations fear thee;[y] but especially let the Lord be magnified from the border of Israel.[z] Let them glorify the Lord in the fires, even the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.[a] O let all nations whom thou hast made, come and worship before thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name; for thou art great, and dost wondrous things, thou art God alone.[b]

O let the gentiles glorify God for his mercy, let his name be known and confessed among the gentiles, and let them rejoice with his people.[a] O let thy name be great among the gentiles,[b] and let all the ends of the world remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations worship before thee; and let them declare thy righteousness to a people that shall be born.[c]

Lord, do thou thyself dispose of all things to thy own glory, both as King of nations[d], and as King of saints:[e] do all according to the counsel of thy own will,[f] that thou mayest magnify thyself, and sanctify thyself, and mayest be known in the eyes of many nations, that thou art the Lord.[g] O sanctify thy great name, which has been profaned among the heathen, and let them know that thou art the Lord, when thou shalt be sanctified in them.[h]

Father, glorify thine own name: thou hast glorified it, glorify it again.[i] Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.[k] O give him a name above every name,[l] and in all places, and in all things let him have the pre-eminence.[m]

Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name?[n] Do this for thy great name; Pour out of thy Spirit upon all flesh;[o] and let the word of Christ dwell richly in the hearts of all.[p] Be thou exalted, O Lord, among the heathen, be thou exalted in the earth;[q] be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, let thy glory be above all the earth;[r] be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength, so will we sing and praise thy power.[s] Do great things with thy glorious and everlasting arm, to make unto thyself a glorious and an everlasting name.[t]

O let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel.[u]

Thy Kingdom come.

In order to the sanctifying and glorifying of thy holy name, Father in heaven, let thy kingdom come, for thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all: both riches and honour come of thee; thou reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and might; in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.[x] And we desire to speak of the glorious majesty of thy kingdom, for it is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endures throughout all generations.[y] Thou rulest by thy power for ever, thine eyes behold the nations. O let not the rebellious exalt themselves,[z] but through the greatness of thy power let thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.[a]

O make it to appear that the kingdom is thine, and that thou art the governor among the nations, so evident, that they may say among the heathen, The Lord reigneth;[b] that all men may fear, and may declare the works of God,[c] and may say, Verily he is a God

[a] Ps. 20. 2, 6. [b] John 14. 2. [c] Phil 3. 20. [d] Col. 3. 1. [e] Est. 5. 6. [f] Mat. 20. 32. [g] Rom. 10. 1. [h] Lev. 10. 3. [i] Ps. 99. 3, 5, 9. [k] Ps. 22. 3. [l] Ps. 105. 3. [m] Ps. 33. 21. [n] Ps. 106. 47. [o] Ps. 86. 12. [p] John 15. 8. [q] Jer. 13. 11. [r] 1 Pet. 2. 9. [s] Isa. 29. 23. Eph. 1. 12. [u] 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11, 16. [x] Phil. 1. 20. [y] Isa. 25. 3. [z] Mal. 1. 5. [a] Isa. 24. 15. [b] Ps. 86. 9, 10.

[a] Rom. 15. 9, 10. [b] Mal. 1. 11. [c] Ps. 22. 27, 31. [d] Jer. 10. 7. [e] Rev. 15. 3. [f] Eph. 1. 11. [g] Ezek. 38. 23. [h] Ezek. 36. 23. [i] John 12. 27, 28. [k] John 17. 1. [l] Phil. 2. 9. [m] Col. 1. 18. [n] Josh. 7. 9. [o] Joel 2. 28. [p] Col. 3. 16. [q] Ps. 46. 10. [r] Ps. 57. 11. [s] Ps. 21. 13. [t] Isa. 63. 12, 14. [u] 1 Chro. 17. 24. [x] 1 Chro. 29. 11, 12. [y] Ps. 145. 12, 13. [z] Ps. 66. 7. [a] Ps. 66. 3. [b] Ps. 96. 10. [c] Ps. 64. 9.

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that judgeth in the earth.[a] Make all the kings of the earth to know that the heavens do rule, even that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and to praise and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.[b]

O let the kingdom of thy grace come more and more in the world, that kingdom of God which cometh not with observation, that kingdom of God which is within men.[c] Let it be like leaven in the world, diffusing its relish till the whole be leavened, and like a grain of mustard seed, which, though it be the least of all seeds, yet when it is grown, is the greatest among herbs.[d]

Let the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. Take unto thyself thy great power, and reign, though the nations be angry.[e] Set up thy throne there where Satan's seat is,[f] let every thought be brought into obedience to thee,[g] and let the law of thy kingdom be magnified and made honourable.[h]

Let that kingdom of God, which is not in word, but in power,[i] be set up in all the churches of Christ. Send forth the rod of thy strength out of thy Zion, and rule by the beauty of holiness.[k]

Where the strong man armed hath long kept his palace, and his goods are in peace, let Christ who is stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him, and take from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divide the spoil.[l]

O give to the son of man dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages may serve him, and the judgment may be given to the saints of the Most High.[m]

Let the kingdom of thy grace come more and more in our land, and the places where we live. There let the word of the Lord have free course, and be glorified,[n] and let not the kingdom of God be taken from us, as we have deserved it should, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.[o]

Let the kingdom of thy grace come into our hearts, that they may be the temples of the Holy Ghost.[p] Let no iniquity have dominion over us.[q] Overturn, overturn, overturn the power of corruption there, and let him come whose right our hearts are, and give them him;[r] make us willing, more and more willing, in the day of thy power.[s] Rule in us by the power of truth, that being of the truth, we may always hear Christ's voice,[t] and may not only call him Lord, Lord, but do the things that he saith.[u] And let the love of Christ command us, and constrain us,[x] and his fear be before our eyes, that we sin not.[y]

O let the kingdom of thy glory be hastened; we believe it will come, we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, to come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;[a] we hope that he shall appear to our joy;[b] we love his appearing;[c] we are looking for, and hasting to the coming of the day of God;[d] make us ready for it,[e] that we may then lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption draws nigh.[f] And, O that we may have such first-fruits of the Spirit, that we ourselves may groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, even the redemption of our body;[g] and may have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is best of all.[h]

Blessed Jesus, be with thy ministers and people (as thou hast said) always even unto the end of the world.[i] and then, as thou hast said, Surely, I come quickly; Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly:[k] when the mystery of God shall be finished,[l] make haste our beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.[m]

Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.

And as an evidence that thy kingdom comes, and in order to the sanctifying of thy name, Father in heaven, let thy holy will be done. We know, O Lord, that whatsoever thou pleasest, that thou doest in heaven, and in earth, in the sea, and in all deep places;[a] thy counsel shall stand, and thou wilt do all thy pleasure:[o] Even so be it, Holy Father, not our will, but thine be done.[p] As thou hast thought, so let it come to pass; and as thou hast purposed, let it stand.[q] Do all according to the counsel of thine own will.[r] Make even those to serve thy purposes who have not known thee,[s] and who mean not so, neither doth their heart think so.[t]

Father, let thy will be done concerning us and ours: Behold here we are; It is the Lord, let him do to us as seemeth good unto him;[u] The will of the Lord be done.[x] O give us to submit to thy will in conformity to the example of the Lord Jesus, who said, Not as I will, but as thou wilt;[y] and to say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.[z] Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?[a]

Father, let the Scriptures be fulfilled;[b] the Scriptures of the prophets, which cannot be broken.[c] Though heaven and earth pass away, let not one iota or tittle of thy word pass away.[d] Do what is written in the Scriptures of Truth, and let it appear that for ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.[e]

Lord, give grace to each of us to know and do the will of our Father which is in heaven.[f] This is the will of God, even our sanctification.[g] Now the God of peace sanctify us wholly.[h] O let us be filled with the knowledge of thy will in all wisdom and spiritual

[a] Ps. 58. 11. [b] Dan. 4. 25, 26, 37. [c] Luke 17. 20, 21. [d] Matt. 13. 31, 32, 33. [e] Rev. 11. 15, 17. [f] Rev. 2. 13. [g] 2 Cor. 10. 5. [h] Isa. 42. 21. [i] 1 Cor. 4. 20. [k] Ps. 110. 2, 3. [l] Luke 11. 21, 22. Dan. 7. 14, 22. [m] 2 Thes. 3. 1. [o] Matt. 21. 43. [p] 1 Cor. 3. 16. [q] Ps. 119. 133. [r] Ezek. 21. 27. [s] Ps. 110. 3. [t] John 18. 37. [u] Luke 6. 46. [x] 2 Cor. 5. 14. [y] Exod. 20. 20.

[a] Mat. 24. 30. [b] Isa. 66. 5. [c] 2 Tim. 4. 8. [d] 2 Pet. 3. 12. [e] Matt. 24. 44. [f] Luke 21. 28. [g] Rom. 8. 23. [h] Phil. 1. 23. [i] Matt. 28. 20. [k] Rev. 22. 20. [l] Rev. 10. 7. [m] Cant. 8. 14. [n] Ps. 135. 6. [o] Isa. 46. 10. [p] Luke 22. 42. [q] Isa. 14. 24. [r] Eph. 1. 12. [s] Isa. 45. 4. [t] Isa. 10. 7. [u] 2 Sam. 15. 26. [x] Acts 21. 14. [y] Matt. 26. 39. [z] Job 1. 21. [a] Job 2. 10. [b] Matt. 26. 56. [c] John 10. 35. [d] Matt. 24. 35. [e] Ps. 119. 89. [f] Matt. 12. 50. [g] 1 Thess. 4. 3. [h] 1 Thess. 5. 23.

understanding,

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understanding,[a] and make us perfect in every good work to do thy will.[b] O let the time past of our life suffice us to have wrought the will of the flesh,[c] and to have walked according to the course of this world:[d] and henceforth grant that it may always be our meat and drink to do the will of our Father,[e] and to finish his work;[f] not to do our own will, but his that sent us, that we may be of those that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,[g] and not those that shall be beaten with many stripes.

Lord, give grace to others also, to know and do thy will; to prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;[h] not to be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;[i] and then give them to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.[k] And let us all serve our generations according to that will.[l] And when we have done the will of God, let us inherit the promises;[m] and let that part of the will of God be done; Lord, let the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servants be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.[n]

We rejoice that thy will is done in Heaven; that the holy angels do thy commandments, and always hearken to the voice of thy word,[o] that they always behold the face of our Father:[p] and we lament that thy will is so little done on earth, so many of the children of men being led captive by Satan at his will.[q] O that this earth may be made more like to heaven! And saints more like to the holy angels! And that we who hope to be shortly as the angels of God in heaven,[r] may now, like them, not rest from praising him;[s] may now, like them, resist and withstand Satan; may be as a flame of fire,[t] and fly swiftly,[u] and may go strait forward whithersoever the Spirit goes;[x] may minister for the good of others, and thus may come into communion with the innumerable company of angels.[y]

Give us this day our daily bread.

Thou, O God, who hast appointed us to seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, hast promised that if we do so, other things shall be added unto us:[z] and therefore, having prayed for the sanctifying of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, and the doing of thy will, we next pray, Father in Heaven, give us this day, give us day by day our daily bread.[a]

Remove far from us vanity and lies: give us neither poverty nor riches; feed us with food convenient for us,[b] lest we be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or, lest we be poor and steal, and take the name of our God in vain.

Lord, we ask not for dainties, for they are deceitful meat;[c] nor do we pray that we may fare sumptuously every day, for we would not in our life time receive our good things;[a] but we pray for that bread which is necessary to strengthen man's heart.[b] We desire not to eat the bread of deceit,[c] nor to drink any stolen waters,[d] nor would we eat the bread of idleness,[e] but that if it be thy will we may eat the labour of our hands,[f] that with quietness we may work, and eat our own bread;[g] and having food and raiment, give us to be therewith content,[h] and to say, We have all, and abound.[i]

Bless, Lord, our substance, and accept the work of our hands;[k] and give us wherewithal to provide for our own, even for those of our own house,[l] and to leave an inheritance, as far as is just to our children's children.[m] Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.[n] Bless, Lord, our land with the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof; but above all let us have the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, even the blessing that was upon the head of Joseph, and upon the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.[o]

But if the fig-tree should not blossom, and there should be no fruit in the vine; if the labour of the olive should fail, and the field should yield no meat, if the flock should be cut off from the fold, and there should be no herd in the stall, yet let us have grace to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of our salvation.[p]

Father, we ask not for bread for a great while to come, but that we may have this day our daily bread; for we would learn, and the Lord teach us, not to take thought for the morrow, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be cloathed, but we cast the care upon thee, our heavenly Father, who knowest that we have need of all these things; who feedest the fowls of the air, though they sow not, neither do they reap, and wilt much more feed us, who are of more value than many sparrows.[q]

Nor do we pray for daily bread for ourselves only, but for others also. O satisfy thy poor with bread.[r] Let all that walk righteously and speak uprightly dwell on high: let the place of their defence be the munition of rocks, let bread be given to them, and let their waters be sure.[s]

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And, Lord, as duly as we pray every day for our daily bread, we pray for the forgiveness of our sins; for we are all guilty before God, have all sinned, and have come short of the glory of God.[t] In many things we all offend every day.[u] Who can tell how often he offends? If thou shouldest mark iniquities, O

[a] Col. 1. 9. [b] Heb. 13. 21. [c] 1 Pet. 4. 3. [d] Eph. 2. 2. [e] John 4. 34. [f] John 6. 38. [g] Matt. 7. 21. [h] Rom. 12. 2. [i] Eph. 5. 17. [k] Col. 4. 12. [l] Acts 13. 36. [m] Heb. 10. 36. [n] 1 Chron. 17. 27. [o] Ps. 103. 20. [p] Matt. 18. 10. [q] 2 Tim. 2. 26. [r] Matt. 22. 30. [s] Rev. 4. 8. [t] Ps. 104. 4. [u] Dan. 9. 21. [x] Ezek. 1. 9, 12. [y] Heb. 12. 22. [z] Mat. 6. 33. [a] Luke 11. 3. [b] Pro. 30. 8, 9. [c] Pro. 23. 3.

[a] Luke 16. 19, 25. [b] Ps. 104. 15. [c] Pro. 20. 17. [d] Pro. 9. 17. [e] Pro. 31. 27. [f] Ps. 128. 2. [g] 2 Thess. 3. 12. [h] 1 Tim. 6. 8. [i] Phil. 4. 18. [k] Deut. 33. 11. [l] 1 Tim. 5. 8. [m] Pro. 13. 22. [n] Ps. 90. 17. [o] Deut. 33. 13, 16. [p] Hab. 3. 17. 18. [q] Matt. 6. 31. 32. [r] Ps. 132. 15. [s] Isa. 33. 15, 16. [t] Rom. 3. 19, 23. [u] Jam. 3. 2.

Lord,

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Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared[a]. God be merciful to us sinners.

We have wasted our Lord's goods[b], we have buried the talents we were entrusted with[c], nor have we rendered again according to the benefit done unto us[d], and thus we come to be in debt. The Scripture has concluded us all under sin[e]; we have done such things as are worthy of death[f], things for which the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience[g]. Our debt is more than ten thousand talents, it is a great debt, and we have nothing to pay, so far are we from being able to say, Have patience with us, and we will pay thee all[h]. Justly therefore might our adversary deliver us to the judge, and the judge to the officer, to be cast into prison, the prison of hell, till we pay the last farthing[i].

But blessed be God, there is a way found out of agreeing with our adversary; for if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins[k]. For his sake, we pray thee, blot out all our transgressions[l], and enter not into judgment with us[m]. He is our surety[n], who restored that which he took not away[o], that blessed Days-man, which hath laid his hand upon us both[p], through him let us be reconciled unto God[q], and let the hand-writing which was against us, which was contrary to us, be blotted out, and taken out of the way, being nailed to the cross of Christ[r], that we may be quickened together with Christ, having all our trespasses forgiven us. Be thou merciful to our unrighteousnesses, and our sins and our iniquities do thou remember no more[s].

And give us, we pray thee to receive the atonement[t], to know that our sins are forgiven us[u]. Speak peace to us[x], and make us to hear joy and gladness[y]. Let the blood of Christ thy Son cleanse us from all sin[z], and purge our consciences from dead works, to serve the living God[a].

And as an evidence that thou hast forgiven our sins, we pray thee give us grace to forgive our enemies, to love them that hate us, and bless them that curse us; for we acknowledge, that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father forgive our trespasses[b]; and, therefore, we forgive, Lord, we desire heartily to forgive, if we have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave us[c]. Far be it from us to say, that we will recompense evil[d], or that we should avenge ourselves[e], but we pray that all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking may be put away from us, with all malice; and that we may be kind one to another, and tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake we hope hath forgiven us[f]. O make us merciful as our Father which is in heaven is merciful, who hath promised that with the merciful, he will shew himself merciful[g].

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

And, Lord, forasmuch as there is in us a bent to backslide from thee[h], so that when our sins are forgiven, we are ready to return again to folly[i], we pray that thou wilt not only forgive us our debts, but take care of us, that we may not offend any more[k]. Lord, lead us not into temptation. We know that no man can say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God tempteth not any man[l]; but we know that God is able to make all grace abound towards us[m], and to keep us from falling, and present us faultless[n]. We, therefore, pray that thou wilt never give us up to our own heart's lusts, to walk in our own counsels[o], but restrain Satan, that roaring Lion, that goes about seeking whom he may devour[p]; and grant that we may not be ignorant of his devices[q]. O let not Satan have us, to sift us as wheat; or however let not our faith fail[r]. Let not the messengers of Satan be permitted to buffet us; but if they be, let thy grace be sufficient for us, that where we are weak, there we may be strong[s], and may be more than conquerors through him that loved us[t]. And the God of peace tread Satan under our feet, and do it shortly[u]. And since we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, let us be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might[x].

Lord grant that we may never enter into temptation[y], but having prayed, may set a watch[z]; let thy wise and good Providence so order all affairs, and all events that are concerning us, that no temptation may take us, but such as is common to men, and that we may never be tempted above what we are able[a] to discern, resist, and overcome through the grace of God. Lord, do not lay any stumbling-blocks before us[b], that we should fall upon them and perish. Let nothing be an occasion of falling to us[c], but give us that great peace which they have that love thy law, whom nothing shall offend[d].

And, lead us, we pray thee, into all truth; lead us in thy truth[e], and teach us, for thou art the God of our salvation. Shew us thy ways, O God, and teach us thy paths, the paths of righteousness; O lead us in those paths for thy name's sake, that so we may be led beside the still waters[f].

And deliver us we pray thee, from the Evil One; keep us that the Wicked One touch us not[g], that he sow not his tares[h] in the field of our hearts, that we be not ensnared by his wiles, or wounded by his fiery darts[i]; let the word of God abide in us, that we may be strong, and may overcome the Wicked One[k]

[a] Ps. 130. 3, 4. [b] Luke 16. 1. [c] Mat. 25. 18. [d] 2 Chr. 32. 25. [e] Gal. 3. 22. [f] Rom. 1. 32. [g] Eph. 5. 6. [h] Mat. 18. 24, 25, 26, 32. [i] Mat. 5. 25, 26. [k] 1 John 2. 1, 2. [l] Ps. 51. 1. [m] Ps. 143. 2. [n] Heb. 7. 22. [o] Ps. 69. 4. [p] Job 9. 33. [q] 2 Cor. 5. 20. [r] Col. 2. 13, 14. [s] Heb. 8. 12. [t] Rom. 5. 11. [u] 1 John 2. 12. [x] Ps. 85. 8. [y] Ps. 51. 8. [z] 1 John 1. 7. [a] Heb. 9. 14. [b] Mat. 5. 44. Mat. 6. 15. [c] Col. 3. 13. [d] Pro. 20 22. [e] Rom. 12. 19. [f] Eph. 4. 31. 32.

[a] Ps. 18. 25. [b] Hos. 11. 7. [c] Ps. 85. 8. [d] Job. 34. 3. [e] Jam. 1. 13. [f] 2 Cor. 9. 8. [g] Jude 24. [h] Ps. 81. 12. [i] 1 Pet. 5. 8. [k] 2 Cor. 2. 11. [l] Luke 22. 31, 32. [m] 2 Cor. 12. 7, 9, 10. [n] Rom. 8. 37. [o] Rom. 16. 20. [p] Eph. 6. 10. 12. [q] Mat. 26. 41. [r] Neh. 4. 9. [s] 1 Cor. 10. 31. [t] Jer. 6. 21. [u] Rom. 14. 13. [x] Ps. 119. 165. [y] John 16. 13. [z] Ps. 25. 4. 5. Ps. 23. 2, 3. [a] 1 John 5. 18. [b] Mat. 13. 25. [c] Eph. 6. 11, 16. [d] 1 John 2. 14.

Deliver

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Deliver us from every evil thing, we pray, that we may do no evil[a]: O deliver us from every evil work[b], save us from our sins[c], redeem us from all iniquity[d], especially the sin that doth most easily beset us[e]. Hide pride from us[f]; remove from us the way of lying; let us not eat of sinners' dainties; incline our hearts to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness; and keep us that we never speak unadvisedly with our lips: but especially keep back thy servants from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over us[g].

Preserve us, we pray thee, that no evil thing may befal us; let thy hand be with us, and keep us from evil, that it may not hurt us[h]. O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee, from those that rise up against them! Shew us thy marvellous loving-kindness, and keep us as the apple of thine eye, hide us under the shadow of thy wings[i]. Keep that which we commit unto thee[k]. Thou hast delivered, dost deliver, and we trust, and pray that thou wilt yet deliver[l], wilt deliver us from all our fears[m]. O make us to dwell safely, and grant that we may be quiet from the fear of evil[n]. And bring us safe at last to that holy mountain, where there is no pricking briar, or grieving thorn[o], nothing to hurt or destroy[p].

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Father in heaven, let thy kingdom come, for thine is the kingdom, thou art God in heaven, and rulest over all the kingdoms of the heathen[q]; let thy will be done, for thine is the power, and there is nothing too hard for thee[r]: let thy name be sanctified, for thine is the glory, and thou hast set thy glory above the heavens[s].

Father in heaven, supply our wants, pardon our sins, and preserve us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, and thou art Lord over all, who are rich to all that call upon thee[t]. None can forgive sins but thou only[u]; let thy power be great[x] in pardoning our sins: and since it is the glory of God to pardon sin[y], and to help the helpless, help us, O God of our salvation; for the glory of thy name deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name sake[z].

We desire in all our prayers to praise thee, for thou art great, and greatly to be praised[a]. We praise thy kingdom, for it is an everlasting kingdom, and endures throughout all generations[b], and the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness[c]. To thee belongeth mercy, and thou renderest to every man according to his works. We praise thy power, for thou hast a mighty arm, strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand, and yet judgment and justice are the habitation of thy throne, mercy and truth shall go before thy face[a]. We praise thy glory, for the glory of the Lord shall endure for ever[b]. Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be. O let God be praised in his sanctuary, and praised in the firmament of his power; let him be praised for his mighty acts, and praised according to his excellent greatness. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Hallelujah[c].

And forasmuch as we know that he heareth us, and whatsoever we ask, according to his will, in faith, we have the petitions that we desired of him[d], we will triumph in his praise[e]. Now know we that the Lord heareth his Anointed, and for his sake will hear us from his holy Heaven with the saving strength of his right hand[f]; and therefore, in token not only of our desire, but of our assurance to be heard in Christ's name, we say, Amen, Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, &c.

CHAP. IX.

Some short Forms of PRAYER, *for the use of those who may not be able to collect for themselves out of the foregoing Materials.*

A PRAYER to be used by Children.

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee.

Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; my Father's God, and I will extol thee.

Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. When my flesh and my heart fail, thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Thou madest me for thyself, to shew forth thy praise.

But I am a sinner; I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

God be merciful to me a sinner.

O deliver me from the wrath to come, through Christ Jesus, who died for me, and rose again.

Lord, give me a new nature. Let Jesus Christ be formed in my soul, that to me to live may be Christ, and to die may be gain.

Lord, I was in my baptism given up to thee; receive me graciously, and love me freely.

Lord Jesus, thou hast encouraged little children to come to thee, and hast said, that of such is the kingdom of God; I come to thee; O make me a faithful subject of thy kingdom, take me up in thy arms, put thy hands upon me and bless me.

O give me grace to redeem me from all iniquity, and particularly from the vanity which childhood and youth are subject to.

[a] 2 Cor. 13. 7. [b] 2 Tim. 4. 18. [c] Mat. 1. 21. [d] Tit. 2. 14. [e] Heb. 12. 1. [f] Job 33. 17. [g] Ps. 119. 29. Ps. 141. 4. Ps. 119. 36. Ps. 106. 33. Ps. 19, 13. Ps. 91. 10. [h] 2 Chro. 4. 10. [i] Ps. 17. 7, 8. [k] 2 Tim. 1. 12. [l] 2 Cor. 1. 10. [m] Ps. 34. 4. [n] Pro. 1. 33. [o] Ezek. 28. 24. [p] Isa. 11. 9. [q] 2 Chro. 20. 6. [r] Jer. 32. 17. [s] Ps. 8. 1. [t] Rom. 10. 12. [u] Mark 2. 7. [x] Num. 14. 17. [y] Pro. 25. 2. [z] Ps. 79. 9. [a] Ps. 145. 3. [b] Ps. 145. 13. Ps. 45. 6, 7. [c] Ps. 62. 12.

[a] Ps. 89, 13, 14. [b] Ps. 104. 31. [c] Ps. 150. 1, 2, 6. [d] 1 John 5. 15. [e] Ps. 106. 47. [f] Ps. 20. 6.

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Lord, give me a wise and an understanding heart, that I may know and do thy will in every thing, and may in nothing sin against thee.

Lord, grant that from my childhood I may know the holy Scriptures, and may continue in the good things that I have learnt.

Remove from me the way of lying, and grant me thy law graciously.

Lord, be thou a Father to me, teach me, and guide me; provide for me, and protect me; and bless me, even me, O my father.

Bless all my relations, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and give me grace to do my duty to them in every thing.

Lord, prepare me for death, and give me wisely to consider my latter end.

O Lord, I thank thee for all thy mercies to me; for life and health, food and raiment, and for my education; for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift; blessed be God for Jesus Christ. None but Christ, none but Christ for me.

Now to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that great name into which I was baptised, be honour and glory, dominion and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

Another Paraphrase on the LORD'S PRAYER, *in the Words of the Assemblies shorter Catechism.*

OUR Father in heaven we come to thee as children to a Father able and ready to help us.

We beseech thee, Let thy name be sanctified; enable us and others to glorify thee in all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, and dispose of all things to thine own glory.

Let thy kingdom come; let Satan's kingdom be destroyed, and let the kingdom of thy grace be advanced; let us and others be brought into it, and kept in it, and let the kingdom of thy glory be hastened.

Let thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven; make us by thy grace able and willing to know, obey, and submit to thy will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; of thy free gift let us receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and let us enjoy thy blessing with them.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. We pray that for Christ's sake thou wouldest freely pardon all our sins, and that by thy grace thou wouldest enable us from the heart to forgive others.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Either keep us O Lord, from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Lord, we take our encouragement in Prayer from thyself only, and desire in our prayers to praise thee, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to thee: and in testimony of our desires and assurance to be heard through Jesus Christ, we say, Amen.

Another PRAYER *drawn out of my plain Catechism for Children; (which was first published in the Year* 1702.) *which will be easy to those Children who have learned that Catechism.*

O LORD, thou art an Infinite and Eternal Spirit, most wise and powerful, holy, just, and good.

Thou art the great God who madest the world, and art my Creator; and thou who madest me dost preserve and maintain me, and in thee I live, and move, and have my being. O that I may remember thee as my Creator in the days of my youth, and never forget thee.

Lord, give me grace to serve and honour thee, to worship and obey thee, and in all my ways to trust in thee, and to please thee.

Lord, I thank thee for thy holy word, which thou hast given me to be the rule of my faith and obedience, and which is able to make me wise unto salvation.

I confess, O Lord, that the condition I was born in is sinful and miserable. I am naturally prone to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good, and foolishness is bound up in my heart; and I am by nature a child of wrath, so that if thou hadst not raised up a saviour for me, I had been certainly lost and undone for ever. I have been disobedient to the command of God, and have eaten forbidden fruit.

But, blessed, and for ever blessed, be God, for the Saviour Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, and the only Mediator between God and man, who took our nature upon him, and became man, that he might redeem and save us.

Lord, I bless thee for his holy life, give me to follow his steps. I bless thee for the true and excellent doctrine which he preached, give me to mix faith with it. I bless thee for the miracles which he wrought to confirm his doctrine: and, especially, that he died the cursed death of the cross to satisfy for sin, and to reconcile us to God; and that he rose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended up into heaven, where he ever lives making intercession for us, and has all power, both in heaven and in earth; and that we are assured he will come again in glory to judge the world at the last day.

Lord, I thank thee, that I am one of his disciples; for I am a baptized Christian; and I give glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose name I am baptized.

Lord, be thou in Christ to me a God, and make me one of thy people.

Be thou my chief good and highest end; let Jesus Christ be my Prince and Saviour; and let the Holy Ghost be my sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter.

Lord,

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Lord, enable me to deny all ungodliness and worldly fleshly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, always looking for the blessed hope.

Work in me repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and give me to live a life of faith and repentance.

Lord, make me truly sorry that I have offended thee in what I have thought, and spoken, and done amiss, and give me grace to sin no more.

And enable me to receive Jesus Christ, and to rely upon him as my Prophet, Priest, and King, and to give up myself to be ruled and taught, and saved by him.

Lord, grant unto me the pardon of my sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life.

And give me grace to manifest the sincerity of my faith and repentance, by a diligent and conscientious obedience to all thy commandments.

Enable me to love thee with all my heart, and to love my neighbour as myself.

Give me grace always to make mention of thy name with reverence and seriousness, to read and hear thy word with diligence and attention, to meditate upon it, to believe it, and to frame my life according to it.

Lord, grant that I may receive all thy mercies with thankfulness, and bear all afflictions with patience and submission to thy holy will.

Lord, grant that my heart may never be lifted up with pride, disturbed with anger, or any sinful passion; and that my body may never be defiled with intemperance, uncleanness, or any fleshly lusts; and keep me from ever speaking any sinful words.

Lord, give me grace to reverence and obey my parents and governors; I thank thee for their instructions and reproofs: I pray thee bless them to me, and make me in every thing a comfort to them.

Lord, pity, help, and succour the poor, and those in affliction and distress.

Lord, bless my friends, forgive my enemies, and enable me to do my duty to all men.

Wherein I have in any thing offended thee, I humbly pray for pardon in the blood of Christ, and grace to do my duty better for the time to come, and so to live in the fear of God, as that I may be happy in this world, and that to come.

Lord, prepare me to die, and leave this world: O save me from that state of everlasting misery and torment which will certainly be the portion of all the wicked and ungodly, and bring me safe to the world of everlasting rest and joy with thee, and Jesus Christ.

And give me wisdom and grace to live a holy, godly life, and to make it my great care and business to serve thee, and to save my own soul.

All this I humbly beg in the name, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer, to whom with thee, O Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be honour, glory, and praise, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O LORD our God, we desire with all humility and reverence to adore thee as a Being infinitely bright and blessed, and glorious; thou hast all perfection in thyself, and art the Fountain of all being, power, life, motion, and perfection.

Thou art good to all, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works; and thou art continually doing us good, though we are evil and unthankful.

We reckon it an unspeakable privilege, that we have liberty of access to thee through Jesus Christ, and leave to call thee our Father in him. O look upon us now, and be merciful unto us, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

O give us all to account our daily worship of thee in our family, the most needful part of our daily business, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts.

Thou art the God of all the families of Israel, be thou the God of our family, and grant, that whatever others do, we and our's may always serve the Lord; that thou mayest cause the blessing to rest on our house from the beginning of the year to the end of it. Lord, bless us, and we are blessed indeed.

We humbly thank thee for all the mercies of this night past, and this morning, that we have laid us down and slept, and waked again, because thou hast sustained us; that no plague has come nigh our dwelling; but that we are brought in safety to the light and comforts of another day.

It is of thy mercies, O Lord, that we are not consumed, even because thy compassions fail not, they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

We have rested and are refreshed, when many have been full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day. We have a safe and quiet habitation, when many are forced to wander and lie exposed.

We own thy goodness to us, and ourselves we acknowledge less than the least of all thy mercy, and of all the truth thou hast shewed unto us.

We confess we have sinned against thee, we are guilty before thee, we have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God: we have corrupt and sinful natures, and are bent to backslide from thee; backward to good, and prone to evil continually.

Vain thoughts come into us, and lodge within us, lying down and rising up, and they defile or disquiet our minds, and keep out good thoughts. We are too apt to burthen ourselves with that care which thou hast encouraged us to cast upon thee.

We are very much wanting in the duties of our particular relations, and provoke one another more to folly and passion than to love and to good works. We are very cold and defective in our love to God, weak in our desires toward him, and unsteady and uneven in our walking with him; and are at this time much out of frame for his service.

We pray thee forgive all our sins for Christ's sake, and be at peace with us in him who died to make peace, and ever lives making intercession.

There

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There be many who say, Who will shew us any good? But, Lord, let not us be put off with the good of this world for a portion: for this is our hearts' desire and prayer, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and that shall put gladness in our hearts, more than they have whose corn, and wine, and oil, increase.

Lord, let thy peace rule in our hearts, and give law to us, and let thy peace keep our hearts and minds, and give comfort to us; and let the consolations of God, which are neither few nor small, be our strength and our song in the house of our pilgrimage.

Lord, we commit ourselves to thy care and keeping this day: watch over us for good; compass us about with thy favour as with a shield; preserve us from all evil, yea, the Lord preserve and keep our souls; preserve our going out, and coming in.

Our bodies, and all our worldly affairs, we commit to the conduct of thy wise and gracious providence, and submit to its disposals. Let no hurt or harm happen to us; keep us in health and safety; bless our employments, prosper us in all our lawful undertakings, and give us comfort and success in them. Let us eat the labour of our hands, and let it be well with us.

Our precious souls, and all their concerns, we commit to the government of thy Spirit and grace. O let thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us, and let it work in us, both to will and to do that which is good, of thine own good pleasure.

O give us grace to do the work of this day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires, and to do even common actions after a godly sort; acknowledging thee in all our ways, and having our eye ever up to thee, and be thou pleased to direct our steps.

Lord, keep us from sin; give us rule over our own spirits, and grant that we may not this day break out into passion upon any provocation, or speak unadvisedly with our lips. Give us grace to live together in peace and holy love, that the Lord may command the blessing upon us, even life for evermore.

Make us conscientious in all our dealings, and always watchful against sin, as become those who see thine eye ever upon us. Arm us against every temptation, uphold us in our integrity, keep us in the way of our duty; and grant that we may be in thy fear every day, and all the day long.

In every doubtful case let our way be made plain before us; and give us that wisdom of the prudent which is at all times profitable to direct; and let integrity and uprightness preserve us, for we wait on thee.

Sanctify to us all our losses, crosses, afflictions, and disappointments, and give us grace to submit to thy holy will in them, and let us find it good for us to be afflicted, that we may be partakers of thy holiness.

Prepare us for all the events of this day, for we know not what a day may bring forth. Give us to stand complete in thy whole will; to deny ourselves, to take up our cross daily, and to follow Jesus Christ.

Lord, fit us for death and judgment, and eternity, and give us grace to live every day as those who do not know but it may be our last day.

Lord, plead thy cause in the world: build up thy church into perfect beauty; set up the throne of the exalted Redeemer in all places upon the ruins of the Devil's kingdom. Let the reformed churches be more and more reformed, and let every thing that is amiss be amended; and let those who suffer for righteousness' sake be supported and delivered.

Do us good in these nations; bless the king and all in authority, guide public counsels and affairs; overrule all to thine own glory; let peace and truth be in our days, and be preserved to those who shall come after us.

Be gracious to all our relations, friends, neighbours, and acquaintance, and do them good according as their necessities are. Supply the wants of all thy people. Dwell in the families that fear thee, and call upon thy name. Forgive our enemies, and those that hate us; give us a right and charitable frame of spirit toward all men, and all that is their's.

Visit those who are in affliction, and comfort them, and be unto them a very present help. Recover the sick, ease the pained, succour the tempted, relieve the oppressed, and give joy to those who mourn in Zion.

Deal with us and our family according to the tenor of the everlasting covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure, and which is all our salvation, and all our desire; however it pleases God to deal with us and with our house.

Now blessed be God for all his gifts, both of nature and grace, for those that concern this life, and that to come; especially for Jesus Christ, the fountain and foundation of all. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

We humbly beseech thee for Christ Jesus sake to pardon our sins, accept our services, and grant an answer of peace to our prayers, even for his sake who died for us, and rose again, who hath taught us to pray, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

MOST holy, and blessed, and glorious Lord God, whose we are, and whom we are bound to serve; for because thou madest us, and not we ourselves, therefore, we are not our own, but thine, and unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our souls. Thy face, Lord, do we seek; whither shall we go for happiness but to thee, from whom we derive our being?

Thou art the great Benefactor of the whole creation: thou givest to all life and breath, and all things: thou art our benefactor; the God who hast fed us, and kept us all our life long unto this day. Having obtained help of God, we continue hitherto monuments of sparing mercy, and witnesses for thee, that thou art gracious, that thou art God and not man; for therefore it is that we are not cut off.

One day tells another, and one night certifies to another, that thou art good, and doest good, and never failest those that seek thee, and trust in thee.

Thou

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Thou makest the out-goings of the morning and of the evening to praise thee.

It is through the good hand of our God upon us, that we are brought in safety to the close of another day, and that after the various employments of the day, we come together at night to mention the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the praises of our God, who is good, and whose mercy endureth for ever.

Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation; for he who is our God is the God of salvation. We have from thee the mercies of the day in its day, according as the necessity of the day requires, though we come far short of doing the work of the day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires.

We bless thee for the ministration of the good angels about us, the serviceableness of the inferior creatures to us, for our bodily health and ease, comfort in our relations, and a comfortable place of abode, and that thou hast not made the wilderness our habitation, and the barren land our dwelling; and, especially, that thou continuest to us the use of our reason, and the quiet and peace of our consciences.

We bless thee for our share in the public tranquillity, that thou hast given us a good land, in which we dwell safely under our own vines and fig-trees.

Above all, we bless thee for Jesus Christ, and his mediation between God and man, for the covenant of grace made with us in him, and all the exceeding great and precious promises and privileges of that covenant, for the throne of grace erected for us, to which we may, in his name, come with humble boldness, and for the hope of eternal life through him.

We confess we have sinned against thee; this day we have sinned and done foolishly: O God, thou knowest our foolishness, and our sins are not hid from thee; we mispend our time, we neglect our duty, we follow after lying vanities, and forsake our own mercies. We offend with our tongues: Are we not carnal, and walk as men, below Christians? Who can understand his errors? Cleanse us from our secret faults.

We pray thee give us repentance for our sins of daily infirmity, and make us duly sensible of the evil of them, and of our danger by them, and let the blood of Christ thy Son, which cleanses from all sin, cleanse us from it, that we may lie down to night at peace with God, and our souls may comfortably return to him, and repose in him as our rest.

And give us grace so to repent every day for the sins of every day, that when we come to die we may have the sins but of one day to repent of, and so we may be continually easy.

Do us good by all the providences we are under, merciful or afflictive; give us grace to accommodate ourselves to them, and by all bring us nearer to thee, and make us fitter for thee.

We commit ourselves to thee this night, and desire to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Let the Lord be our habitation, and let our souls be at home in him.

Make a hedge of protection, we pray thee, about us, and about our house, and about all that we have round about, that no evil may befal us, nor any plague come nigh our dwelling. The Lord be our keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Lord, be thou a sun and a shield to us.

Refresh our bodies, we pray thee, with quiet and comfortable rest, not to be disturbed with any distrustful disquieting cares or fears; but especially, let our souls be refreshed with thy love, and the light of thy countenance, and thy benignity, which is better than life.

When we awake, grant that we may be still with thee, and may remember thee upon our beds, and meditate upon thee in the night-watches, and may improve the silence and solitude of our retirements for communing with God and our own hearts; that when we are alone we may not be alone, but God may be with us, and we with him.

Restore us to another day in safety, and prepare us for the duties and events of it; and by all the supports and comforts of this life, let our bodies be fitted to serve our souls in thy service, and enable us to glorify thee with both, remembering that we are not our own, we are bought with a price.

And, forasmuch as we are now brought one day nearer our end, Lord, enable us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let us be reminded by our putting off our cloaths, and going to sleep in our beds, of putting off the body, sleeping the sleep of death, and of making our bed in the darkness shortly, that we may be dying daily in expectation of, and preparation for our change, that when we come to die indeed, it may be no surprise or terror to us, but we may with comfort put off the body, and resign the spirit, knowing whom we have trusted.

Lord, let our family be blessed in him, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ Jesus, and with temporal blessings as far as thou seest good for us. Give us health and prosperity, but especially let our souls prosper, and be in health, and let all that belong to us belong to Christ, that we who live in a house together on earth, may be together for ever with the Lord.

Look with pity upon a lost world, we beseech thee, and set up Christ's throne there where Satan's seat is; send the gospel where it is not, make it successful where it is; let it be mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin.

Let the Church of Christ greatly flourish in all places, and make it to appear that it is built upon a rock, and that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; and suffer not the rod of the wicked any where to rest upon the lot of the righteous.

Let the land of our nativity be still the particular care of thy good providence, that in the peace thereof

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thereof we may have peace. Let glory dwell in our land, and upon all the glory let there be a defence.

Rule in the hearts of our rulers. We pray thee continue the King's life and government long a public blessing; make all who are in places of public trust faithful to the public interest; and all who bear the sword a terror to evil doers, and a protection and praise to them who do well. Own thy ministers in their work, and give them skill and will to help souls to heaven.

Be gracious to all who are dear to us: let the rising generation be such as thou wilt own, and do thee more and better service in their day than this has done.

Comfort and relieve all that are in sorrow and affliction, lay no more upon them than thou wilt enable them to bear, and enable them to bear what thou dost lay upon them.

Do for us, we pray thee, abundantly above what we are able to ask or think, for the sake of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the Lord our Righteousness. To him with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be glory and praise, now and for ever. Amen.

A Family Prayer for the Lord's Day Morning.

MOST Gracious God, and our Father in our Lord Jesus Christ: it is good for us to draw near to thee; the nearer the better, and it will be best of all when we come to be nearest of all in the kingdom of glory.

Thou hast thy Being of thyself, and thy happiness in thyself; we therefore adore thee as the great Jehovah: we have our being from thee, and our happiness in thee, and therefore it is both our duty and our interest to seek thee, to implore thy favour, and to give unto thee the glory due to thy name.

We bless thee for the return of the morning light, and that thou causest the day-spring to know its place and time. O let the Day-spring from on high visit our dark souls, and the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing under his wings.

We bless thee, that the light we see is the Lord's: that this is the day which the Lord has made, has made for man, has made for himself, we will rejoice and be glad in it. That thou hast revealed unto us thy holy Sabbaths, and that we were betimes taught to put a difference between this day and other days, and that we live in a land, in all parts of which God is publicly and solemnly worshipped on this day.

We bless thee, that sabbath liberties and opportunities are continued to us; and that we are not wishing in vain for these days of the Son of Man; that our candlestick is not removed out of its place, as justly it might have been, because we have left our first love.

Now we bid this Sabbath welcome. Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. O that we may be in the Spirit on this Lord's Day; that this may be the Sabbath of the Lord in our dwelling; in our hearts, a Sabbath of rest from sin, and a Sabbath of rest in God. Enable us, we pray thee, so to sanctify this Sabbath, as that it may be sanctified to us, and be a means of our sanctification: that by resting to day from our worldly employments, our hearts may be more and more taken off from present things, and prepared to leave them; and that, by employing our time to day in the worship of God, we may be led into a more experimental acquaintance with the work of heaven, and be made more meet for that blessed world.

We confess we are utterly unworthy of the honour, and unable for the work of communion with thee, but we come to thee in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is worthy, and depend upon the assistances of thy Blessed Spirit to work all our works in us, and so ordain peace for us.

We keep this day holy, to the honour of God the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, in remembrance of the work of creation, that work of wonder, in which thou madest all things out of nothing by the word of thy power, and all very good; and they continue to this day according to thine ordinance, for all are thy servants. Thou art worthy to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. O thou, who at first didst command the light to shine out of darkness, who saidst on the first day of the first week, Let there be light, and there was light; we pray thee shine this day into our hearts, and give us more and more of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and let us be thy workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, a kind of first-fruits of thy creatures.

We likewise sanctify this day to the honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, and our exalted Redeemer, in remembrance of his resurrection from the dead on the first day of the week, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power. We bless thee, that having laid down his life to make atonement for sin, he rose again for our justification, that he might bring in an everlasting righteousness: that the stone which the builders refused, the same is become the head-stone of the corner: *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* We bless thee, that he is risen from the dead, as the first-fruits of them that slept, that he might be the resurrection and the life to us. Now we pray, that while we are celebrating the memorial of his resurrection with joy and triumph, we may experience in our souls the power and virtue of his resurrection, that we may rise with him, may rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, from the dust of this world, to a holy, heavenly, spiritual, and divine life. O that we may be planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life.

We sanctify this day also to the honour of the Eternal

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Eternal Spirit, that blessed Spirit of grace the *Comforter*, rejoicing at the remembrance of the descent of the Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, the first day of the week likewise. We bless thee, that when Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost was given to make up the want of his bodily presence, to carry on his undertaking, and to ripen things for his second coming, and that we have a promise that he shall abide with us for ever. And now, we pray, that the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, may dwell and rule in every one of us, to make us partakers of a new and divine nature. Come, O blessed Spirit of grace, and breathe upon these dry bones, these dead hearts of ours, that they may live, and be in us a spirit of faith, and love, and holiness, a spirit of power, and of a sound mind.

O Lord, we bless thee for thy holy word, which is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths, and which was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope; that the Scriptures are preserved pure and entire to us, and that we have them in a language that we understand. We beg that we may not receive the grace of God herein in vain. We bless thee, that our eyes see the joyful light, and our ears hear the joyful sound of a Redeemer and a Saviour, and of redemption and salvation by him; that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel. Glory be to God in the highest, for in and through Jesus Christ there is on earth peace, and good-will toward men.

We bless thee for the great Gospel-record, that *God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*. Lord, we receive it as a faithful saying, and well worthy of all acceptation; we will venture our immortal souls upon it; and we are encouraged by it to come to thee, to beg for an interest in the mediation of thy Son. O let him be made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; let us be effectually called into fellowship with him, and by faith be united to him, so that Christ may live in us, and we may grow up into him in all things, who is the Head; that we may bring forth fruit in him, and whatever we do in word or deed, we may do all in his name: O let us have the Spirit of Christ, that thereby it may appear we are his. And through him we pray that we may have eternal life, that we may none of us come short of it, but may all of us have the first-fruits and earnests of it abiding in us.

We bless thee for the new covenant made with us in Jesus Christ; that when the covenant of innocence was irreparably broken, so that it was become impossible for us to get to heaven by that covenant, thou wast then pleased to deal with us upon new terms, that we are under grace, and not under the law; that this covenant is established upon better promises in the hand of a Mediator. Lord, we fly for refuge to it, we take hold of it as the hope set before us. O receive us graciously into the bond of this covenant, and make us accepted in the Beloved, according to the tenor of the covenant. Thou hast declared concerning the Lord Jesus, that he is thy beloved Son, in whom thou art well pleased, and we humbly profess that he is our beloved Saviour, in whom we are well pleased: Lord, be well pleased with us in him.

O that our hearts may be filled this day with pleasing thoughts of Christ, and his love to us, that great love wherewith he loved us. O the admirable dimensions of that love, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge! Let this love constrain us to love him, and live to him, who died for us, and rose again. O that it may be a pleasure and great satisfaction to us to think, that while we are here praying at the footstool of the throne of grace, our Blessed Saviour is sitting at the right hand of the throne of glory, interceding for us. We earnestly beg that through him we may find favour with thee our God, and may be taken into covenant and communion with thee.

We humbly pray thee for his sake, forgive all our sins, known and unknown, in thought, word, and deed: through him let us be acquitted of the guilt, and accepted as righteous in thy sight: let us not come into condemnation, as we have deserved; let our iniquity be taken away, and our sin covered; and let us be clothed with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. O let there be no cloud of guilt to interpose between us and our God this day, and to intercept our comfortable communion with him: and let our lusts be mortified and subdued, that our own corruptions may not be as a clog to us, to hinder the ascent of our souls heavenwards.

We pray thee assist us in all the religious services of this thine own Holy Day. Go along with us to the solemn assembly, for if thy presence go not up with us, wherefore should we go up? Give us to draw nigh to thee with a true heart, with a free heart, with a fixed heart, and in full assurance of faith. Meet us with a blessing: grace thine own ordinances with thy presence, that special presence of thine which thou hast promised where two or three are gathered together in thy name. Help us against our manifold infirmities, and the sins that do most easily beset us in our attendance upon thee: let thy word come with life and power to our souls, and be as good seed sown in good soil, taking root, and bringing forth fruit to thy praise; and let our prayers and praises be spiritual sacrifices, acceptable in thy sight through Christ Jesus; and let those who tarry at home divide the spoil.

Let thy presence be in all the assemblies of good Christians this day. Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; let great grace be upon them all. In the chariot of the everlasting Gospel let the great Redeemer ride forth triumphantly, conquering, and to conquer; and let every thought be brought into obedience to him. Let many be brought to believe the report of the Gospel, and to many let the arm of the Lord be revealed. Let sinners be converted unto thee, and thy saints edified, and built up in faith, holiness, and comfort, unto salvation

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vation. Complete the number of thine elect, and hasten thy kingdom.

Now the Lord of peace himself give us peace always by all means. The God of hope fill us with joy and peace in believing for Christ Jesus sake, our Blessed Saviour and Redeemer, who hath taught us to pray, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

A Family Prayer for the Lord's Day Evening.

O ETERNAL and for ever blessed and glorious Lord God! Thou art God over all, and rich in mercy to all that call upon thee, most wise and powerful, holy, just, and good; the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; our Lord and our God.

Thou art happy without us, and hast no need of our services, neither can our goodness extend unto thee, but we are miserable without thee; we have need of thy favours, and are undone, for ever undone, if thy goodness extend not unto us; and therefore, Lord, we entreat thy favour with our whole hearts; O let thy favour be towards us in Jesus Christ, for our happiness is bound up in it, and it is to us better than life. We confess we have forfeited thy favour, we have rendered ourselves utterly unworthy of it; yet we are humbly bold to pray for it in the name of Jesus Christ, who loved us, and gave himself for us.

We bewail before thee, that by the corruption of our natures we are become odious to thine holiness, and utterly unfit to inherit the kingdom of God, and that by our many actual transgressions we are become obnoxious to thy justice, and liable to thy wrath and curse. Being by nature children of disobedience, we are children of wrath, and have reason both to blush and tremble in all our approaches to the holy and righteous God. Even the iniquity of our holy things would be our ruin, if God should deal with us according to the desert of them.

But with thee, O God, there is mercy and plenteous redemption: thou hast graciously provided for all those that repent and believe the gospel, that the guilt of their sin shall be removed through the merit of Christ's death, and the power of their sins broken by his Spirit and Grace; and he is both ways able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives making intercession for us.

Lord, we come to thee as a Father, by Jesus Christ the Mediator, and earnestly desire by repentance and faith to turn from the world and the flesh to God in Jesus Christ, as our ruler and portion. We are sorry that we have offended thee, we are ashamed to think of our treacherous and ungrateful carriage toward thee. We desire that we may have no more to do with sin, and pray as earnestly that the power of sin may be broken in us, as that the guilt of sin may be removed from us: and we rely only upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and upon the merit of his death, for the procuring of thy favour. O look upon us in him, and for his sake receive us graciously; heal our backslidings, and love us freely, and let not our iniquity be our ruin.

We beg, that being justified by faith, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin, that he may be just, and the justifier of them which believe in Jesus. Through him who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, let us who know no righteousness of our own, be accepted as righteous.

And the God of peace sanctify us wholly. Begin and carry on that good work in our souls, renew us in the spirit of our minds, and make us in every thing such as thou wouldest have us to be. Set up thy throne in our hearts, write thy law there, plant thy fear there, and fill us with all the graces of thy Spirit, that we may be fruitful in the fruits of righteousness, to the glory and praise of God.

Mortify our pride, and clothe us with humility; mortify our passion, and put upon us the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. Save us from the power of a vain mind, and let thy grace be mighty in us to make us serious and sober-minded. Let the flesh be crucified in us, with all its affections and lusts; and give us grace to keep under our body, and to bring it into subjection to the laws of religion and right reason, and always to possess our vessel in sanctification and honour.

Let the love of the world be rooted out of us, and that covetousness which is idolatry; and let the love of God in Christ be rooted in us. Shed abroad that love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and give us to love thee the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and might; and to do all we do in religion from a principle of love to thee.

Mortify in us all envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness; pluck up these roots of bitterness out of our minds, and give us grace to love one another with a pure heart, fervently, as become the followers of the Lord Jesus, who has given us this as his New Commandment. O that brotherly love may continue among us, love without dissimulation!

We pray thee rectify all our mistakes; if in any thing we be in an error, discover it to us, and let the Spirit of truth lead us into all truth, the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth which is according to godliness; and give us that good understanding which they have who do thy commandments; and let our love and all good affections abound in us yet more and more, in knowledge, and in all judgment.

Convince us, we pray thee, of the vanity of this world, and its utter insufficiency to make us happy, that we may never set our hearts upon it, nor raise our expectations from it: and convince us of the vileness of sin, and its certain tendency to make us miserable, that we may hate it and dread it, and every thing that looks like it, or leads to it.

Convince us, we pray thee, of the worth of our own souls, and the weight of eternity, and the awfulness of that everlasting state which we are standing upon the brink of, and make us diligent and serious in our preparation for it, labouring less for the meat that perishes, and more for that which endures to eternal life, as those who have set their affections on things above,

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above, and not on things that are on the earth, which are trifling and transitory.

O that time and the things of time may be as nothing to us in comparison with eternity, and the things of eternity; that eternity may be much upon our heart, and ever in our eye; that we may be governed by that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; looking continually at the things that are not seen, which are eternal.

Give us grace, we pray thee, to look up to the other world with such a holy concern, that we may look down upon this world with a holy contempt and indifference, as those that must be here but a very little while, and must be somewhere for ever; that we may rejoice as though we rejoiced not, and weep as though we wept not, and buy as though we possessed not, and may use this world as not abusing it; because the fashion of this world passeth away, and we are passing away with it.

O let thy grace be mighty in us, and sufficient for us, to prepare us for that great change which will come certainly and shortly, and may come very suddenly, which will remove us from a world of sense to a world of spirits; from our state of trial and probation, to that of recompence and retribution; and to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; that when we fail, we may be received into everlasting habitations.

Prepare us, we beseech thee, for whatever we may meet with betwixt us and the grave: we know not what is before us, and therefore know not what particular provision to make; but thou dost, and therefore we beg of thee to fit us by thy grace for all the services and sufferings which thou shalt at any time call us out to; and arm us against every temptation which we may at any time be assaulted with, that we may at all times and in all conditions glorify God, keep a good conscience, and be found in the way of our duty, and may keep up our hope and joy in Christ, and a believing prospect of eternal life, and then welcome the holy will of God.

Give us grace, we pray thee, to live a life of communion with thee both in ordinances and providences, to set thee always before us, and to have our eyes ever up unto thee, and to live a life of dependance upon thee, upon thy power, providence, and promise, trusting in thee at all times, and pouring out our hearts before thee; and to live a life of devotedness to thee, and to thine honour and glory, as our highest end.—And that we may make our religion not only our business, but our pleasure, we beseech thee enable us to live a life of complacency in thee, to rejoice in thee always; that making God our heart's delight, so we may have our heart's desire; and this is our heart's desire, to know, and love, and live to God, to please him, and to be pleased in him.

We beseech thee preserve us in our integrity to our dying day, and grant that we may never forsake thee, or turn from following after thee, but that with purpose of heart we may cleave unto the Lord, and may not count life itself dear to us, so we may but finish our course with joy and true honour.

Let thy good providence order all the circumstances of our dying, so as may best befriend our comfortable removal to a better world; and let thy grace be sufficient for us then to enable us to finish well; and let us then have an abundant entrance ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And while we are here, make us wiser and better every day than other; more weaned from the world, and more willing to leave it; more holy, heavenly, and spiritual; that the longer we live in this world, the fitter we may be for another, and our last days may be our best days, our last works our best works, and our last comforts our sweetest comforts.

We humbly pray thee accomplish all that which thou hast promised concerning thy Church in the latter days; let the earth be filled with thy glory: let the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in, and let all Israel be saved. Let the mountain of the Lord's house be established upon the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and let all nations flow unto it.

Propagate the gospel in the plantations, and let the enlargement of trade and commerce contribute to the enlargement of thy church. Let the kingdom of Christ be set up in all places, upon the ruins of the Devil's kingdom.

Hasten the downfal of the Man of Sin, and let primitive christianity, even pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, be revived, and made to flourish in all places; and let the power of godliness prevail and get ground among all that have the form of it.

Let the wars of the nations end in the peace of the church, the shakings of the nations in the establishment of the church, and the convulsions and revolutions of states and kingdoms in the settlement and advancement of the kingdom of GOD among men,—that kingdom which cannot be moved.

Let Great Britain and Ireland flourish in all their public interests.—Let thine everlasting Gospel be always the glory in the midst of us, and let thy providence be a wall of fire round about us.—Destroy us not, but let a blessing be among us, even a meat-offering and a drink-offering to the Lord our God.

Be very gracious to our Sovereign Lord the King, protect his person, preserve his health, prolong his days, guide his councils, let his reign be prosperous, and crown all his undertakings for the public good.

Bless the Privy-Counsellors, the Nobility, the Judges, and Magistrates in our several counties and corporations, and make them all in their places faithful and serviceable to the interests of the nation, and every way public blessings.

Bless all the Ministers of thy holy word and sacraments: make them burning and shining lights, and faithful to Christ, and to the souls of men. Unite all thy ministers and people together in the truth, and in true love one to another; pour out a healing spirit upon them, a spirit of love and charity, mutual for-

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bearance and condescension, that with one shoulder and with one consent all may study to promote the common interests of our Great Master, and the common salvation of precious souls.

We pray thee prosper the trade of the nation, guard our coasts, disappoint the devices of our enemies against us, preserve the public peace, and keep all the people of these lands in quietness among themselves, and due subjection to the authority God has set over us; and let the Lord delight to dwell among us, and to do us good.

Bless the fruits of the earth, continue our plenty, abundantly bless our provision, and satisfy even our poor with bread.

We bless thee for all the mercies of this thine own holy day; we have reason to say, that a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! Bless the word we have heard this day to us, and to all that heard it; hear our prayers, accept our praises, and forgive what thy pure eye has seen amiss in us and our performances.

Take us under thy protection this night, and enable us to close the day with thee, that we may lie down, and our sleep may be sweet. Be with us the week following in all our ways; forgive us that we brought so much of the week with us into the Sabbath, and enable us to bring a great deal of the Sabbath with us into the week, that so we may be the fitter for the next sabbath, if we shall live to it.

Make us meet for the everlasting Sabbath which we hope to keep within the veil, when time and days shall be no more; and let this day bring us a Sabbath-day's journey nearer heaven, and makes us a Sabbath-day's work fitter for it.

As we began this Lord's Day with the joyful memorials of Christ's resurrection, so we desire to conclude it with the joyful expectations of Chrit's second coming, and of our own resurrection then to a blessed immortality, triumphing in hopes of the glory of God.

Bless the Lord, love the Lord, O our souls, and let all that is within us love and bless his holy name, for he is good, and his mercy endures for ever. In praising God we desire to spend as much of our time as may be, that we may begin our heaven now, for in this good work we hope to be spending a happy eternity.

Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God, and our God, in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, dominion and praise, henceforth and for ever: Amen.

A Prayer proper to be put up by Parents for their Children.

O LORD our God, the God of the spirits of all flesh! all souls are thine, the souls of the parents, and the souls of the children are thine, and thou hast grace sufficient for both.

Thou wast our fathers' God, and, as such we will exalt thee; thou art our children's God, and that also we will plead with thee, for the promise is to us and our children; and thou art a God in covenant with believers and their seed.

Lord, it is thy good providence that has built us up into a family: we thank thee for the children thou hast graciously given thy servants; the Lord, who has blessed us with them, make them blessings indeed to us, that we may never be tempted to wish we had been childless.

We lament the iniquity which our children are conceived and born in, and the corrupt nature which they derive through our loins.

But we bless thee that there is a fountain opened for their cleansing from that original pollution, and that they were betimes by baptism dedicated to thee, and admitted into the bonds, and under the blessings of thy covenant; that they are born in thy house, and taken in as members of thy family upon earth.

It is a comfort to us to think that they are baptized, and we humbly desire to plead it with thee. They are thine; save them; enable them, as they become capable to make it their own act and deed to join themselves unto the Lord, that they may be owned as thine in the day when thou makest up thy jewels.

Give them a good capacity of mind, and a good disposition, make them towardly and tractable, and willing to receive instruction; incline them betimes to religion and virtue.—Lord, give them wisdom and understanding, and drive out the foolishness which is bound up in their hearts.

Save them from the vanity which childhood and youth are subject to, and fit them every way to live comfortably and usefully in this world. We ask not for great things in the world for them; give them, if it please thee, a strong and healthy constitution of body, preserve them from all ill accidents, and feed them with food convenient for them, according to their rank.

But the chief thing we ask of God for them is, that thou wilt pour thy Spirit upon our seed, even thy blessing, that blessing, that blessing of blessings, upon our offspring, that they may be a seed to serve thee, which shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation: Give them that good part which shall never be taken away from them.

Give us wisdom and grace to bring them up in thy fear, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, with meekness and tenderness, and having them in subjection with all gravity. Teach us how to teach them the things of God as they are able to bear them, and how to reprove and admonish, and when there is need to correct them in a right manner, and how to set them good examples of every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy, that we may recommend religion to them, and so train them up in the way wherein they should go, that if they live to be old, they may not depart from it.

Keep them from the snare of evil company, and all the temptations to which they are exposed, and make them betimes sensible how much it is their interest as well as their duty to be religious: and, Lord, grant

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grant that none who come of us may come short of eternal life, or be found on the left hand of Christ in the great day.

We earnestly pray that Christ may be formed in their souls betimes, and that the seeds of grace may be sown in their hearts while they are young, and we may have the satisfaction of seeing them walking in the truth, and setting their faces heavenwards. Give them now to hear counsel and receive instruction, that they may be wise in their latter end; and if they be wise, our hearts shall rejoice, even our's.

Prosper the means of their education; let our children be taught of the Lord, that great may be their peace; and give them so to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, as may be life eternal to them.

O that they may betimes get wisdom, and get understanding, and never forget it. As far as they are taught the truth as it is in Jesus, give them to continue in the things which they have learned.

It is our heart's desire and prayer that our children may be praising God on earth when we are gone to praise him in heaven, and that we and they may be together for ever, serving him day and night in his temple.

If it should please God to remove any of them from us while they are young, let us have grace submissively to resign them to thee, and let us have hope in their death.

If thou remove us from them while they are young, be thou thyself a father to them, to teach them, and provide for them, for with thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

Thou knowest our care concerning them, we cast it upon thee; ourselves and our's we commit to thee. Let not the light of our family religion be put out with us, nor that treasure be buried in our graves, but let those who shall come after us do thee more and better service in their day than we have done in our's, and be unto thee for a name and a praise.

In these prayers we aim at thy glory. Father, let thy name be sanctified in our family, there let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done by us and our's, as it is done by the angels in heaven; for Christ Jesus sake, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, whose seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. Now to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that great and sacred name, into which we and our children were baptized, be honour and glory, dominion and praise, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for the use of a Person before receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

MOST holy, and blessed, and gracious Lord God, with all humility and reverence I here present myself before thee, to seek thy face and entreat thy favour, and as an evidence of thy good-will toward me, to beg that I may experience thy good work in me.

I acknowledge myself unworthy, utterly unworthy of the honour; unfit, utterly unfit for the service to which I am now called. It is an inestimable privilege that I am admitted so often to hear from thee in thy word, and to speak to thee in prayer; and yet, as if this had been a small matter, I am now invited into communion with thee at thy holy table, there to celebrate the memorial of my Saviour's death, and to partake, by faith, of the precious benefits which flow from it. I, who deserve not the crumbs, am called to eat of the children's bread.

O Lord, I thank thee for the institution of this blessed ordinance, this precious legacy and token of love, which the Lord Jesus left to his Church; that it is preserved to this age, that it is administered in this land, that I am admitted to it, and have now before me an opportunity to partake of it; Lord, grant that I may not receive thy grace herein in vain.

O thou who hast called me to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, give me the wedding-garment; work in me a disposition of soul, and all those pious and devout affections which are suitable to the solemnities of this ordinance, and requisite to qualify me for an acceptable and advantageous participation of it. Behold the fire and the wood, all things are now ready, but where is the Lamb for the burnt-offering? Lord, provide thyself a Lamb, by working in me all that which thou requirest of me upon this occasion. The preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue are both from thee; Lord, prepare my unprepared heart for communion with thee.

Lord, I confess I have sinned against thee, I have done foolishly, very foolishly, for foolishness is bound up in my heart, I have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God; I have come short of glorifying thee, and deserve to come short of being glorified with thee. The imagination of my heart is evil continually, and the bias of my corrupt nature is very strong toward the world, the flesh, and the gratifications of sense; but toward God, and Christ, and Heaven, I move slowly, and with a great many stops and pauses. Nay, there is in my carnal mind a wretched aversion to divine and spiritual things. I have mispent my time, trifled away my opportunities, have followed after lying vanities, and forsaken my own mercies. God be merciful to me a sinner! For how little have I done, since I came into the world, of the great work that I was sent into the world about.

Thou hast taken me into covenant with thee, for I am a baptized Christian, set apart for thee, and sealed to be thine; thou hast laid me, and I have also laid myself under all possible obligations to love thee, and serve thee, and live to thee. But I have started aside from thee like a deceitful bow, I have not made good my covenant with thee, nor hath the temper of my mind, and the tenor of my conversation been agreeable to that holy religion which I make profession of, to my expectations from thee, and engagements to thee. I am bent to backslide from the Living God; and if I were under the law I were undone; but I am under grace, a covenant of grace, which leaves room for repentance,

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pentance, and promises pardon upon repentance, which invites even backsliding children to return, and promises that their backslidings shall be healed. Lord, I take hold of this covenant, seal it to me at thy table: there let me find my heart truly humbled for sin, and sorrowing for it after a godly sort: O that I may there look on him whom I have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness for him; that there I may sow in tears, and receive a wounded Christ into a broken heart! And there let the blood of Christ, which speaks better things than that of Abel, be sprinkled upon my conscience, to purify and pacify it: there let me be assured that thou art reconciled to me, that my iniquities are pardoned, and that I shall not come into condemnation. There say unto me, Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.

And that I may not come unworthily to this blessed ordinance, I beseech thee, lead me into a more intimate and experimental acquaintance with Jesus Christ, and him crucified; with Jesus Christ, and him glorified; that knowing him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, and being by his grace planted in the likeness of both, I may both discern the Lord's body, and shew forth the Lord's death.

Lord, I desire by a true and lively faith to close with Jesus Christ, and consent to him as my Lord and my God: I here give up myself to him as my prophet, priest, and king, to be ruled and taught, and saved by him: this is my beloved, and this is my friend. None but Christ, none but Christ! Lord, encrease this faith in me, perfect what is lacking in it, and enable me, in receiving the bread and wine at thy table, by a lively faith to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. O let the great gospel doctrine of Christ's dying to save sinners, which is represented in that ordinance, be meat and drink to my soul, meat indeed, and drink indeed: Let it be both nourishing and refreshing to me; let it be both my strength and my song, and be the spring both of my holiness and of my comfort: and let such deep impressions be made upon my soul by the actual commemoration of it, as may abide always upon me, and have a powerful influence upon me in my whole conversation, that the life I now live in the flesh I may live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Lord, I beseech thee, fix my thoughts; let my heart be engaged to approach unto thee, that I may attend unto thee without distraction. Draw my desires towards thee; give me to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that I may be filled; and to draw near to thee with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith; and since I am not straitened in thee, O let me not be straitened in my own bosom.

Draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee. O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead and guide me; pour thy Spirit upon me, put thy Spirit within me, to work in me both to will and to do that which is good; and leave me not to myself. Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon my garden; come, O blessed Spirit of grace, and enlighten my mind with the knowledge of Christ, bow my will to the will of Christ, fill my heart with the love of Christ, and confirm my resolutions to live and die with him.

Work in me (I pray thee) a principle of holy love and charity toward all men, that I may forgive my enemies, which by thy grace I heartily do, and may keep up a spiritual communion in faith, hope, and holy love, with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord, bless them all, and particularly that congregation with which I am to join in this solemn ordinance. Good Lord, pardon every one that engages his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. Hear my prayers, and heal the people,

Lord, meet me with a blessing, a Father's blessing, at thy table; grace thine own institutions with thy presence; and fulfil in me all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power, for the sake of Jesus Christ my blessed Saviour and Redeemer—To Him, with the Father, and the Eternal Spirit, be everlasting praise. Amen.

Another after the receiving of the Lord's Supper.

O LORD, my God and my Father in Jesus Christ, I can never sufficiently admire the condescension of thy grace to me. What is man, that thou dost thus magnify him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him. Who am I? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto, hast brought me into thy banqueting-house, and thy banner over me hath been love? I have reason to say, that a day in thy courts, an hour at thy table, is better, far better, than a thousand days, than ten thousand hours elsewhere; it is good for me to draw near to God. Blessed be God for the privileges of his house, and those comforts with which he makes his people joyful in his house of prayer.

But I have reason to blush and be ashamed of myself, that I have not been more affected with the great things which have been set before me, and offered me at the Lord's table. O! what a vain, foolish, trifling heart have I? When I would do good, even then evil is present with me. Good Lord, be merciful to me, and pardon the iniquity of my holy things, and let not my manifold defects in my attendance upon thee be laid to my charge, or hinder my profiting by the ordinance.

I have now been commemorating the death of Christ; Lord, grant that by the power of it, sin may be crucified in me, the world crucified to me, and I to the world; and enable me so to bear about with me continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, as that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in my mortal body.

I have now been receiving the precious benefits which flow from Christ's death; Lord, grant that I may never lose, may never forfeit those benefits, but, as I have received Christ Jesus the Lord, give me grace

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so to walk in him, and to live as one that am not my own, but am bought with a price, glorifying God with my body and spirit, which are his.

I have now been renewing my covenant with thee, and engaging myself afresh to thee, to be thine; now Lord, give me grace to perform my vow. Keep it always in the imagination of the thought of my heart, and establish my way before thee. Lord preserve me by thy grace, that I may never return again to folly; after God has spoken peace, may I never, by my loose and careless walking, undo what I have been doing to-day; but, having my heart enlarged with the consolations of God, give me to run the way of thy commandments with cheerfulness and constancy, and still to hold fast my integrity.

This precious soul of mine, which is the work of thine own hands, and the purchase of thy Son's blood, I commit into thy hands, to be sanctified by thy Spirit and thy grace, and wrought up into a conformity to thy holy will in every thing: Lord, set up thy throne in my heart, write thy law there, shed abroad thy love there, and bring every thought within me into obedience to thee, to the commanding power of thy law, and the constraining power of thy love. Keep through thine own name that which I commit unto thee, keep it against that day when it shall be called for; let me be preserved blameless to the coming of thy glory, that I may then be presented faultless with exceeding joy.

All my outward affairs I submit to the disposal of thy wise and gracious providence. Lord, save my soul, and then as to other things, do as thou pleasest with me; only make all providences work together for my spiritual and eternal advantage. Let all things be pure to me, and give me to taste covenant love in common mercies, and by thy grace let me be taught both how to want and how to abound, how to enjoy prosperity, and how to bear adversity, as becomes a christian; and at all times let thy grace be sufficient for me, and mighty in me, to work in me both to will and to do that which is good of thine own good pleasure.

And that in every thing I may do my duty, and stand compleat in it, let my heart be enlarged in love to Jesus Christ, and affected with the height and depth, the length and breadth of that love of his to me, which passes all conception and expression.

And as an evidence of that love, let my mouth be filled with his praises; Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive blessing, and honour, and glory, and power; for he was slain, and has redeemed a chosen remnant unto God by his blood, and made them to him kings and priests. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name, who forgiveth all mine iniquities, and healeth all my diseases; who redeemeth my life from destruction, and crowneth me with loving kindness and tender mercy; who having begun a good work, will perform it unto the day of Christ. As long as I live I will bless the Lord; I will praise my God while I have any being; and when I have no being on earth, I hope to have a being in heaven to be doing it better. O let me be borne up in everlasting arms, and carried from strength to strength, till I appear before God in Zion, for Jesus sake, who died for me, and rose again, in whom I desire to be found living and dying. Now to God the Father, Son, and Spirit, be ascribed kingdom, power, and glory, henceforth and for ever. Amen.

An Address to God before Meat.

O Lord our God, in thee we live and move, and have our being, and from thee we receive all the supports and comforts of our being: thou spreadest our table, and fillest our cup, and comfortest us with the gifts of thy bounty from day to day. We own our dependance upon thee, and obligations to thee: pardon our sins we pray thee; sanctify thy good creatures to our use, and give us grace to receive them soberly and thankfully, and to eat and drink not to ourselves, but to thy glory, through Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another.

GRACIOUS God, thou art the protector and preserver of the whole creation, thou hast fed us all our lives unto this day, with food convenient for us, though we are evil and unthankful. We pray thee forgive all our sins, by which we have forfeited all thy mercies, and let us see our forfeited right restored in Christ Jesus. Give us a taste of covenant love in common mercies, and to use these and all our creature comforts to the glory of our great Benefactor, through the grace of our great Redeemer. Amen.

An Address to God after Meat.

BLESSED be the Lord, who daily loads us with his benefits, and gives us all things richly to enjoy, though we serve him but poorly. O Lord, we thank thee for present refreshments in the use of thy good creatures, and for thy love to our souls in Jesus Christ, which sweetens all. We pray thee pardon our sins, go on to do us good, provide for the poor that are destitute of daily food, fit us for thy whole will, and be our God, and guide, and portion for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Another.

WE thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all the gifts both of thy providence and of thy grace; for those blessings which relate to the life that now is, and that to come; and for the use of thy good creatures at this time. Perfect, O God, that which concerns us, nourish our souls with the bread of life to life eternal, and let us be of those who shall eat bread in the kingdom of our Father, for Christ Jesus' sake, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

To

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TO A COLLECTION OF FAMILY HYMNS

FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS,

Published by Mr. MATTHEW HENRY,

WAS ATTACHED THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS.

To the Reader.

MY design in this essay is to promote the singing of Psalms in families, as a part of their daily worship, especially their Sabbath worship; an exercise which (however it be now with other instances of the warmest devotion sadly disused, yet) was anciently practised by the generality of serious Christians, who thus turned their houses into churches, (such churches as St. Paul speaks of, Rom. 16. 5. Col. 4. 15. Phil. 2.) by praising God together, and by teaching and admonishing one another in singing of Psalms. If we ask for the good old way, we shall find this path in it trodden by the primitive Christians in the Church's early days; among the particulars of whose religion, that learned pen which wrote the "Primitive Christianity," traces remarkable footsteps of this family exercise, Part 1. Ch. 9. The sound of this melody was not only heard in their solemn assemblies, where it appears by many passages (particularly that known account which Pliny gives to Trojan of the Christians, Epist. l. 10.) to have been a considerable part of their public worship, but in their private houses also, where it seems to have been the common usage to sing Psalms with their wives and children, especially at and after their meals; a practice commended by Clemens Alexandrinus, (Pædag. Lib. 2. c. 4. by Chrysostom in Ps. 41.) which made the Psalms so familiar to them, that, as Jerom tells us, (Epist. ad Marcel.) in the place where he lived, you could not go into the field but you should hear the plough-men, and the mowers, and the vine-dressers thus employed: *Sonet Psalmos convivium sobrium—The sober feast resounds with Psalms,* says Cyprian. Socrates (Hist. Eccles. lib. 7. cap. 22.) speaks of it as the practice of Theodosius, the Emperor, to rise early every morning to sing Psalms with his sisters; "so that his palace" (says he) "was like a monastery or religious house," οἶκ ἀλλοιότερα ἡ ἀσκητηρίῳ κατίστησι τὸ βασίλειον. And I have sometimes thought that the service of the monasteries, in the degenerate ages of the Church, (which is known to have consisted very much in singing,) was but the remaining form and carcass of that life and power of godliness and religious worship which had originally reigned in most Christian families. That is a good hint of Tertullian, in his book ad Uxorem, (written about the year 205.) Lib. 2. cap. 9. Where, cautioning Christian women not to marry with unbelievers, he urges this against it, That those who were so linked, could not have their husbands to sing Psalms with them in their houses: whereas, when those in that relation draw together in the yoke of Christ, *Sonant inter duos Psalmi & Hymni, & mutuo provocant, quis melius Deo suo canet,—They sing Psalms and Hymns together; their only strife then is, which shall be most affectionate and serious in singing.* And, to come nearer our own day, that is worthy our notice which Mr. Quick, in the Introduction to his Synodicon, tells us, Vol. 1. p. 5. That the singing of Psalms in families, even those of the best rank, not only at their morning and evening worship, but at their meals, conduced very much to the strength and growth of the reformed religion in France in its first and best days. And the title-page of our Old English Translation of the Psalms into metre, set forth and allowed at the beginning of our reformation in Edw. the VIth's time, recommends them to be sung in private houses for their godly solace and comfort. And how the houses of the good old Protestants were perfumed with this incense daily, especially on Lord's-Days, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us. Gladly therefore would I contribute something toward the revival of this duty in Christian families, which, if they be (as they should be) nurseries and seminaries of piety, would certainly embrace this as an excellent means of instilling religion betimes into the minds of their little children, who, as they commonly attend most to this duty, so they will sooner receive the good impressions of it, than of any other; and thus out of the mouths of babes and sucklings will praise be perfected to the glory of God, and strength ordained to the comfort of families; compare Mat. 21. 16. with Ps. 8. 2. Austin (Prolog. in Lib. Psalm.) suggests that Psalms were written, and the singing of Psalms appointed, very much for the sake of youth. *Propterea Psalmorum* (says he) *nobis per modulos aptata sunt carmina, ut vel ætate puerili, vel qui adolescentes sunt moribus, quasi cantilenâ quâdam psallentes delectari videantur,—For this purpose were the Psalms set to music, that the sprightly period of youth might be entertained and exhilirated.*

What shall I say then to persuade masters of families, who have hitherto neglected their duty, to begin it now? Better late than never. The experience of many who make conscience of it will testify both the sweetness and profit of it. If Psalms were more sung in families, they would be better sung in congregations. Let none plead want of time as their excuse; for, how can

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can time be spent better than in praising God? And is there not a great deal of our precious hours thrown away every day upon other things that are less to the purpose of a Christian? Nor will there be room for this pretence, if care be taken not to defer family worship too late, either morning or evening, so as to crowd it into a corner, (as many do by a thousand impertinences) as likewise so to proportion the other parts of the duty, that they may not prevent this. It is the wisdom of masters of families, so to manage their family worship, that they may make it as much as possible a pleasure, and not a task to their children and servants. Nor let want of skill be any excuse; there may be much of acceptable affection, where there appears but little of art. Plain songs best befit plain Israelites. A small degree of skill (and that is easily attained by any who give their minds to it) will suffice to the management of this duty decently and in order, and more there needs not; for in private families the quickest way of singing seems to be most agreeable; such singing as the great Athanasius appointed in the church of Alexandria, *Ut pronuncianti vicinior esset quàm canenti,—more like reading than singing.* So Austin tells us, (Confess. Lib. 10. Cap. 33.) and approves of it as a good means to preserve that spiritual delight which should be in this ordinance, from degenerating into a sensitive pleasure, which it is apt to do when tunes and notes are overmuch studied and affected, and the ear tickled with them.

Nor let any be afraid that their neighbours should overhear them: we serve a Master that we have no reason to be ashamed of, to whom we have engaged, that whatever others do, we and our houses will serve him; and whose hold is so great of the consciences, even of bad men, that those whose contempt and reproach you fear, even of them perhaps you will be had in honour, 2 Sam. 6. 22. Nay, your light hereby may so shine before men, that others may be brought to glorify your Father which is in heaven, Mat. 5. 16.

If any make it an excuse that they are unready in finding out such Psalms, or passages in the Psalms, as are most proper for family use, such may perhaps receive some help from this small collection.

It is taken out of David's Psalms, and further we seldom need to go for hymns and spiritual songs, though other Scriptures may, no doubt, be used this way much to edification. *Nolite cantare nisi quod legitis esse cantandum,—Sing nothing but what you read as being appointed to be sung,* is a good rule, which Austin gives, Epist. 109. This collection will be the more useful, (and it is what I chiefly aim at in it) if every one in the family have a book, so that the Psalm or Hymn (for the distinction is but nominal) may be sung without reading the line betwixt, which is the general practice of the reformed churches abroad, and renders the duty more pleasant and profitable, and takes up less time, and is practicable enough in a family, if not in large congregations.

The gathering of verses out of several Psalms, and putting them together, may seem to be a violation of their own native coherence: but I hope it will not give offence to any, since it is no more so, than the joining of several passages of Scriptures remote from each other, and putting them together in our prayers and sermons, which is generally practised: besides that, it is a liberty which is often taken by the clerks who give out the Psalms in public: and I think those who dislike it not there, will the rather allow it in private families. Nay, I am in hopes that the reference I have made all along to the Psalms and verses, will increase and lead to an acquaintance with the book of Psalms in general, which I would not that this essay should at all lessen or supersede.

I have made use of the best approved translations, especially Mr. Patrick's and Mr. Barton's; as likewise Bishop King's, Mr. Smith's, Dr. Ford's, and Mr. Baxter's, who have each of them laboured well in this province; nor have I neglected the old translation, which (considering the age in which it was done, and that it broke the ice,) is not such a contemptible piece as some love to represent it. I have taken that out of each, which I judged the best and most suitable to my purpose, acting herein not as a censor, but as a gleaner. Books are known to have their fate, *Ad captum Lectoris,* and therefore I hope my pardon for making this use of the labours of others will be easily granted, and this general acknowledgment will suffice to acquit me from the charge of Plagiarism. I have not varied at any time from my authors merely for variation sake, yet throughout I have seen cause very often to alter, and in many places to build anew (especially where I was willing to contract) according to the best of my skill. The performance indeed is but very small, yet the design is honest; and it will be fruit abounding to a good account, if it do but help forward the work of singing Psalms, in which the will of God is done on earth, somewhat like as it is in heaven, where singing Hallelujahs to him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, is both the everlasting work, and the everlasting felicity of those glorified beings, that wear the crown of perfection within the veil.

M. H.

Jan. 14, 1694.

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GREAT BRITAIN'S PRESENT JOYS AND HOPES;

DISPLAYED

IN TWO SERMONS

PREACHED IN CHESTER.

The former on the National Thanksgiving Day, December 31, 1706. The latter the Day following, being New-Year's Day.

PSAL. 65. 11.

Thou crownest the Year with thy Goodness.

AMONG other feasts of the Lord, which the Jewish church was appointed to observe, (and many annual feasts they had for one fast,) one is called, *The feast of in-gathering at the end of the year,*[a] according to the civil computation of their year. The feast we are, this day, solemnizing—with joy, in communion with all the religious assemblies of our land,—being appointed by authority, on the last day of the year, according to the vulgar reckoning, may be looked upon as our feast of in-gathering: in it we appear before the Lord, in whom all our joys must terminate, and to whom all our trophies must be consecrated. Remember therefore the law of those feasts, that none must appear before the Lord empty: if our hearts be here empty, what will it avail us that our congregation is full? It is the soul that appears before God, if that be empty of holy joy in God, and holy concern for the welfare of the public, which ought to fill us on such occasions,—it is but the carcase and shell, without the life and kernel, of a Thanksgiving-day.

Let this feast at the end of the year, be kept to the honour of that God who is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *First and the Last*; both the spring, and the centre, of all our glories. As we must begin every day and year with him, so with him we must end both. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.*

Praise is waiting for God this day in our English Zion, and to him must the vow be performed;[b] the vow of thanksgiving to God, for his mercies to the land of our nativity; in the peace whereof we have our share; and in the praises whereof we are unworthy of the name of Englishmen, if we do not cheerfully bear our part. And how can we sum up our acknowledgments of God's favours to our nation, in more proper words than those of my text, *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* Common providence crowns every year with the goodness of God; but special providences crown some years more than others with it.

I. Every year is crowned with God's goodness. We of this land have as much reason to say so as any other people; for, like Canaan, it is a land which the eyes of the Lord our God are always upon, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.[a] He who appoints the bounds of men's habitations, has appointed very well for us: *The lines are fallen to us in such pleasant places,* as forbid us to envy the situation of any of our neighbours, or of any nation under heaven.

As we have *daily* mercies to give thanks for, in the close of every day; so we have *yearly* mercies to give thanks for, in the close of every year, even the blessings of "Heaven above," and the "Earth beneath;" for both which we are indebted to Him who made heaven and earth, and continues the ordinances of both for the benefit and comfort of that mean, unworthy creature,—Man.

1. The annual revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the benefit we receive by their light and influences, in the several seasons of the year. Summer and winter crown the year; God made both, and both for the service of men,—as well as night and day.[b] The shadows of the evening are not more acceptable to the weary labourer,[c] than the winter quarters of refreshment are to fatigued armies; and then the spring, that time when kings go forth to war,[d] is as welcome to the bold and faithful soldier, as the morning is to the honest and industrious husbandman, who then goes forth to his work and to his labour.[e]

And he who made summer and winter, has made both very easy and comfortable to our land. So very temperate is our climate, and so well secured from both extremes, that the inconveniences neither of the

[a] Exod. 23. 16. [b] Ps. 65. 1.

[a] Deut. 11. 12. [b] Ps. 74. 16. [c] Job 7. 2. [d] 2 Sam. 11. 1. [e] Ps. 104. 23.

heat

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heat in summer, nor of the cold in winter, are intolerable; nor such obstructions to business and intercourse as they are in some other countries, no farther north than Russia, nor south than Spain. So that if our land produce not such furs as the north does, and such silks as the south, we ought not to complain: nature did not provide them, because it had better provided that we should not need them. We can bid, both summer and winter, welcome; each are beautiful in their season, and neither are a terror to us. May the happy temper of our climate be infused into our minds; and our moderation be known unto all men!

God's covenant with Noah and his sons, by which the seasons of the year were re-settled after the interruption of the deluge, is the crown and glory of every year: and the constant and regular succession of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest,[a] in performance of that promise, is an encouragement to our faith in the covenant of grace, which is established firmly as those ordinances of heaven![b]

2. The annual fruits and products of the earth, grass for the cattle, and herbs for the service of men,[c] with these the earth is every year enriched for use; as well as beautified and adorned for shew. The harvest is the crown of every year, and the great influence of God's goodness to an evil and unthankful world. And so kind and bountiful is the hand of providence herein, that we are supplied not only with necessary food, for the supper of nature, and the *holding of our souls in life*; but with a great variety of pleasant things for ornament and delight. Our soil is as happy as our climate, and like that of Asher, yields royal dainties.[d]

Though all years are not alike plentiful, yet—through the wise disposal of Providence, that great housekeeper of the universe—one year serves to help out another, and so to bring in another; so that when we gather much, it proves there is not much over, and when little, there is no great lack. Or, one country supplies another; so that the extremities of famine have never sent us from our *Canaan* to sojourn in any *Egypt* for bread, but either we have had it among us, or have been able to fetch it.

It is from the goodness of God that we have our yearly corn, and out of that our daily bread, which even after a plentiful harvest we might come short of, if when we *bring it home* God did *blow upon it*.[e] In these things God does good to all, and gives them witnesses of his being and providence, his power and bounty, sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.[f] And these witnesses to us, will be witnesses against us, if we serve not the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of the good things he gives us; but make those things the food and fuel of our lusts, which were given us to be oil to the wheels of our obedience.

Let us thank God for all the blessings of this kind, with which every year of our lives has been crowned; and let not the commonness of them lower their value with us, nor lessen our grateful sense of God's goodness to us in them; nor because they have been hitherto constant, let us therefore imagine that they come of course, or that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant: but let the praise of all those blessings which we enjoy by the constant course of nature, be given to the God of nature: to him let us own our obligations for what is past, and on him let us own our dependance for the future, lest we provoke him to *take away our corn in the season thereof*.

II. Some years are, in a special manner, crowned with the goodness of God more than other years; *Thou wilt bless the crown of the year of thy goodness*, so the Seventy read it. This year, in which by extraordinary instances, not to be paralleled in the events of former years, thou hast made known thy goodness; things which the former years expected not; and which the following years cannot forget, and will reap the benefit of. This year, which thou hast made—to excel other years, and to out-shine them in the historian's annals as much as crowned heads transcend common persons—by *reviving the work in the midst of the years*,[a] when we were ready to ask, *Where are all the wonders which our fathers told us of?*[b] And to speak of *the years of the right-hand of the Most High*,[c] as what we have heard and read of, and what our fathers have told us of, but which we expected not to see in our time.

Every year was crowned with God's goodness, but not so as the sixth year was, when God made the earth to bring forth fruit for three years,[d] which were to live upon the products of that. Every year was not a year of release, much less a year of jubilee. The Great God never does any thing mean or little; even the common works of nature, and the common course of providence, give proofs of the infinite power and goodness of the Creator and Director of the universe: but sometimes the arm of Omnipotence is in a special manner made bare, and the treasures of divine bounty opened, in which, though God never out-does himself, (as men are sometimes said to do upon extraordinary occasions) he out-does what he used to do, that he may awaken a stupid and unthinking world, to see the goings of our God, our King, in his sanctuary,[e] and may proclaim himself glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, working wonders.[f]

Some expositors apply the year, here said to be crowned with God's goodness, to the year of gospel-grace, in which redemption was purchased for, and published to a poor captive world, which is called, *The acceptable year of the Lord*.[g] That was indeed the year of God's goodness, when the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared so clear, so bright: that was indeed a crowned year, not to mention the crowns of common years, the fruitful fields and flowery meads: even the glory of that year in which Israel was brought out of Egypt, and received the law

[a] Gen. 8. 22. [b] Jer. 31. 35. [c] Zec. 9. 17. Gen. 49. 20. [e] Hag. 1. 9. [f] Acts 14. 17.

[a] Hab. 3. 2. [b] Judg. 6. 13. [c] Ps. 77. 10. [d] Lev. 25. 21. [e] Ps. 68. 24. [f] Exod. 15. 11. [g] Luke 4. 19.

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from God's mouth; all the glory which crowned the top of Sinai's mount; was not to be compared with the glory of the everlasting gospel, that glory which *excelleth*, that crown of glory, *which fadeth not away*.

But the occasion of the day leads me to apply the text to those fruits and gifts of the divine goodness, with which our land has been crowned this year past, which the house of peers in their address have called, "A WONDERFUL YEAR;" and therefore we may take leave to call it so, who must form our ideas of public affairs very much by the sentiments of those, who are better acquainted than we can be with the particular motions of them, and have a clearer insight into their secret springs and tendencies than it is fit for us to pretend to. I know present things are apt to affect us most, and will allow for that; remembering many a thing, which we called a great and mighty thing when it was in the doing, but it afterwards dwindled, and looked very little: but not undervaluing what God has wrought for us formerly, as if there had never been the like before, nor pre-judging what may yet be in the womb of a kind providence, as if we were never to expect the like again, but only giving it its due weight, and what we think it will hold to, it cannot be denied, but that God has of late done great things for us; [a] so *they say among the heathen*, and shall not we say it among ourselves?

Blessed be God for the many testimonies borne this day, by better hearts and better tongues than mine, to the glory of God's goodness: but into the great treasury of the nation's offering, into which the great men cast in of their abundance, we are here out of our poverty to cast in our mite: and the righteous acts of the Lord must be rehearsed at the *places of drawing water*, [b] which were the rendezvous of the meaner sort of people, as well as in the *palaces* of Jacob, where the princes of our people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham. [c] And we trust it shall please the Lord better than hecatombs of drink-offerings and sacrifices.

In this plain and short acknowledgment, let us therefore all join with thankful hearts, *Lord, thou crownest the year*—THIS year *with thy goodness*. Observe,

1. God and his providence must be owned in all the blessings of the year. Whatever has been or is our honour, our joy, our hope, comes from God's hand, and he must have the praise of it. We are very unthinking and unwise if we know not, and very unjust and ungrateful if we own not, that God *gives us our corn, our wine, our oils*, [d] our victories, our wealth, our peace, our all: *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?* [e] whatever it is we glory in: *Let him that glories, therefore glory in the Lord.* [f]

It is fit instruments should have their due praise: and the sense the nation has expressed of its obligations to those whom God has honoured in the public service, is a very good indication. It was a sign that Israel remembered not the Lord their God, when they shewed not kindness to the house of Gideon [a]: but we must lift up our eyes above the hills, as high as heaven, for from thence cometh our help [b], and our salvation. It is not from our own sword or bow, but from God's right hand and his arm, that our kingdom is great, our power victorious, and our glory bright; and therefore to him must the kingdom, the power, and the glory, be ascribed. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel;* for without him it never had been done, how willingly soever the people offered themselves [c].

We believe there is a providence that governs the world, and rules in all the affairs of it; and good men have the comfort of it every day. Even a heathen could say, Ου'κ ἐ;ι ζῆν ἐν τῷ κοσμῷ κενῷ Θεῶν και κενῇ προνοιας. *There were no living in this world without God and his providence.* If providence be our support in the day of our distress, let providence have our praise in the day of our triumph. It watches us particularly, let us watch it filially; and since every creature is that to us that God makes it to be, let our thanks pass through the instruments to the Great Author of all our salvation.

2. The goodness of God must in a particular manner be acknowledged; as that in which all our springs are, and from which all our streams flow. We must take notice, not only of his wisdom and power in effecting things great and admirable in themselves, but his goodness and mercy in doing that which is happy and advantageous for us; and make that the burden of all our songs, *For he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever*; a short song, but highly honoured, when it was upon the singing of these words, that the glory of the Lord took possession of Solomon's temple [d].

When we consider what an unworthy people we are, how ungrateful we have been for God's former favours, and what unsuitable returns we have made, we have reason to admire God's goodness, above all his attributes, in the repetition and progress of his blessings; for he is good to the evil and unthankful. If England's God and Saviour had not been a God of infinite mercy, God and not man, in pardoning sin, we had been ruined long since: but his goodness is his glory, and it is ours; in it, the power of the Lord is great, according as he hath spoken [e].

Acts of justice to the church's enemies are acts of goodness to her friends. When *he that is mighty doth great things, and scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts;* it is in *remembrance of his mercy*,—and *his mercy* therein, *is on them that fear him from generation to generation.* [f] O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness! *Lord, thou art good and dost good*; and thou, therefore, dost good, because thou art good, not for any merit of ours, but for the honour of thine own mercy.

3. These blessings which flow from the goodness of God have crowned this year; he in them has crowned it. That word shall lead us into the detail of those favours, which we are, this day to take notice of, with

[a] Ps. 26. 2, 3. [b] Judg. 5. 11. [c] Ps. 47. 9. [d] Hos. 2. 8. [e] Job 12. 9. [f] 1 Cor. 1. 31.

[a] Judg. 8. 34, 35. [b] Ps. 121. 1. [c] Judg. 5. 2. [d] 2 Chr. 5. 13. [e] Num. 14. 17. [f] Luke 1. 49, 50

thankfulness,

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thankfulness, to the glory of God. A crown signifies three things, and each will be of use to us. (1.) It dignifies and adorns. (2.) It surrounds and encloses. And (3.) It finishes and compleats. And accordingly this year has been dignified, surrounded, and finished with the blessings of God's goodness.

(1.) God hath dignified this year with his goodness. A crown denotes honour. Heaven itself, which is perfect holiness in everlasting honour, is often represented by a crown; *A crown of glory which fadeth not away*: and a year of honour this has been to our land; the children that shall be born will call it so.

Surely the English nation never looked greater, nor made a better figure, among the nations than it does at this day. Never did it appear more formidable to its enemies, nor more acceptable to its friends; never were the eyes of Europe more upon its counsels; never was its alliance more courted and valued, nor its influences upon all its confederates more powerful and benign; never was English conduct and English courage more admired, nor our English Jerusalem more a praise in the earth: would to God our goodness grew in proportion to out greatness; (and that would be both the advancement and security of our greatness;) and that when God, as he promised Israel, *makes us high in praise, and in name and in honour*, this might be the fruit of it, *that* (as it follows there) *we might be a holy people to the Lord our God*[a]; that while our forces, and those of our allies, are triumphing over the common enemy of Europe abroad; giving us occasion for one thanksgiving-day after another; virtue and serious godliness might triumph—over vice and profaneness, impiety and immorality, those common enemies of mankind—at home; that the pious proclamation of our gracious queen, and her other endeavours for the suppression of vice, and the support of religion, may not be frustrated; that all our other glories may be made substantial, and may be established—to us, and those that shall come after us, by that righteousness which exalteth a nation; and may not be withered by sin, which is a reproach to any people, especially to ours.

Two crowns are at this day the honour of our English nation, and for both we are highly indebted to the divine goodness: The imperial crown of government at home; and the triumphal crown of victory abroad.

[1.] The imperial crown of government at home is our honour and joy, and that by which we have a great deal of reason to value ourselves, and for which we have no less reason to be thankful to God, who because he loved our land,[b] and his thoughts concerning us were thoughts of good, and not of evil to give us an expected end,[c] set such a government over us.

Which of all the crowns of Europe can pretend to outshine the English diadem at this day, which is as the sun when it goes forth in its strength? The flowers of our crown are not—like his on the other side of the water, who would be called *the king of glory*—gathered out of the spoils of ruined rights, and liberties of the subject, nor stained like his, with *righteous blood*. The jewels of our crown are—not got by fraud and rapine from injured neighbours; not, like his, seized by an unrighteous war, and a deceitful peace, in a bold and impudent defiance of all that is honourable, just and sacred: no, the flowers and jewels of our crown are *its own* against all the world; none of all our neighbours has any demand upon us. Mercy and truth are the splendour of our crown, and justice and righteousness the never-failing supporters of our throne. The globe and sceptre, that is, the wealth and power of the English Sovereign, are both equitable beyond dispute,—who, therefore, may justly assume that motto and abide by it, *Je mien tiendrai,—I will hold my own.*

How happy, how very happy is the constitution of our government! such as effectually secures both the just prerogatives of the prince, and the just properties of the subject; so that no good prince can desire to be greater, nor any good subject desire to be easier, than the constitution of our government provides: for which, we may justly be the envy of all our neighbours; and in which, we ourselves ought to take the greatest satisfaction, sitting down with delight under the shadow of it. If there be any who are *given to change*, I am sure we have no reason to *meddle with them. O my Soul, come not thou into their secret.* The ancient landmarks, which our fathers have set, and which the patriots of our own age have confirmed, are so well placed, that in kindness to posterity, as well as in honour to antiquity, we have reason to pray they may never be removed.

Thus bright does the crown of England shine:—yet this is not all the honour of our day. We have further to add, that the head that wears this crown, reflects more honour to it, than it borrows from it. A true Deborah, a Mother in Israel, a prudent, careful, tender mother to the Israel of God: one who intirely *seeks the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed;* who is herself a great pattern of virtue and piety, and a pattern of it in her realms; whose conduct is as pure and unexceptionable, as her title is clear and incontestible. It is with very good reason that we do so often in our religious assemblies, bless God "for her, and for her wise and good government, and "the tranquillity we enjoy under the protection and "influences of it."

Far be it from me to *give flattering titles unto man* any where, especially in this place; in so doing *my Maker would soon take me away*[a]: but from a deep conviction of God's goodness to us, and to our land, in the present government, I think it is my duty, as a minister, to stir up myself and you, thankfully to acknowledge it to the glory of our Lord Jesus, the eternal wisdom of the Father, *by whom kings and queens reign, and princes decree justice;* and as the performance of that promise which is made to the gospel-church, *Kings shall be her nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers.* Faithful is he who has promised.

I find it related concerning that holy good man, Mr. Richard

[a] Deut. 26. 19. [b] 2 Chr. 9. 8. [c] Jer. 29. 11.

[a] Job 32. 22.

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Richard Greenham, who lived and died in the glorious reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, that "He much rejoiced and praised God for the happy government of that princess, and for the blessed calm and peace of God's church and people under it; and spake often of it both publicly and privately, as he was occasioned, and stirred up the hearts of all men what he could, to pray, and to praise God with him for it continually; yea, this matter so affected him, that the day before he died, his thoughts were much troubled, for that men were so unthankful for her happy deliverance from the conspiracies of the papists against her." And I am sure we have no less reason to be thankful for the good government we are under, but much more; so far does the copy go beyond the original.

The happiness of the nation in the present ministry, the prudence of our counsellors, the confessed fidelity of those in public trusts, the harmony and good understanding between the queen and the two houses, and their mutual confidence in each other, and that between the houses, with the triumphs of catholic charity over bigotry on all sides, ought to be taken notice of by us with all thankfulness, to the glory of that God who has thus crowned us with the blessings of goodness.

And lastly, the project set on foot for the uniting of the two imperial crowns in one, that England and Scotland, like Judah and Ephraim[a], may become one stick in the hand of the Lord, which our wise men think will add greatly to the strength, wealth and honour of this land, is one of the blessings with which this year has been crowned; though the perfecting of it is reserved to be the crown of another year, as we hope the good effects of it will crown the years of many generations, and posterity will for it call this reign blessed.

[2.] The triumphal crown of victory abroad is likewise the honour and joy of our land at this day. What a series of successes has this year been crowned with! and how glorious will the history of it appear in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in[b] Flanders, what in Spain, what in Italy! However it shall please God for the future to deal with us, here we must set up our Ebenezer, and say, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.*

It was a clear and glorious victory which opened the campaign in Flanders, when we scarce knew that the armies had taken the field, and which, through the good hand of our God upon us, was well improved. It was a happy turn that was given to our affairs at Barcelona, which if it might have been better improved afterwards, ought not to make us unthankful to God for the good footing then, and there gotten. In these and other instances, the righteous God has pleaded our righteous cause, and given judgment for us.

And a righteous cause it is: it is requisite that we be clear in this, that we may make our prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for its prosperity and success in faith. Something it may not be improper for me to say to make it out, for the help of those of you who are not capable of getting better information.

Judge therefore within yourselves;

(i.) Is not that a righteous war, which is undertaken for the asserting the rights of injured nations, and the securing of the common interests of Europe? It is in the necessary defence of these that we appear, and act at this day, in conjunction with our allies, against the exorbitant power, and boundless ambition of France, which must be reduced, which must be repressed, or we and our neighbours, we and our posterity cannot be safe.

When proud and haughty men will aim at an universal monarchy, will oblige every sheaf to bow to theirs, will command the territories and treasures of all their neighbours, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth[c]; it is necessary to the public safety, and is for the honour of God, as King of Nations, that a check be given to their rage, *Here shall thy proud waves be stayed*, which by aiming at universal monarchy, threaten an universal deluge. He who, like Ishmael, has his hand against every man, must have every man's hand against him, and can expect no other.

War among the nations, is like the administration of justice in a particular community, it is a revenger to execute wrath upon him who does wrong[b]; it is a terror to evil-doers, and a protection of right. There are no courts of justice in which an unrighteous king and kingdom may be impleaded, and by whose sentence restitution may be awarded, the injured righted, and wrong-doers punished: the court of Heaven therefore must be appealed to by the drawing of the sword of war, when gentler methods have been tried in vain; for it must be the *Ratioultima Regum,—the dernier resort of injured nations.* In this supreme court Jephtha thus lodges his appeal, *The Lord, the Judge, be Judge this day between the children of Israel, and the children of Ammon*[c]. And the final determination of these appeals, no doubt, will be according to equity; for he who sits in the throne judgeth right: though the righteous cause is not always crowned with victory at first, witness the war between Israel and the Benjamites[d], yet great is the truth, and will prevail at last. See Job. 20. 15.

The expence of blood and treasure must not be grudged, when it is necessary for the settling the balance of power, the securing of the just rights of nations, and the cutting off of those horns with which they have been wounded and scattered[e].

And the case is very much strengthened, when acts of violence and injustice are maintained by treachery, and a perfidious violation of oaths and leagues; when the public faith of princes and states is pawned in vain, and the most sacred cords by which conscience should be held, are snapt in sunder like Sampson's bonds, only because a man thinks himself a Sampson for

[a] Ezek. 37. 19. [b] Num. 21 14.

[a] Isa. 5. 8. [b] Rom. 13. 4. [c] Judg. 11. 27. [d] Judg. 20. [e] Zech. 1. 21.

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strength: and this not once or twice, but often, then it is time to draw the sword to avenge the quarrel of the covenant. If a man despise an oath, and break through that, when lo, he hath given his hand, *As I live*, says the Lord, *he shall not escape*, but *it shall surely be recompensed* upon that faithless head.[a] War is an appeal to God's providence, as the Lord of Hosts, against those who would not abide by an appeal to his ordinance, as the God of truth.

(ii.) Is not that a righteous war, which is undertaken in defence of the particular interests of our nation? If we had not helped our neighbours to quench the fire in their borders, we know not how soon it might have been kindled in our own bowels, and it might have been out of the power of our hands to extinguish it, and to prevent the ruin of all that is dear to us. It is for our people, and the cities of our God, that we engage in this war, self-preservation requires it.

How can we be safe? How can we sit still unconcerned, while so formidable a neighbour as France has been, not only harbours, but espouses the cause, and aims at the establishment of one who pretends to our crown, sets up a title, and makes an interest against the best of governments, and manifestly designs the ruin of our religion, rights and liberties, and all we have that is valuable? How can we do otherwise, who must write after a *French Copy*, and be governed by *French Counsels?*

Did the wisdom of the nation find it requisite to oblige us, by an oath, not only to be faithful to the present government, but to maintain the succession as it is established in the Protestant line? (which we pray God late to bring in, but long to continue, that it may prove a successful expedient, for the extinguishing of the hopes of our Popish adversaries, and all their aiders and abettors:) and is it not the duty, as well as interest of the nation, in pursuance to that engagement, to take all possible precaution for the fortifying our bulwarks against every attempt upon that establishment? There is no man that has sincerely abjured the Pretender, but he must in good earnest pray against his supporters.

Well! this is the cause, the just and honourable cause, in which our banner is displayed; for the prosperity of which we have often prayed; and in the good success of which we are this day rejoicing, as that which is very much the honour of *this* year. If in any places which we are concerned for, there have been some losses, and disappointments,—or advances not so quick as we were apt to promise ourselves,—those need not surprise or perplex us: in general, the progress of our arms has been very considerable, beyond what we could reasonably have expected, and likely to turn greatly to our advantage.

2. God has *surrounded* this year with his goodness, *compassed and enclosed it* on every side. So we translate the same word, (Ps. 5. 12.) *With favour wilt thou compass* (or crown) *him as with a shield.* He has given us instances of his goodness in every thing that concerns us; so that turn which way we will, we meet with the tokens of his favour: every part of the year has been enriched with the blessings of heaven, and no gap has been left open for any desolating judgment to enter by. A hedge of protection and peculiar inclosure has been made about us on every side, and has been to us as the crown to the head; so entirely have we been begirt by it, and *comforted on every side.*[a]

Let us observe some instances of that goodness which has *gone through* the year.

(1.) It has been a year of peace and tranquillity at home, even while we have been engaged in war abroad; as, thanks be to God, the years past have been. The God of peace makes peace in our borders;[b] securing us from foreign invasions *upon* our borders, and domestic insurrections *within* our borders; and blessing the care of those, who under him are the conservators of our peace. We ought to be so much the more sensible of this mercy, and thankful for it, because so many other countries in Europe are at this time the seat of war. When we read in the public intelligences of the ruin of cities by long sieges, the putting of all to the sword, and the devastations made in those countries where armies are encamped,—let us take occasion to bless God, that it is not so in our land. We hear, indeed, of wars, and rumours of wars in other countries; but at so great a distance, that they create no horror or inconvenience to us. What a consternation was the prophet Jeremiah himself put into by the noise of war; *My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*[c] Thanks be to God, we are not acquainted with those frights, we see not those desolations of fire and sword, we hear not the thundering noise of the instruments of war, that breathe threatenings and slaughter.* How pleasant is the noise of yonder great guns, now they are proclaiming our victories, and celebrating our triumphs, and as it were discharging war out of our kingdom! But how dreadful would it be, how would it make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble, if the noise came from the batteries of an enemy, and every shot carried with it a messenger of death flying swiftly!

The peace we enjoy is the comfort of our lives, the security of our estates, and the protection both of the civil and sacred administrations. War is an interruption to the course of justice, and a disturbance to its courts, an obstruction to the progress of the word of God, and a terror to religious assemblies: But, blessed be God, both are held among us *without fear:* on *all our glory* this is a defence:[d] and this makes our English Jerusalem a quiet habitation, and the cities of our solemnities doubly pleasant to us.[e] To this we owe it, that the highways are not unoccupied, that the plains are not deserted, and that our cities remain in their strength. We are *delivered from the noise of archers, at*

[a] Ezek. 17. 18, 19.

[a] Ps. 71. 21. [b] Ps. 147. 14. [c] Jer. 4. 19. [d] Isa. 4. 5. [e] Isa. 33. 20.

* Just as these words were spoken, it happened that the cannon of the castle began to be discharged in honour of the day, within hearing of our assembly, which occasioned the following remark.

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the places of drawing water: here, therefore, let us rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even his righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel.[a]

Thanks be to God, it is with us at this day, as it was with Judah and Israel in Solomon's time, when they dwelt safely, every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree,[b] and the property of them not questioned or invaded; what we have we can call our own; and the enjoyment of them not disturbed or imbittered to us. God grant, that security and sensuality may not be the *ill* effects of so *good* a cause, as our long peace and tranquillity!

(2.) It has been a year of plenty, and abundance of the increase of the earth. Though we of this country were threatened, and somewhat incommoded by unseasonable and excessive rains in the time of harvest, (and it has been observed, that our land, unlike to Canaan, is in danger of suffering by too much rain more than by too little;) yet in wrath God remembered mercy, and our corn was not *taken away*, as it might have been *in the season thereof;* but our markets are full, and a kind Providence does abundantly bless our provisions, and satisfies our poor with bread,[c] if any thing will satisfy them. It is a pity this should be complained of as a grievance by the seller, which is so great a blessing to the buyer; and that some expedient or other is not found out, in imitation of Joseph's prudence, to keep the balance somewhat even between them; that he who sells his corn, may neither have cause to complain of plenty, nor he who buys the bread, of scarcity.

Whatever complaints bad hearts may make of bad times, the scarcity of money, and the burthen of taxes, and the like; those who know the world better than I do, observe, "that whatever there are in France, in England there are no visible marks of poverty; nor any sign to be seen either in building or furniture, either in food or clothing; no, nor in the alehouse or the tavern, (where one would think, money if scarce, should first be spared,) of the decay of our trade, and the expence of the war being insupportable."

(3.) It should seem to have been a year too of more trade than one would have expected, considering the war. Numerous fleets of merchantmen are come in, and our surrounding ocean is not only as a strong wall to us, but as a rich mine; so that with Zebulun we *suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.*[d] If it be complained of that we lose more ships of trade to the enemy than they to us, it must be considered, that suppose the matter of fact be so, the reason is because we have more to lose, abundantly more, and more valuable.

May our merchandise, and our hire, be holiness to the Lord,[e] that a blessing may rest upon it, as it will, if we consecrate our gain unto the Lord, and our substance to the Lord of the whole earth.[f]

(4.) It has been a year of constant opportunities for our souls, and plenty of the means of grace. This, this is that which crowns the year with God's goodness more than any thing. The greatest honour of our land is, that God's tabernacle is among us, the Lord is known, his name is great. This makes it *beautiful for situation*, and *the joy of the whole earth*, and to us whose lot is cast in it, a *pleasant land* indeed: that we are a Christian nation, a Protestant nation; that we have plenty of Bibles in a language we understand, and not only that we may read them without danger of the inquisition, but that we have them read to us, have stewards of God's house among us, to break to us this bread of life; *our eyes see our teachers*, and they are not *removed into corners;* and the word of the Lord is not, *in respect of scarcity*, precious in our days; but we have *open vision*. God makes known his statutes and judgments to us, and has not dealt so with other nations. Our fleece is wet with the dew of heaven, while their's is dry. It is our religion that is our glory; it is the fear of the Lord that is our treasure; it is God himself that is our crown and diadem of beauty.[a]

The sabbaths of the year are the crown of it. The Jews called the sabbath their *Queen:* and the crown of our sabbaths, is our solemn assemblies, which we have had the comfort of throughout the year, throughout the land, without interruption, in the stated times appointed for them; it is that we have Moses and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles, *read in our synagogues* every sabbath-day.[b] It is a comfort to us, when we come together to worship God, that we do it not only in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ, but *in a spiritual communion*, with *all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's;* that we worship the same God, in the same name, by the same rule of the written word, under the conduct of the same Spirit, and in expectation of the same blessed hope. But our communion with the religious assemblies of our own land; both those by the legal establishment, and those by the legal toleration; is, in a particular manner, comfortable to us. Our brethren's services to God and his Church who move in a higher and larger sphere, we rejoice in, and heartily wish well to; and think we have a great deal of reason to be thankful also, both to God and the government, for the continuance of our own liberties and opportunities, which we desire always to be found quiet and peaceable, humble and charitable in the use of, and diligent and faithful in the improvement of, for the glorifying of God, and the working out of our own salvation.

Thus has the year been surrounded with the fruits of God's goodness, and we have been compassed with songs of deliverance. In consideration whereof, let us be constant and universal in our obedience to God, *steady and uniform* in our returns of duty to him, whose compassions to us *are so*, and *never fail.*

3. God has crowned, that is, he hath finished this year with his goodness. The happy issue of an affair we call the crown of it; and the close of this year's actions may well be looked upon as the beauty of the whole year, the crown of the whole work; of which his

[a] Judges 5. 11. [b] 1 Kings 4. 25. [c] Ps. 132. 15. [d] Deut. 33. 19. [e] Is. 23. 18. [f] Mic. 4. 13.

[a] Isa. 28. 5. [b] Acts 13. 27.

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favour has both laid the foundation, and brought forth the top-stone with shouting.

In the beginning of the year, God did remarkably precede us with the blessing of his goodness;[a] met us with a victory early in the morning of the campaign, before we were well awake, which left room for the doing of a good day's work in prosecution of it. Yet we rendered not according to the benefit done unto us: for which he might justly have turned his hand against us, and have made the latter end of the year, by some fatal disgrace or disappointment, to have undone what had been done so gloriously in the beginning of the year, so that we might have been obliged to conclude the year with a fast: but he has not *dealt with us according to our sins;* the same powerful and gracious hand that went before us then, crowns us now with honour and joy: the end of the year is of a piece with the beginning; and, in answer to our prayers on the last thanksgiving day, he has favoured us with *another* feast and a good day, in which we have light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. Thus is God known by his name Jehovah, a finishing God; a Rock whose work is perfect: and thus are we admonished, when we have begun in the spirit, not to end in the flesh.

Two things crown this year, and make the conclusion of it Great; and both must be attributed to the goodness of God.

(1.) The successes of our allies abroad; the wonderful relief of Turin, and the restoration of that excluded prince to his capital, when his affairs were reduced to the last extremity, and the enemy was confident of carrying the day. And that this should be but one day's work, but two or three hours' action—this is such a loss and mortification to our adversaries; and the consequences of it, in Italy, of such vast advantage to our allies, and likely to be more so; that the year must be acknowledged to end as honourably and happily as it began. *This is the Lord's doing!*

That which magnified the mercy in the beginning of the year, was, that our expectations were in it anticipated; that which magnifies this in the end of the year, is, that our expectations in it were far outdone. In that, God was better to us than our hopes; in this, than our fears; in both, than our deserts.

(2.) The unanimity of our counsels at home. The presence of God is as much to be observed and owned *in the congregation of the mighty, and judging among the gods,*[b] as in the high places of the field determining the issues of war, and turning the hovering scale of victory. It is He who gives a spirit of judgment to them who sit in council, as well as *strength to them that turn the battle to the gate:*[c] and in this matter, he who has all hearts in his hands, who made man's mouth, the hearing ear and the seeing eye, has done well for us, and crowned the year.

All who undertake to give the sense of the nation, or of any part of it; the lords, the commons, the convocation; all agree to admire the present happy posture of our affairs, and the flourishing state of the kingdom under this government, and in this conjuncture. Never did the English nation appear to be so universally easy, so pleased, so entirely satisfied in the public management and administration. *Happy art thou,* O England, *who is like unto thee, O people?* Never was such a hearty zeal discovered for the common cause of our religion and liberties, against the threatening power of France; nor were ever the necessary supports of that cause given so speedily, so cheerfully, and with such expressions of a willingness to continue them, till it be in our power to oblige that perfidious foe to such a just and honourable peace, as it shall not be in his power to violate. In a word, the temper and good affection of the nation at this day, seems not unlike that of the people of Israel, when Solomon dismissed them from the feast of dedication, *They blessed the king, and went unto their tents, joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people,* 1 Kings 8. 66. Long—and ever—may it be so!

Ministers (I know) are the unfittest persons, and the pulpit the unfittest place in the world, to talk of state-affairs in. You know it is not my practice; and I am sure, I am most in my element when I am preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified. But I would endeavour to do the work of every day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires; and on such occasions as these, one had as good say nothing, as nothing to the purpose; and therefore, though I am not so well versed in the public affairs as to be particular in my remarks, nor such a master of language as to be fine in them; yet the hints I have given you of God's favours to our land at this day, and the great goodness with which the year we are now concluding has been crowned, will serve to answer in some measure my intention, (and it is no other than what becomes a minister of the gospel,) which is, to excite your thankfulness to so good a God, and to confirm your affections to, and satisfaction in so good a government: and therefore, I hope, you will neither think them impertinent, nor find them all together unprofitable.

III. Application.

That which remains, is to make some improvement of our observations concerning that goodness with which God has crowned this year, that we may go away (as we should aim to do from every sermon) some way wiser and better.

1. Has God thus crowned the year? Let us cast all the crowns of it at his feet, by our humble, grateful acknowledgments of his infinite wisdom, power and mercy. What we have the joy of, let God have the praise of. The blessed spirits above cast their crowns before the throne,[a] and that is the fittest place for all our crowns. Let praise continue to wait on Him, who, though he be attended with the praises of angels, yet, is pleased to inhabit the praises of Israel.[b] Let our closets and families witness to our constant pious ado-

[a] Ps. 91. 3. [b] Ps. 82. 1. [c] Isa. 28. 6.

[a] Rev. 4. 10. [b] Ps. 22. 3.

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rations of the divine greatness, and devout acknowledgments of the divine goodness to us, and to our land; that every day may be with us a thanksgiving-day, and we may live a life of praise, that work of Heaven. David did so, *Every day will I bless thee*;[a] nay, almost every hour in the day, *Seven times a day will I praise thee.*[b]

God must have the glory, particularly of all our victories; and every monument of them must be sacred to the ETERNAL LORD, rather than to *the eternal memory of any man:* nor ought the most meritorious and distinguished actions of the greatest heroes to be registered, without some acknowledgment to that supreme *Numen—Deity*, whose universal and over-ruling providence, guided their eyes, strengthened their arms, and covered their heads. *All people will thus walk in the name of their God,*[c] and shall not we? If Amalek be subdued, the memorial of it is an altar, not a triumphal arch; and is inscribed to the honour not of Moses or Joshua, but of God himself, *Jehovah Nissi,—The Lord my Banner.*

In this, both our Illustrious Sovereign, and her great General, are examples to the nation; (and, as much as in other things do real honour to it by doing honour to the religion of it:) that from him in the camp, immediately upon the obtaining of a victory; and from her in the church, in due time after; and from both, in the most solemn manner; the incense of praise ascends to the glory of God, as the God of our salvation. These, who thus honour God, no doubt, he will yet further honour; and make those crowns, those coronets, to shine yet more bright, which are thus laid at his feet, with *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.*

If we be remiss to ascribe the praise of our atchievments to God,—we provoke him to turn his hand against us, and by some judgment or other to distrain for the rent which is not duly paid. When Sampson had with the jaw-bone of an ass laid a thousand Philistines dead upon the spot, he seems to take the praise of the performance too much to himself, and to overlook the arm that strengthened him, when he called the place, *Ramath-lehi—the lifting up of the jaw-bone:*[d] and, therefore—by a very afflictive thirst which seized him immediately after, and drove him to his prayers—God reduced his pride, and made him know his own weakness, and dependance upon God, and obliged him to give a new name to the place, *Enhakkore,—the well of him that cried,*[e] not of him that *conquered.* The more thankful we are for former mercies, the better prepared we are for further mercies.

2. Has God thus crowned the year? Let not us then profane our crown, nor lay our honour in the dust, by our unworthy walking. Let the goodness of God lead us to repentance, and engage us all to reform our lives, and families, to be more watchful against sin, and to abound more in the service of God, and in every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy. Then, and then only, we offer praise, so as indeed to glorify God, when we order our conversation aright; and then shall we be sure to see his great salvation, and be for ever praising him.

It does indeed give both a damp to our joy, and a shock to our hopes at this day, that notwithstanding the great things God has done for us, there is yet so much wickedness to be found among us; so much impiety, so much immorality; and both arising from practical atheism and infidelity, and accompanied with a contempt of religion and sacred things. What shall we say to these things! It is some encouragement to us to hear, as we do by some, that through the pious care of the general, there is a manifest reformation of manners in the army; vice discountenanced, and virtue in reputation; God grant it may be more and more so! it would be the happiest omen of any other. It is likewise to be rejoiced in, that there are national testimonies borne against vice and profaneness, and national endeavours used for the suppressing of it: which we heartily pray God both to give success to, and graciously to accept of, that the wickedness which is not *prevented*, yet may not be laid to the charge of the land, nor bring judgments upon the community.

But it is our duty to lament *the wickedness of the wicked;* to sigh, and cry for the abominations that are found among us; to witness against them in our places; and, so, to *keep ourselves pure* from them, and to do our utmost by our prayers and endeavours to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end. And thus we may prevent the mischief of it to the nation, and empty the measure which others are filling, that there may be a *lengthening out of our tranquillity.*

3. Now we are reviewing with thankfulness, the mercies of the year past: Let us at the same time reflect with sorrow and shame upon the sins of the year past; our own sins, I mean, for it is enough for us to judge ourselves. The year has been full of goodness on God's part, but very empty on our's. He has not been as a barren wilderness to us, or as waters that fail; but we have been so to him, very careless and defective in our duty, and in many instances we have come short.

Our time has been mis-spent, our opportunities not improved; God has come this year *seeking fruit* among us, but how little has he found! God brings our years to an end, as a HISTORY THAT IS WRITTEN, so substantial and valuable are the gifts of his favour to us: but we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told,[a] so idle, and trifling and insignificant, are we in our carriage toward him.

4. Let God's goodness to us engage, and increase, our goodness to one another: it is justly expected, that they who obtain mercy should shew mercy, and so reflect the rays of the divine goodness upon all about them; being herein *followers of God as dear children;*[b] *followers of Him that is good,*[c] in his goodness.

Let God's goodness to us constrain us as we have opportunity to do good to all men; to do good with

[a] Ps. 145. 2. [b] Ps. 119. 164. [c] Mic. 4. 5. [d] Judg. 15. 17. [e] Judg. 15. 19.

[a] Ps. 90. 9. [b] Eph. 5. 1. [c] 1 Pet. 3. 13.

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what we have in the world, as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God; (charity must crown a thanksgiving-day;) to do good with all the abilities God gives us, remembering that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Let it particularly incline us to do good to those from whose sentiments ours' differ in the less weighty matters of the law. This I would take all occasions to press upon myself and others, pursuant to the great royal law of charity. There is an infinite distance between God and us, and a just controversy he has with us, and yet he is kind to us, and does us good; and cannot we then be kind to one another, and do all good offices one to another, notwithstanding the matters in variance between us? How ill does it become us to bear a grudge to any of the children of our people, or wish ill to any, who are every day, and every year crowned with the goodness of God; and are, and hope to be forgiven of him! Let not our eye be evil one toward another; when God's eye is so good toward us all, and he does things for us, which we all come in for a share of the benefit of, and are all this day giving thanks for. Let our common success against our enemies abroad, help to stay all enmities at home; and let all our consciences be able to witness for us, that we *walk in love*, and *keep the unity of the spirit*.

4. *et ult.* Let this year's experience help to support and encourage next year's expectations. Has God crowned us with his goodness this year? let us thence infer, that if we approve ourselves faithful to God, surely goodness and mercy shall still follow us. And our hopes ought to be the matter of our praises as well as our joys. *Unto thee do we give thanks*, (says the Psalmist) *unto thee do we give thanks; for that thy name is near, thy wonderous works declare.*[a] The wonderous works we are this day giving thanks for, are upon this account the more valuable, that they give us ground to hope, that *God's name is near*,—the advancement of his kingdom,—and, in that, the accomplishment of his promise. That comprehensive prayer: *Father, glorify thy name*: has already obtained an answer, from Heaven,—which true believers may apply to themselves; *I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again.*[b] Amen, so be it. Hallelujah.

ENGLAND'S HOPES:
A SERMON,

PREACHED

JANUARY THE FIRST, 1706.

Isa. 63. 4.

The Year of my Redeemed is come.

A New year is now come. The common compliment of the morning is: "I wish you a good new year;" and it is well; hearty well-wishers we ought to be to the welfare one of another. God by his grace make us all wiser and better, and give us to live better every year; better, this year, than we did the last,—and then it will be indeed a good new-year. Good hearts will make good times, and good years.

Have any of you had any good purposes and resolutions in your minds, the prosecution whereof has hitherto been delayed? put it off no longer. Is the house of God yet to be set up in your hearts, the work to be begun? begin it, to-day; as Moses did, who, on the first day of the first month, set up the tabernacle.[a] Are there things amiss with you to be amended, corruptions to be purged out, and things wanting to be set in order? begin this day, to reform; as Hezekiah did, who, on the first day of the first month, began to sanctify the house of the Lord:[c] so will you make this day in the best manner remarkable, and this year comfortable.

But that which at present I aim at, is to direct you—in wishing a good year—to the church of God, and the kingdom of Christ in the world; and, particularly, to the land of our nativity,—to the prosperity of which, in all its interests, I hope every one of us bears a very hearty good-will, that in the peace thereof we may have peace. *For we are members one of another.*

My text would easily lead me to *foretel* a good year: But I am no prophet, nor prophet's son, nor dare I ever pretend to prediction; nor indeed, can I give heed to any other but the most sure word of prophecy in the written word, which is a light shining in a dark place.[d] Christ's parting words to his disciples at his ascension, is sufficient to silence all bold enquiries, and much more all presumptuous determinations concerning future events; *It is not for you to know the times, and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own*

[a] Exod. 40. 2.

[a] Ps. 75. 1. [b] John 12. 28. [c] 2 Chro. 29. 17. [d] 2 Pet. 1. 19.

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power.[a] Astrological predictions I utterly condemn; I hope you know better things than to have any regard to them. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the astrologers, the star-gazers, and the monthly prognosticators, in his time, as great cheats, that imposed upon the world. *The heavens declare the glory of God,*[b] and magnify the τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ,—*that which* IS, and MAY BE *known of God;* but were never intended to declare the will of God,[c] or any of those *secret things* which *belong not to us.*[d] Scripture prophecies I have a profound veneration for, and of admirable use they are to give us a general idea of the methods of Providence concerning the church, and to furnish us with a key to many of the difficulties of it, and thereby to assist our faith and hope in the worst of times. But the particular intention and application of them, till the event unfolds them; though I greatly value the labours of those who have searched into them, yet to me it seems *higher than heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell, what can we know?* It is what we cannot *by searching find out to perfection,* or to satisfaction.

My design therefore, in the choice of this text today, is not to gratify your curiosity with prognostications of what *shall be;* but to direct your prayers for the church of God, and to offer something for the assistance of your faith in those prayers. *For we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.* I remember the rule long since given me, with reference to the prospects of public affairs; and shall still abide by it; "Pray, pray; and do not prophesy." We may be sure of an answer to the prayers of faith, but not of the accomplishment of the predictions of fancy.

Our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray: *Our Father who art in Heaven! thy kingdom come.* And it is fit we should take our instructions in prayer, from Him, on whose intercession we depend for the success of our prayers. Now when we pray, *Father, let thy kingdom come;* this, is one thing included in it, and intended by it, *Father, let the year of the redeemed come.* Let this therefore be our heart's desire, and our prayer to our heavenly Father, every day.

My text is part of that account which the victorious Redeemer gives of his glorious appearances against his and his church's enemies, represented by the Edomites, whom he *treads down in his anger,* and *tramples upon in his fury;*[e] and, therein, appears *more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*[f] Come, and with an eye of faith see the Lord Jesus, by his grace triumphing—over sin and corruption, and all the powers of Satan—in the souls of believers, under whose feet he will shortly tread that great enemy,[g] and make him *their* footstool,[h] as he has made them *his own.* Come, and see him, by his providence, triumphing over all antichristian powers and factions in the world; and all the maintainers and upholders of the Devil's kingdom; Pagan formerly, and Mahometan and Papal now: putting down all oppressing rule, principality and power, till he has compleated his whole undertaking. And upon the sight of this, let every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And if you ask, why Michael and his angels push on this war so vigorously, and at such a vast expence of blood and treasure? Michael himself shall answer you in the text, *The year of my Redeemed is come;* even the day appointed of the Father for this great performance; that day at which, as Mr. Norris expresses it in his paraphrase on this passage, "Fate folded down the iron leaf." Now the day prefixed is come, the work designed must be done, whatever it costs: *The Lord shall arise and have mercy upon Sion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come.*[a]

Let us observe here,

1. That the church and people of God, are Christ's redeemed,—*the ransomed of the Lord;* so they are called in the promise, *Isa.* 35. 10.—*the redeemed of the Lord,* so they are called upon to praise him, Ps. 107. 2. They are his own: *he* is *intitled* to *them,* as his own: and as his own, *they* are *very dear* to *him:* he formed them for himself: he bought them for himself, and paid dear for them; shed his blood, his precious blood, to purchase them, and purify them to himself; gave his life, an invaluable price, a ransom for them. They were sold by the guilt of sin, to the justice of God; had sold themselves, by their affection to it, unto the dominion of Satan: but out of both these bonds Christ has effectually provided for their discharge and deliverance.

He calls them, here, *his redeemed*—though as yet their redemption was not wrought out, and obtained, by the bringing-in of the everlasting righteousness—because he had undertaken to redeem them, and the work would as surely be effected, in the fulness of time, as if it were done already. Thus, when the Gospel was first preached in Corinth, and but few of that place were effectually called,—yet Christ said, *I have much people in this city*[b] They are mine already; for *the Lord knoweth them that are his,* and will lose none of them.

It is the honour of good people that they belong to Christ:[c] they are his, and shall be owned as his in that day when he makes up his jewels; but they have no reason to be proud of this honour; for—by this, boasting is for ever excluded; that they had not been his, if he had not bought them: they must be redeemed ere they could be preferred. Where is boasting then? we are bought, and therefore still bound; bought with a price, and therefore must not be our own, but his who bought us; to him we must live, and not to ourselves.

2. That there is a time fixed, concerning them, which is the year of the redeemed; when their Redeemer will do great things for them. A year which shall introduce a bright and glorious scene; which shall be crowned with their salvation. A year of jubilee, to them, (to which it seems to allude,) when they shall be discharged from their servitude, and restored to the

[a] Acts 1. 7. [b] Ps. 19. 1. [c] Rom. 1. 19. [d] Deut. 29. 29. [e] Deut. 33. 3. [f] Ps. 76. 4. [g] Rom. 16. 2. [h] Ps. 110. 1.

[a] Ps. 102. 13. [b] Acts 18. 10. [c] Mark 9. 41.

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glorious liberty, and inheritance *of the children of God*; which will be indeed to them *the acceptable year of the Lord*.

This is fixed, in the counsel and decree of God; which he has *purposed in himself*; and in which he has *determined all the times before appointed*; particularly the times concerning his Church, which is his garden inclosed, his Segullah, his peculiar treasure in the world,—about which his providence, through all the revolutions of time, is in a special manner conversant; and therefore his purposes from eternity were so. The affairs of the church were not left to the disposal of blind chance. The wheels on which it moves are animated by *the Spirit of the living creature*; and there are *eyes in the wheels*,[a] a wise providence that directs all for the best, according to the divine will, and the settled counsels of that will. The eternal mind never makes a transition to *new measures*, never takes up *new resolves*; *known unto God are all his works*, and all ours too, the events themselves, and the times of them, *from the beginning of the world*. Which yields an unspeakable satisfaction to all those who have but so much reason and religion as to believe—that God knows what is fit to be done, and when, better than we do, and that his time is, without doubt, the best time.

The providences of God concerning Israel of old, as well as their ordinances, were typical; and *things happened to them for ensamples* or patterns of the great salvation to be wrought in and for the Gospel-Church. Many a time was Israel afflicted, from their youth up; many a time, in the house of bondage: but still there was a year fixed for their redemption, when their warfare or appointed time should be accomplished,[b] and deliverance should be wrought for them. The year was fixed, for their redemption out of Egypt; and God kept time to a day; *At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self same day* they went out triumphantly.[c] The year was likewise fixed, for their return out of their captivity in Babylon; when seventy years were accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem.[d] And the distresses of the New Testament church are in like manner limited to *a time, times*, and *half a time*; which, if we know not how to compute with any certainty or exactness, yet, we may with the greatest assurance infer from it, that infinite wisdom has fixed the time, though it is not for us to know it. *Times are not hidden from the Almighty*, though *they that know him do not* as yet *see his day*,[e] nor foresee it.

3. That the year of the redeemed *will* come, though it may be long, first—long wished for, long waited for—yet it will come at last. Concerning the thing itself, we may be clear, we may be confident,—though concerning the time we may be in doubt, and in the dark. Though many years intervene between this, and the year of the redeemed, and those, perhaps, dark and cloudy and melancholy years, years in which we see evil,[f]—yet the days of affliction and captivity will be numbered and finished, and the years of servitude will come to an end; hitherto it shall come, but no further; so long it shall last, but no longer: God will *have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, though he* has had *indignation against them three-score and ten years*;[a] and he will *make them glad* with the joys of his salvation, in some proportion to the *days wherein he has afflicted them*.

Observe with what an air of triumph and exaltation the Redeemer, himself, here speaks of this great day; as one who longed to engage the enemy, and rescue the beloved of his soul, and who almost grew impatient of the delay. He cannot anticipate the time. The divine counsels are as mountains of brass,[b] which can neither move nor moulder: but when the wheels of his chariot, which have been so long in coming, arrive at last, how welcome are they! Now *the year of my redeemed is come*; *it is come*. And *Lo, I come*, with this *shout*, does *the Lord himself descend from Heaven, ride upon the wings of the Wind*,[c] and make the *mountains flow at his presence*.[d] With this does the Lord awake himself *as one out of sleep*, and like a *mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine*;[e] *the year of my Redeemer is come*. Now Χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι.—*Time*, that is, delay, *shall be no longer*.[f] Now will I arise; now shall the everlasting arm be made bare. *Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh*.

Now for the more distinct improvement of this,—let me apply it, both to the universal church of the redeemed, the whole family, in every age; and to particular churches, and the interests of the kingdom of Christ, in some special time and place

(1.) Let me briefly apply it to the whole mystical body of Christ, the universal church of the redeemed; in which we have cast our lot; and hope to have a place and a name in the *general assembly* of all who belong to it. And understanding it of this,—there are two which above all the rest may be called the years of the redeemed; one long since past, the other yet to come.

[1.] The year of Christ's dying was the great year of the redeemed, and that on which all the rest depend; from the salvation then wrought, the foundation was laid on which all the other more particular salvations of the church are built. Therefore in the Apocalypse the Lamb was to *make war with the beast* and to *overcome him*, appeared as a Lamb *that had been slain*.[g] And it is *by the blood of the Lamb* that the victory is said to be obtained.[h] And many understand the text of *that* year of the redeemed, when Christ by *death destroyed him who had the power of death*; trod the winegress of his Father's wrath alone, and *stained all his raiment* both with his own blood, and with the blood of his enemies.

Then was the price paid down; upon the undertaking, of which, the great Redeemer was trusted with the salvation of all the Old-Testament saints; and for which all who in every age believe in him should be justified and accepted. Then the chosen remnant was

[a] Ez. 1. 20. [b] Isa. 40. 2. [c] Ex. 12. 41. [d] Dan. 9, 2. [e] Job 24. 1. [f] Ps. 90. 15.

[a] Zec. 1. 12. [b] Zec. 6. 1. [c] Ps. 18. 9, 10. [d] Isa. 64. 2. [e] Ps. 78. 65. [f] Rev. 10. 6. [g] Rev. 5. 6. [h] Rev. 12. 11.

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purchased, and eternal life purchased for them; then principalities and powers were spoiled, and a shew made of them openly;[a] the strong-man armed disarmed, stript, and triumphed over. To that victory, all the victories of faith are owing; for we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The time was fixed, for this great and glorious atchievement; fixed in that determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, by which that sacrifice was *delivered up;* fixed in the Old Testament predictions, from that of the "*Seed of the woman,* which should *break the serpent's head,*[b] to that of "Messiah the Prince, "who at the period of the seventy weeks should *finish* "*transgression, and make an end of sin, by making recon-* "*ciliation for iniquity,* and *bringing in an everlasting* "*righteousness.*"[c] It was fixed to a day, it was fixed to an hour: how often did Christ speak of it with that exactness: *Mine hour is not yet come,* and when it was come, *This is your hour.*

Long, was it looked for, by them who *waited for the redemption*[d]; and, more earnestly by him that was to *work out* the redemption, who, having this baptism to be baptised with, was even *straitened till it was accomplished;*[e] it came at last: *Blessed is he that cometh.* And of all the years that God has crowned with his goodness, that was, without doubt, the greatest of all that every day and night measured, since the clock of time was set in motion. And though they who were to have the benefit of the redemption slumbered and slept, and were not duly sensible of the vast importance of what was then doing, till afterwards when the Spirit was poured out upon them,—yet he that was to be at the expence of it, and fore-saw how the great affair of man's redemption,—and, perhaps, the angel's confirmation—was to turn upon that mighty hinge, triumphed and was transported, when he said in the beginning of the battle, *Now is my soul troubled,* but *now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out;*[f] and in the close of the battle when he knew what an irreparable blow he had given to the Devil's kingdom, *It is finished.*[g] This was that *year of the redeemed* which we frequently celebrate the memorial of with joy, at the table of the Lord.

[2.] The year of Christ's second-coming to judge the world, is that *great year of the redeemed* which is yet to come; that true Platonic year, which will be, though not the repetition, yet the review and retribution of all that is past. And as in our observance of the great institution of the Eucharist, that *proprium,—appropriate rite,* of our holy religion, and peculiar badge of our Christianity, we look *as far back* as that year of the redeemed which is past, shewing forth the Lord's death; so we look *as far forward* as that year of the redeemed which we are yet in expectation of, shewing it forth *till he come.*

This year of the redeemed, which will be crowned with the *greatness* of God, as other years have been *with his goodness,* is fixed in the divine counsels; unalterably fixed, fixed to a day: for *he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness;*[a] and a great and terrible day it will be. God, by his grace, make us all ready for it, that he who shall then appear may appear to our joy. It is fixed, but it is not revealed; it is not fit it should, nor agreeable to that state of probation and expectation we are now in. It is fixed, and it will come; it will certainly come; to the unspeakable confusion of all those who slight the warnings of it, and the everlasting consolation of all those who embrace the promise of it. As sure as this year *is* come, that year *will* come, and you and I shall see it; *in our flesh* resumed *we shall see it;* shall see the terrors, shall see the triumphs of that day, and, according as we are found then, shall certainly and eternally share either in the one or in the other.

That—that—will be the year of the redeemed; in which all our hopes and prospects, which in our present state are still kept moving forward, one event serving only to raise our expectation of the next, will come to a full period. Then we shall see the final end of all those things, which here we are so solicitous and inquisitive about.[b] And a blessed end it will certainly be to all the redeemed of the Lord; who, will in that day lift up their heads *and* hearts with joy, never to despond or be dejected again, knowing that their redemption in its open declaration, and full perfection, draweth nigh.[c]

All the redeemed who are now scattered and dispersed over the face of the whole earth, will then be gathered together into one body; and a great and glorious body it will be; to be presented to the Father *without spot or wrinkle or any such thing;* and to grace their Redeemer's triumphs, as the trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness, that had held them captive, that he may be *glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*[d] A general rendezvous it will be of all whoever approved themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation,[e] shall produce all who were given him, they shall every one answer to their names, and not one be missing.

All the enemies of the redeemed will then be conquered and brought down, and death itself, that last enemy, shall be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory. The Devil, with all those whom he has decoyed into his interest, will then, by the almighty power of that God, *whose the deceived and the deceiver are,*[f] be *cast into the lake of fire,*[g] and the redeemed will be set for ever out of the reach of all their enemies. Then shall the redemption of the soul be perfected, in the redemption of the body from the power of the grave, and *that* captivity led captive.[h]

But that which, above all, will denominate it the year of the redeemed, is, that then *the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs of praise; everlasting joy* shall fill their hearts, and crown their heads; and sorrow and sighing, those clouds which in this world are still returning after the rain, shall be finally dismissed, and flee away for ever.[i] The redeemed

[a] Col. 2. 15. [b] Gen. 3. 15. [c] Dan. 9. 24. [d] Luke 2. 38. [e] Luke 12. 50. [f] John 12. 27. [g] John 12. 31.

[a] Acts 17. 31. [b] Dan. 12. 8. [c] Luke 21. 28. [d] 2 Thes. 1. 10. [e] Heb. 2. 10. [f] Job 12. 16. [g] Rev. 20. 10. [h] Rom. 8. 23. [i] Isa. 35. 10.

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of the Lord, by virtue of their union with the Redeemer will then sit down with him upon his throne,—as he overcame, and is set down with his Father upon his throne—and reign with him for ever.

This is the year of the redeemed; for it is the year which their hearts are upon, which, according to the promise, they look for, and have an eye to, in all their present services, sufferings, and struggles. It will be the crown and satisfaction of their faith and hope, and the perpetual perfection of all their joys and honours.

Think, my brethren, think seriously, what that year of the redeemed will be—to you. How will the archangel's trumpet sound in *your* ears? will it be a joyful or a dreadful sound? To them that obey the Gospel, and live up to it, it will proclaim liberty and honour; but against them who are unbelieving and disobedient, it will denounce war and ruin. That great day will be coronation-day to the former, but execution-day to the latter. We none of us know but this year of which we now see the beginning may be the year of our death; if it should be so, will it be the year of our redemption? And can we, as such, bid it welcome, and heartily say,—farewel to this world? *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;* and then you may look for death and judgment, with joy and rejoicing. Spend your time well, and then no doubt but you shall spend your eternity well; and the year of the redeemed, will be the year of your eternal redemption.

(2.) Let me more largely apply it to the militant church; and the particular parts and branches of Christ's kingdom in the world, and their states and interests,—those especially with which we are best acquainted, and in which we are most nearly concerned.

I was yesterday endeavouring, as well as I could, to excite your holy joys and thankful praises for the great things God has of late done for us, and our allies, whom he crowned, the last year, with his goodness; I would to-day say something for the encouragement of your faith and hope in God, concerning the events of the year ensuing, and of your earnest prayers to God that it may prove one of the years of the redeemed.

It is no new thing for the Church of Christ upon earth to be in distress and bondage, and to stand in need of redemption, notwithstanding the great redemption from sin and hell, which the Lord Jesus has wrought out. It is always militant, it is often afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; and Sion constrained to dwell with the daughters of Babylon.[a] *Israel* had many enemies, was often in the hands, often under the feet of their enemies; and the redemption of *Israel* was often prayed for, and often promised: much more reason has the *Gospel Church* (that never had so many promises made to it, relating to the life that now is, as the Old-Testament Church had) to expect trouble in this world; to be fought against, and to suffer persecution; in conformity to the example of its head.

The book of the Revelations gives us intimation enough of troublesome times that were to pass over the Church; and though it should be allowed doubtful, who the enemy is that is there described, yet it is past dispute, that there should arise an enemy, a powerful and dangerous one, who should make war with those that keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ:[a] so that we are not to think it strange, no not concerning the fiery trial, if the best of God's saints and servants be called out to it, as though some strange thing happened. Behold, Christ has told us before, that when it comes, it may be no surprise or offence to us.

But there will come a year of redemption for those who suffer in the cause of Christ; God *will* not, and men *shall* not, contend for ever; nor shall the rod of the wicked rest *always* upon the lot of the righteous, though it may rest *long* there. It is the state of some of the reformed churches abroad, especially those of France, that I have upon my heart, and had in my eye in the choice of this text. The year of their deliverance, whenever it comes, I must call the year of the redeemed.

The excellent Archbishop Tillotson in a sermon, on Rev. 14. 13. plainly intimates his suspicion, That the French King is that second beast described (Rev. 13. 11.) with two horns, France and Navarre, speaking like a dragon, which (says he) may point at a particular sort of armed soldiers called dragons, or *dragoons:* and the number six hundred sixty-six in the name LUDoVICUs: and that the persecution of the French protestants, in that last and great persecution, is there foretold. And in another sermon before King William and Queen Mary in the year 1692, makes him the present great supporter of the mystical Babylon. And if so, a deliverance from under his tyranny, may well be prayed and hoped for, in the year of the redeemed.

[Since the preaching of this, I have with much pleasure received encouragement to my hopes—and been confirmed in my choice of this subject, for an appendix to the thanksgiving—by that excellent discourse of the worthy Bishop of Sarum, before the Queen and both Houses of Parliament, on the Thanksgiving-Day, in which he lays so much stress upon the French King's barbarous usage of his Protestant subjects, in his description of him as an oppressor, whom it will be the glory of a good prince to help to break in pieces: and he tells that august assembly, "That till the exiles are recalled, till the prisoners are set at liberty, till the edicts that were their inheritance are revived, and compensation is made for the precious blood that has been shed among them; till the oppressor is so bounded, that his own people are secured from oppression, and his neighbours from invasion; till this is done,—it is reasonable to hope, that man will say as God has said, *There is no peace to the wicked.*" God keep that word always in the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, to whom it was spoken, and establish their way before him.]

Four things it will be proper for us to inquire into, concerning the year of the redeemed which we are hoping, and praying, and waiting for. I. What the

[a] Zech. 2. 7.

[a] Rev. 12. 17.

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year of the redeemed will be, and what we expect to be included in it. II. What ground we have to believe that it *will come*, some time. III. What encouragement we have to hope that it will come quickly. IV. What is our duty in reference hereto.

I. What we may expect the year of the redeemed will be; which, according to his promise we may look for. You shall see it in three things.

1. The year of recompence for the controversy of Sion, will be the year of the redeemed. Such a year we read of, (Isa. 34. 8.) and it is parallel to this, here: for it explains the day of vengeance, which is here said to be in the heart of the victorious Redeemer. Therefore *the sword* that is *bathed in heaven*, shall *come down upon Idumea, the people of God's curse*, because it is the year of recompence for the controversy of Sion.

God espouses Sion's cause, does, and will plead it with jealousy:[a] his Church is dear to him as the apple of his eye,[b] and therefore, he has a controversy with those who are injurious to his people; and sooner or later he will reckon with them, and will avenge his own elect, who cry day and night to him, though he bear long.[c] He has a righteous quarrel with them, and he will avenge that quarrel. Barbarous and unrighteous wars fill the measure of a nation's sins; and are that *fourth transgression*, for which, when it is added to *other three*, God *will not turn away the punishment* of a people, as is intimated, (Amos 1. 6, 9, 11, 13.) where for three transgressions, and then this as the fourth, God will reckon with Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, because they had *delivered up the whole captivity*, had *pursued with the sword*, and *cast off all pity*, particularly had *ript up the women with child*: would not God visit for these things, should not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? But barbarous persecutions for righteousness' sake, are yet more provoking: all innocent blood is precious to God, and inquisition will be made for it; but the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, is in a special manner precious to him, and not a drop of it shall be shed, but it shall be reckoned for.

The great day of recompence for Sion's controversy will be at the end of time, *in the valley of decision*,[d] when the long-depending controversy, after many struggles, will at length be determined; when everlasting tribulation shall be recompensed by the Lord Jesus, to them that troubled his Church,—and to them who were troubled, everlasting rest.[e] The Lord hasten that glorious day, and make us ready for it!

But we may expect that it will be done, in part, in this world. When God shall have performed his whole work upon mount Sion, and upon Jerusalem; his humbling, reforming work *upon* them; he will then perform his saving-work *for* them, and will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks:[f] the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall do this. All the wrongs done to Sion will be returned to those who did them, and the cup of trembling will be taken out of the hand of the oppressed, and put into the hand of the oppressor.[a] The arm of the Lord will awake as in the days of old, and will put on strength; that mighty arm that humbled Pharoah, Senacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Julian, and other the proud enemies of his Church, will be made bare, in our day, against the successors of these sons of pride and violence. The papal kingdom in general, that has for many ages been so barbarously oppressive to the faithful worshippers of God, and the French tyranny in particular, that has been remarkably so in our days, are the enemies, with whom, I think, God has a controversy on Sion's behalf, and the day will come that he will plead it.

His controversy is,

(1.) *For* the sons of Sion; whom they [the persecutors] have abused; the precious sons of Sion, comparable to fine gold; who have not only been despised and thrown by as vessels in which there is no pleasure, but trodden down and broken to pieces as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter.[b] How many excellent ministers and Christians have been sacrificed to the pride and malice of the Church of Rome, and with a rage reaching up to Heaven, *numbered to the sword* as sheep for the slaughter! and the survivors either miserably enslaved in the gallies, and there *dying daily*, or buried alive in dungeons, or forced to beg their bread in strange countries: and shall not this be recompensed?

(2.) For the songs of Sion, which they have profaned. This head is suggested by that instance of the Babylonians' insolence, and contempt of the Jews and their religion, when they upbraided them in their captivity with the songs of Sion: and, for this, it follows: *Daughter of Babylon; thou art to be destroyed.*[b] The contempt cast upon the pure worship of God as heretical, and the jest made of sacred things, is what God will reckon for.

(3.) For the powers of Sion's King, which they have usurped. All the anointed offices of our Lord Jesus are boldly invaded by the Papacy. His Prophetical Office, by setting up an infallibility in Pope or Councils: his Kingly Office, by setting up the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all churches, and giving him the power of Christ's Vicar, or his rival rather, upon earth; and his Priestly Office, by making the mass a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and saints and angels mediators between God and man. And shall not the crown of the exalted Redeemer be supported against these usurpations?

(4.) For the pleasant things of Sion's palaces which they have laid waste. God will reckon for the many churches they have demolished, the solemn assemblies they have scattered, the administration of ordinances they have restrained, and the fountains of living-water they have stopped up. God keeps an account of all the mischief of this kind done at any time by the Papal Power and its adherents, and will bring it all into the reckoning when the year of recompences comes.

[a] Zech. 1. 14. [b] Zech. 2. 8. [c] Luke 18. 7. [d] Joel 3. 14. [e] 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. [f] Isa. 10. 12.

[a] Isa. 51. 22, 23. [b] Lam. 4. 2. [c] Ps. 137. 3, 8.

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2. The year of release for God's captives, will be the year of the redeemed; and this is the year we are waiting for. While we enjoy our liberties and opportunities, in peace and without check, we ought to remember them who are in bonds, and to pray for the *turning again of their captivity as the streams in the south.*

(1.) Oppressed consciences, we long to hear of the release of. Of the many that through the force of persecution have been brought to put forth their hands unto iniquity, we hope there are some who have not put forth their hearts to it; but if the force were taken off, would return to the true religion, which they have in word renounced. The triumphs of tyranny over these pretended converts cannot be thought of by any good Christian, without the utmost indignation; for the worst of tyanny is theirs, who take a pride in saying to men's souls, *Bow down, that we may go over;*[a] insulting over conscience, and pretending to command that: and though the utmost point they can gain by all their violence, is that, as it follows there, *men lay their body as the ground, and as the streets to them that go over,* by external compliances, while the soul remains unbended; yet this being a most grievous affliction, (as it is there spoken of) the freeing of the oppressed from this force, will be a most glorious deliverance. We long to hear of the breaking off the yoke from off their necks, that they may no longer be compelled to give that honour to the creature, that is the Creator's due, against the conviction of their consciences; but may be brought up out of that Egypt, to sacrifice unto the Lord with freedom, though it were in a wilderness. For, Is Israel a servant? Is conscience a home-born slave, that it is thus spoiled,[b] thus imposed upon? No; it is God's Son, it is his first-born, and he will maintain its privileges. *Lord, bring their souls out of prison, that they may praise thy name.*[c]

(2.) Oppressed confessors, we also long to hear of the release of. Humanity obliges us much, and Christianity much more, to pity the distressed state of those who are in bonds and banishment, in dungeons and in galleys, *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* When will the time come that the house of the prisoners shall be opened, and every man's chains fall from his hands, that a spirit of life from God shall enter into the dry bones, that they may live? The account we had some years ago of the brave and daring struggles of the Sevennois, was such a *noise and a shaking,* as we thought portended the *return of bone to his bone,* and a glorious resurrection of God's witnesses; but that affair, for aught we hear, is now asleep: God himself revive that work in the midst of the years, and so hasten the year of the redeemed!

3. The year of the revival of primitive Christianity in the power of it, will be the year of the redeemed. This we wish, we hope, we long to see, both at home and abroad; not the establishment and advancement of any party, but the extinguishing and swallowing up of all parties in the prevalence of *pure religion, and undefiled,* and the dominion of serious godliness in the hearts and lives of all who are called by the Christian name.

When the bounds of the Church will be enlarged by the conversion of Pagan and Mahometan nations to the faith of Christ, and the spreading of the Gospel in foreign parts: when the enlargement of trade and commerce shall be made serviceable to the interests of Christianity, as it is to our secular interests, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and the Redeemer's throne shall be set up where Satan's seat is, then will the year of the redeemed come.

When what is amiss in the Churches of Christ shall be amended, mistakes rectified, corruptions purged out, and every plant that is not of our heavenly Father's planting, shall be rooted up, and the plants that are, shall be fruitful and flourishing; when the Lord of the temple shall sit as a refiner, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and all the seed of Israel, then shall the year of the redeemed come.[a]

When the word of the Lord shall have a free course, when vice and profaneness shall be suppressed, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth,[b] when virtue and piety shall be not only generally praised, but generally practised; when in every place the spiritual incense shall be offered, and a pure offering with pure hands,—and the principles of our holy religion shall be copied out into mens' hearts and lives, then shall the year of the redeemed come.

When the divisions of the church shall be healed, and the unity of the Spirit kept entirely in the bond of peace, so that Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim: when all shall agree to love one another; though they cannot agree in every thing to think with one another; when the Lord shall be one, and his name one, and all who profess his name one in Christ, the great centre of unity, then shall the year of the redeemed come.

In a word, When the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high,[c] so that knowledge shall triumph over ignorance, truth over error, devotion over profaneness, virtue over all immoralities, justice and truth over treachery and all unrighteousness, and christian love and charity over schism, bigotry, and all uncharitableness; then shall the year of the redeemed come. But alas! *Who shall live when God doeth this?* The Lord hasten it in its season.

II. What ground we have to believe that the year of the redeemed, even the year of recompences for the controversy of Sion, will come some time, whether we live to see it or no.

That which I build upon is,

1. The justice and righteousness of that God who governs the world, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. If men are unrighteous, they shall find to their cost that God is not. If men make nothing of their word, God makes something of his; and the unbelief of men shall not make it void, and of none effect. The clouds and darkness are round about him,[d] so that we know not

[a] Isa. 51. 23. [b] Jer. 2. 14. [c] Ps. 142. 7.

[a] Mal. 3. 3. [b] Ps. 107. 42. [c] Isa. 32. 15. [d] Ps. 97. 2.

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the way that he takes, verily he is a God who hideth himself; yet judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne; and so will it appear when the mystery of God shall be finished; and the heavens shall declare his righteousness,[a] and neither earth nor hell shall have any thing to object against it. Sooner or later the Lord will be known by the judgment which he executes.

Look up, (my brethren) look up with an eye of faith to heaven above, and see the Lord God Omnipotent upon a throne, high and lifted up;[b] the throne of glory, the throne of government, which he has prepared in the heavens,[c] and established there, though the heathen rage, and the floods lift up their waves:[d] and hence let us take encouragement to hope, that in due time we shall see an effectual check given to the "boundless ambition of France," as the proclamations often call it. The Universal Monarch will not suffer himself to be rivalled and insulted by a bold pretender to an universal monarchy; nor will he, who alone is absolute, have the flowers of his crown plucked by a pretender to absolute sovereignty. The humbling and abasing of such proud men, treading them down, and hiding them in the dust together, by which the great Jehovah proves himself to be God; and in which he glories, above any thing, in his discourse with Job, out of the whirlwind: *do thou do so* (says he) *and then will I also confess unto thee.*[e] And will he not do it in our day?

Look abroad, (my brethren) look abroad with pleasure upon this earth, and see it as wild as it is, and as bad as it is, under the government of a righteous God, whose eyes run to and fro through it, and who does according to his will, not only in the armies of heaven, who are not too high to be above his controul; but among the inhabitants of the earth, who are not too mean to be below his cognizance. They are mistaken who think God has forsaken the earth,[f] and that he cannot judge through the dark cloud;[g] who say in their hearts, *God hath forgotten,* and *thou wilt not require it.* The day is coming when it shall be so evident, that every man will own it: *verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*[h]

Suppose we could not read the doom of the Papacy, and the French tyranny, out of the depths of the Apocalypse—we may read it out of the Proverbs of Solomon the plainest book in all the Bible: for there we are told, *men's pride will bring them low; wealth gotten by vanity will be diminished; he that seeketh mischief it shall come upon him; and whoso doth violence to innocent blood, shall flee to the pit, and no man shall stay him.* And no word of God shall fall to the ground.

The tender concern God has for his church and people. His redeemed are very dear to him, and he is jealous for them, as his portion, and peculiar treasure; he takes pleasure in their prosperity, and in all their afflictions he is afflicted; and he takes what is done against them, as done against himself: and shall not he avenge his *own elect,* because they are *his own?* He who purchased *the soul of his turtle dove* with the blood of his Son, will not deliver it into the *hand of the multitude of its adversaries.*[a]

Especially, considering how much his own honour is interested in the concerns of his church and people. If they be abandoned and cast out of his care what will the Egyptians say; it will for ever disgrace the throne of his glory, and be the reproach of his government; so that how mean soever they are, and unworthy he should do any thing for them; yet no doubt, he will work for his own name, his own great name, that that may not be polluted among the heathen.

The many exceeding great and precious promises which he has made in his word concerning his church, and on which he has caused us to hope: on these our faith must build, and we shall find them a firm and never-failing foundation. God has spoken in his holiness,[b] and we will rejoice in what he has promised, it is all our own. He has promised, that *he will judge for his people,* and *repent himself concerning his servants, when he sees that their strength is gone.*[c] *That for the oppression of the poor,* and *the sighing of the needy, he will arise and set them in safety.*[d] That the *Redeemer shall come to Sion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*[e] That there shall be no more *any pricking brier or grieving thorn,* nor *any to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain.*[f]

It was shewn in vision to the prophet Daniel what great havock would be made, by persecuting powers of the Church in the latter times of it; but at the same time, the deliverance of the Church, and the destruction of its enemies is foretold. *Antiochus shall be mighty, and shall wonderfully destroy the people of the Holy One: and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart; and by peace* (more than by war) *he shall destroy many,* (who can avoid thinking of the French king at the reading of this?) *but he shall be broken without hand;*[g] or, as it is in a parallel place, *he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*[h] And of another great enemy, arising out of the fourth kingdom, which seems to be the Papacy, it is said, that he shall *wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws* by an unlimited power; and *they shall be given into his hand,* by the divine permission, for wise and holy ends, *until a time, times, and the dividing of time.*[i] But what will come of him at last? Shall he reign thus for ever, because he clotheth himself with cedar?[k] No, the judgment shall sit, and they shall *take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.* The God of truth has said it, and shall stand firm, *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity;* and *he that killeth with the sword, shall be killed by the sword, when his day shall come to fall:* and in the mean time, here is the patience, and the faith of the saints.[l]

[a] Ps. 50. 6. [b] Isa. 6. 1. [c] Ps. 103. 19. [d] Ps. 93. 2, 3. [e] Job 40. 12, 13, 14. [f] Ez. 9. 9. [g] Job 22. 13. [h] Ps. 58. 11.

[a] Ps. 74. 19. [b] Ps. 60. 6. [c] Deut. 32. 36. [d] Ps. 12. 5. [e] Rom. 11. 26. [f] Isa. 11. 9. [g] Dan. 8. 24, 25. [h] Dan. 11. 45. [i] Dan. 7. 25, 26. [k] Jer. 22. 15. [l] Rev. 13. 10.

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2. The performance of these promises to the church in all ages: God has often delivered; always, delivered at last; and, therefore, we trust he does and will deliver. After Israel's long affliction in Egypt, that house of sore bondage, at length God came down to deliver them, and gave an emblem of their condition in a Bush that burned, and yet was not consumed. In the times of the judges, first one enemy, and then another mightily oppressed them, for so many years; but in due time God raised them up a deliverer, and sent from Heaven to save them. The captivity in Babylon came to an end at the set time. The treading under foot of the sanctuary, by Antiochus, was limited to a certain number of days, and then the sanctuary was cleaned.[a] Thus the jewish nation, as long as it continued the church of God, though often distressed, was still delivered, till by rejecting Christ and his Gospel, they threw themselves out of the church; and now they wait in vain for redemption from their present dispersion, and cannot expect it till they shall look unto him whom they pierced.

The Christian Church has been often afflicted from its youth up, groaned long under the yoke of the Pagan powers: but in Constantine's time the year of the redeemed came, when the great red Dragon was cast out, and his angels who adored him, were cast out with him; when idolatry was abolished, and persecution came to an end, and that voice was heard in Heaven, *Now is come salvation, and strength, the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*[b]—Many have been the troubles of the followers of Christ; but the Lord has delivered them out of them all. Now, God is the same *yesterday, to day, and for ever;* he is God and changes not: his arm is not shortened, his ear is not heavy, his love is not spent, nor are his counsels changed: and, therefore, we are sure, the year of the redeemed will come in due time, and though it tarry we will wait for it; for *the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie.*

III. What encouragement we have to hope that the year of the redeemed will come shortly; that the rescue of the oppressed, and the ruin of the oppressor is not far off; that the progress and advancement of the Protestant religion in Europe, with the reviving and flourishing of serious piety in all the churches of Christ, are blessings at the door.

As to this, let me premise, that we ought to be very sober and modest in our conjectures, concerning the time of the accomplishment of scripture prophecies. Buxtorf, I remember, somewhere quotes a saying of the Jewish Rabbins, *rumpatur Spiritus eorum qui supputant Tempora—Calculating the times breaks the spirit.* They have so long and so often looked for the coming of the Messiah, and been disappointed, that they curse him who fixes the time of his coming. We despair not of the things themselves that God has promised: but we *presume not* to limit the Holy One of Israel, or to set him his time; we wrong the promise by doing so,—and are tempted to think, when providence breaks our measures, it is the breaking of God's word,—and nothing tends more to the breaking of our spirits: whereas *he that believeth doth not make haste.* Many who have been peremptory in foretelling the time when the year of the redeemed would come, have had the mortification of living to see themselves mistaken.

If we look into ourselves, we shall find a great deal to discourage us, and make us fear that this glorious year is yet a great way off, so conscious are we to ourselves of a frame and disposition of soul that renders us utterly unmeet to share in the joys of such a day. Our faith is weak; our spirits are narrow; our prayers are cold and customary; our conversation loose and careless; and the *things which remain* among us *are ready to die.* Iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxen cold. Our own private interests, it is to be feared, lie nearer our hearts than the great and general interests of the kingdom of God among men. Our divisions are very threatening, especially the mismanagement of them: these are ill omens, and occasion many a melancholy thought to those who seek the good of the Gospel-Jerusalem. We now think ourselves within sight of Canaan: but how justly might God for our unbelief and murmuring hurry us back into the wilderness again, and swear in his wrath that we should never enter into his rest? We should have the more reason to fear these fatal consequences of our present distempers, but that it is intimated to us, that the Son of Man will come at a time *when* he shall find little faith on the earth,[a] that the divine fidelity be the more magnified.

But for all this, we are not altogether without hope, that the year of the redeemed may come shortly: who knows but that this year which we are now brought to the beginning of, may in some instances go far toward it? Though if it should set us back, and prove a year of disappointment, we must own that God is righteous; yet if it should set us forward, and make large advances towards it, we shall have this to add to the comfort of it, that it will be the answer of our prayers, and the crown of our hopes in God at the beginning of the year.

I dare not build much upon the opinion of Mr. Joseph Mede, and other learned men, (though I have a great value for their judgment) who compute the period of 1260 Days, that is, years, so often spoken of in the Revelation, which should end in the resurrection of the witnesses, and the downfall of Babylon, to fall not many years hence. However that be,

1. It is plain that the measure of the iniquity of the church's enemies fills apace: the powers we are contesting with, after all the mortifications they have been under, as if they had bid defiance to repentance, seem to grow more and more false and treacherous, cruel and barbarous; which cannot but ripen their vintage apace for the great vine-press of the wrath of God.[b] That which hastened the descent of the King of Babylon down to the sides of the pit, was not only that he

[a] Dan. 8. 14. [b] Rev. 12. 9, 10.

[a] Luke 18. 8. [b] Rev. 14. 19.

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had made the earth to tremble, and shaken kingdoms; that he had made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; but which was worst of all, he opened not the house of his prisoners,[a] that is, God's Israel, whom he detained in captivity, those poor to whom Daniel counselled him to shew mercy, that it might have been a lengthening of his tranquillity.[b]

Well, when he who *spoileth* though he *was not spoiled*, and *dealt treacherously* with those who *dealt fairly* with him, shall *cease to spoil*, and shall *make an end to deal treacherously*;[c] not in a way of reformation, that we have more reason to pray for than hope for, but so as that his measure shall be full; then expect that he shall be spoiled, and men shall deal treacherously with him, that is, shall shew him that he has wretchedly deceived himself. Babylon's doom is, *Reward her as she rewarded you.*[d]

2. The present posture of affairs, gives us a very hopeful prospect. The pride of the French King has been much humbled of late, and his power broken; and (which is very encouraging) the great things done against him, have been done chiefly by Protestant armies, which we hope, will animate Protestant princes and states to unite for the support of the reformation, that it may recover the ground which in many places it has lost, and may gain more; for many, we hope, will join themselves to us, when they see that God favours our righteous cause, and that he is with us of a truth.

For our future safety, Manoah's wife shall be my prophetess: *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us*, he would not thus have accepted and answered our prayers, *nor would he, as at this time, have shewed us such things as these.*[e]

And for our further success and victory, even Hamon's wife shall be my prophetess: *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall*, there is no remedy; the seed of the Jews will without fail be victorious, whenever the scale turns in their favour; *thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.*[f] As for God, his work is perfect; when he begins he will make an end. What we have received from God emboldens us to expect more; when God *brake the heads of Leviathan*[g] *in pieces, he gave him to be meat* to the faith and hope of his *people inhabiting the wilderness*, and so encouraged them to expect, that they should inhabit Canaan shortly. God is plainly selling *Sisera into the hand of a woman.*

IV. Nothing remains now, but to tell you in a word or two, what is our duty, in reference hereunto. Have we all this reason to think that the year of the redeemed will come, that surely it will come quickly?

1. Then let us be very earnest with God in prayer, to hasten this glorious year. When Daniel understood by books that the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolations were just expiring; then he set his face with more than ordinary fervor and fixedness to seek the Lord God by prayer and supplication, with fasting.[h] When we see mercies coming toward us, let us go forth to meet them, with so much the more cheerfulness, by our prayers. *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*[a] but, especially, at such a time, that when God's *beloved is delivered*, and he *saves with his right hand*, we each of us may have the pleasure of saying with the Psalmist, God has therein *answered me.*[b]

Let our closets and families witness for us, that we pray, that we pray daily, that we pray earnestly, for the peace of Jerusalem, as those who prefer it before our chief joy. Pray for the uniting of Protestants at home, and of Protestant princes and states abroad; pray for the prosperity of our armies and navies, and those of our allies; pray for the pouring out of the Spirit upon us from on high, and then the year of the redeemed would soon come.

2. Let us prepare ourselves for the comfort of those great things, which we hope God will do for his church in our days, by bringing every thought within us into obedience to those two royal laws of holiness and love. When we expect God to do wonders among us, it concerns us to sanctify ourselves.[c] Let us carry on the holy war in our own bosoms against sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, with vigour, and pursuant to our baptismal vow, fight manfully under the banner of the Lord Jesus; then may we hope that our prayers for the prosperity of the war our nation is engaged in, will be acceptable, and prevalent in heaven. But what joy can we have of our triumphs over the French, if we suffer our own lusts to triumph over us? If indeed we desire the progress of the reformation in the churches of Christ, let us shew it by carrying on the reformation of our own hearts and lives and families. Remember that law of Moses, *When the host goeth forth against the enemy, then keep thyself from every wicked thing*; lest you undo by your sins, what they do by their swords.

3. Let us with patience wait for the year of the redeemed. If the days of our brethren's affliction should yet be prolonged, and their deliverance be deferred, yet let us not be weary, nor faint in our minds. Though the year of the redeemed come not in our time, the time we looked for it, yet believe, it will come in the best time, the time that infinite wisdom has appointed; and when it does come, it will abundantly recompense us for all our waiting. The longest voyages make the richest returns; and the Church's triumphs are the most welcome, when they are the crown of great and long expectations: *So, this is our God, we have waited for him.*[d] Let us not upon every disappointment, arraign either the providence of God, or the conduct of those in public trusts. Leave it to God to govern the world, and to the Queen and her councils under him, to govern the realm; and let us in our obscurity be easy and satisfied, and believe that all will end well at last.

But if the year of the redeemed should not come in

[a] Isa. 14. 17. [b] Dan. 4. 27. [c] Isa. 33. 1. [d] Rev. 18. 6. [e] Jud. 13. 23. [f] Est. 6. 13. [g] Ps. 74. 14. [h] Dan. 9. 2.

[a] Luke 18. 1. [b] Ps. 108. 6. [c] Josh. 3. 5. [d] Isa. 25. 9.

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our days; if the carcases of this generation should fall in this wilderness, as justly they may for our unbelief and murmuring, and we should not go over Jordan to see that goodly mountain, and Lebanon: yet let it suffice us, that those who shall come after us shall enter into that rest. Joseph dies in Egypt, but lays his bones in confidence that God will surely visit Israel. Let us give all diligence to make sure our eternal redemption, and then we shall be happy, though we live not to see the glories of the year of the redeemed on earth; and may depart in peace with the prophet Daniel's dismission, *Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest*; and, whatever thy lot be on earth,—thou shalt stand in thy lot, (and it shall be a blessed lot,) in the end of the days.[a]

[a] Dan. 12. 13.

A SERMON

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A

SERMON

CONCERNING THE

WORK AND SUCCESS OF THE MINISTRY;

Preached at the Tuesday Lecture, at Salter's Hall, June 25, 1710.

LUKE 10. 5, 6.

And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you again.

PROSPECT of success, as it is the spring of action, so it is the spur to industry and resolution. Issachar, that tribe of husbandmen, would never bow his shoulder to bear, and couch, as he does between two burthens; much less could he rejoice in his tents of labour, but that he sees the land is pleasant,[a] and from it he hopes to reap the precious fruits of the earth: nor would Zebulun, that tribe of merchants, be a haven of ships, and rejoice in his hazardous going out, but that he expects to suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.[b] Whatever business a man has, he cannot long oblige himself to abide by it, unless he can promise himself to get by it.

Now it is worth while to inquire what is the gain, and what the success, which we, who are ministers, have in prospect, and which we bear up ourselves in our work with the prospect of. What is it which we may feed ourselves with the hopes of?

1. Worldly advantages we must not promise to ourselves, in common with the children of this world: for the soldiers of Jesus Christ, though they walk in the flesh, do not war after the flesh;[c] they negociate the affairs of a kingdom that is not of this world.

They who deal in secular business think they succeed well and gain their point, if they raise an estate, and advance their families, and make to themselves a name among the great ones of the earth; they rejoice because their wealth is great, and their hand has gotten much, and say, *Soul, take thine ease.* But the ministry, though it is the best calling, is the worst trade in the world; that is, it will prove so to those who make a mere trade of it, looking no further than to get money by it, and to enrich themselves.

We cannot propose to ourselves advantages of this kind, for the same Lord who ordained that they *who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,*[a] and live comfortably, has also told them, *In the world ye must have tribulation.*[b] Nay, we may not make these things our end in undertaking or prosecuting this work: we debase our calling, and contradict our profession if we do. Shall we who preach the great things of another world to others, so far forget ourselves as to seek great things to ourselves in this world, when God in saying to Baruch has said to all his servants the prophets, *Seek them not?*[c]

2. Spiritual and eternal advantages in the other world, if we be faithful, we may hope for, and encourage ourselves with the prospect of, in common with all good Christians. If we be sincere, and diligent in our work, and our hearts upright with God, we shall have the favour of God, and the testimony of our consciences for us, and eternal life in its earnests and first-fruits abiding in us; and it is much our own fault if we excel not in graces and comforts, by our constant converse with divine things. And if through grace we endure to the end good and faithful servants, —our Master's "*Well done;*" the *joy of our Lord* into which we shall enter, and the *crown of life*[d] which we shall receive when the chief Shepherd shall appear,[e] will be an abundant recompence for all our services and sufferings; and we shall then say, we have had good success in our work.

Let us therefore fear lest such a rest, such a glory being set before us, any of us should seem to come short of it,[f] and lest while we preach to others, and shew them the way to Heaven, we ourselves should be shut out, and become cast away at last;[g] and, being moved with this fear, let us walk very circumspectly, and take heed to ourselves, that we may not only save those who hear us, but ourselves in the first place. But,

3. There is a particular good success besides this, which faithful ministers have in prospect, which they aim at, and animate themselves with, in their work, and that is, doing good to the souls of men; and as

[a] Gen. 49. 14, 15. [b] Deut. 33. 19. [c] 2 Cor. 10. 3.

[a] 1 Cor. 9. 14. [b] John 16. 33. [c] Jer. 45. 5. [d] Matt. 25. 21. [e] 1 Pet. 5. 4. [f] Heb. 4. 1. [g] 1 Cor. 9. 27.

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instruments in the hand of God, serving the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world. We are shepherds, we are vine-dressers, and we reckon we have good success, if the flock increase, and the vineyard flourish, and be fruitful, to the honour of him who is the great Owner of both. We are Christ's soldiers, and if we be instrumental to curb and restrain the enemies of his kingdom, and to reduce and protect the subjects of it; if by the blessing of God on our ministry the ignorant be instructed, the simple made wise for their souls and eternity, and the wise made to increase in learning; if the bad be made good, and the good made better, then do we prosper, and then have we good success: this is that we should have in our eye, and which we should lay near our hearts, with seriousness and concern to the last degree; that is that, for the compassing of which we should study and use the most apt and proper means, and should willingly spend and be spent; it is that fruit of the travail of our soul, which, if we *see* it, will be abundantly to our satisfaction,[a] and the pain will be forgotten for joy of it; but if we see it not, the case is more sad than that of a miscarrying womb and dry breasts,[b] and because of it we go on in heaviness, nay in bitterness of spirit.[c]

But though so much of our comfort is bound up in the success of our labour, yet we lie under this disadvantage, above those of other professions, that we are at great uncertainty concerning it, and for the most part very much in the dark. The physician knows whether he cures his patient or no, and the lawyer whether he carries his client's cause or no: but we preach, from day to day, to *work upon* the hearts of men, and though sometimes the effect is visible either one way or the other, *some men's sins are open before hand,* and the *good works of some are likewise manifest before hand,*[d] some are much our joy and crown, others much our grief and shame;—yet more often it is not so; we cannot tell who are savingly wrought upon, and who are not: but this makes the foundation of God to stand sure, *The Lord knows them that are his,*[e] whether we do or no. And in this matter, which cannot but be very much upon our hearts, this text will give us both direction and satisfaction; for it shews us how we must do our duty, and then leave the success with the grace of God,—as, in the affairs of this life, we are to leave it with the providence of God.

The text is part of the *instructions* which our Lord Jesus gave to the seventy disciples, when he gave them their *commission;* for those two will go together: Christ sends none on his errand, whom he does not give in some measure to understand their message. These instructions here are much the same with those he gave to the twelve apostles; and what he said to them both in exhortation and encouragement, he says in effect to all his ministers, excepting some few things that were peculiar to the state and work of those first preachers of the Gospel.

[a] Isa. 53. 11. [b] Hos. 9. 14. [c] Ezek. 3. 14. [d] 1 Tim. 5. 24, 25. [e] 2 Tim. 2. 19.

My text will give us not only a fair occasion, but good help too, to consider two things.

I. The work and office of ministers; wherever they come, they are to say, *Peace be here.*

II. Their success in the discharge of this office; which is according as they do or do not meet with the sons of peace. And the opening of these two things, I trust, by the blessing of God, may be of some use both to ministers and people.

I. We may observe here, what the charge and work of Gospel ministers is, and what they are warranted and instructed to do; they are appointed by the Prince of peace to be the messengers of peace, and wherever they come, they are to say, *Peace be here.* If a minister be asked, as Samuel was, *Comest thou peaceably,* he may answer in the name of him who sent him, *Yes, peaceably;*[a] and such their temper and behaviour ought to be, as to be able to answer, so, for themselves. They are heralds indeed to proclaim war against sin; but to the children of men they are sent as ambassadors preaching peace by Jesus Christ;[b] who himself first came (as one pleased he had such an errand to perform) and preached peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh;[c] and has appointed his ministers as residents to negociate this great affair, while time lasts, for so long the treaty will continue.

1. The ministers whom Christ here sends forth are supposed to enter into private houses; and *that* under the character of Christ's ambassadors, and in the execution of their office,—the business of which they must be carrying on, not only into whatsoever *synagogue,* but into whatsoever *house* they enter. We shall find them in *private houses,* either because thither their public preaching will be driven, or because thither they themselves will carry it.

(1.) Sometimes they were forced into such corners. Though the message they brought had every thing in it to recommend them to an universal acceptance, yet it is probable, in many places they were not permitted to preach in the synagogues; the rulers there who had a jealous eye upon them would take care to keep them thence; and they then retired into private houses, and preached to as many as would come to hear them there. Those who cannot do what they would, for God and the souls of men; must do what they can, and God will accept of them.

The Gospel of Christ is never the less honourable in itself, nor should be ever the less acceptable to us for any disadvantageous circumstances of this kind, which the preaching of it may be at any time reduced to. It is not the place but the heart that God looks at.[d] It was in the house of Cornelius that the Holy Ghost first descended, in the dew of Peter's preaching upon the Gentiles. The master of the feast sent his servants into the highways and the hedges, to invite guests to the wedding supper.

And those who in such a cloudy and dark day, open their doors to God's ministers and people, out of a

[a] 1 Sam. 16. 5. [b] Acts 10. 36. [c] Eph. 2. 17. [d] Acts 1. 24.

sincere

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sincere love to Christ and his Gospel, whatever inconvenience they may sustain, shall be no losers by it in the end; sure a church of Christ brought into a house (and we often in the New Testament meet with a "church in the house") cannot but bring as valuable a blessing along with it, though perhaps not so sensible a one, as the ark of God brought into the house of Obed-edom.[a] Simon Peter was soon repaid with a great draught of fishes, for lending Christ his boat to preach a sermon out of,[b] and (which was a better reward) was made a fisher of men.

We have reason to be thankful to God that we are not reduced to such straights as our suffering brethren in France are at this day reduced to; but it is our wisdom to prepare for changes, and to resolve, that whithersoever the ark removes, we will remove and go after it.[c]

(2.) They always embraced such opportunities of spreading the gospel, and doing good to the souls of men, as visiting people at their houses gave them. Our Lord Jesus preached wherever he visited. Mary heard his word, and Martha should have heard it, in their own house.[d] St. Paul, at Ephesus, taught not only publicly in the synagogue, and the school at Tyrannus, but from house to house;[e] and the apostles at Jerusalem, not only in the temple, but *in every house* continued to teach and preach Jesus Christ.[f]

Private and personal application would make our public work the more successful; and some, perhaps, will give a more earnest heed to that which is spoken to them, by themselves, about their souls and their salvation, than to that which they only hear in common with others. Peter must not only cast a net, but sometimes cast a hook into the sea, with which the fish may be caught that had escaped the net.[g] And if the words of the wise be *as nails*, this will help to fasten them, as *nails in a sure place*.[h] Hereby we may come to know what people have to say against being religious, and what their excuses are with which they support themselves in a sinful way; and by giving suitable answers to both, may help them over the particular difficulty that lies in their way.

Thus, we may express more condescension and compassion (two excellent principles in a minister) than we can in our public administrations: thus, we may give more particular reproofs and admonitions, counsels and comforts, suited to the case of each person and family; may, with that which is indeed the tongue of the learned, speak a word in season;[i] and may learn the better how to direct the arrow in public, that it may not always come from a bow *drawn at a venture*.

But if the priest's lips should *keep knowledge*, and have it ready to impart upon all occasions, the people should seek the law at his mouth,[k] and desire instruction: Ministers would gladly give you the best advice they can about your spiritual concerns, if you would *ask it*, or *give them an opportunity for it*, and—when they come to your houses, or you are in company with them—would ask: (as of old they used to do of the prophet:) *What hath the Lord answered thee*, and *what hath the Lord spoken?*[a] *Watchman, what of the night?* They who would have the benefit of an oracle must consult it.

2. They are instructed to say, *Peace be to this House*, that is, to the inhabitants of it; to all under this roof; to the master of the family, for be he ever so great he needs this blessing; and to all the members of the family, for be they ever so mean they are not excluded from this blessing. In Christ Jesus, there is neither bond nor free. Ignatius's Bishop was to take cognizance even of the servants of the families that belonged to his charge.

Peace be to you, was a common form of salutation among the Jews: but no doubt it is here intended for more than a compliment, or a piece of civility and good manners: it does indeed well become Christ's ministers to be very respectful and obliging to all: the just and undissembled expressions of honour and tenderness to those with whom they converse, will not only be an ornament to their profession, but may help to gain them an interest in the affections of people, improvable to the best purposes; as on the contrary, their ministry may be projudiced more than they are aware of, by a rude and morose behaviour. But these words, here, are to be used by them in the same sense, and with the same solemnity that Christ used them to his disciples, after his resurrection, when he stood in the midst, and said unto them, once and again, *Peace be unto you:*[b] by which he lodged this peace with them, as a sacred deposit, to be communicated by them, as his agents, to the church: *Peace be to you*, and—in you—to all believers. Receive the olive-branch of peace, and carry it with you to all nations; receive from Him who has authority to give it, and who can command peace to be the fruit of the lips, the fruit of *your* lips.[c] They were to go into all the world, with these words in their mouths: *Peace be unto you.* They were for peace: but when they spake, the world was for war[d]—with them, with Christ himself.

Now the gospel they preach was an everlasting gospel;[e] and Jesus Christ is, in it, the same *to day* that he was *yesterday*;[f] and, therefore, what *they* were to say, in the same name *we* are to say, *we* do say: *Peace be unto you.* I say, (the unworthiest of all who are employed on this great errand,) *Peace be to this congregation;* Peace to every one who hears me this day. *For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be upon you.*[g] That is,

(1.) We are to preach peace to all; to publish and proclaim the gospel of peace; to notify to the children of men the covenant of peace; to invite them to come and take the benefit of it, and for their greater satisfaction to administer the seals of it. When the First-begotton was brought into the world, the angels of Heaven, in token of their communion with the church

[a] 2 Sam. 6. 12. [b] Luke 5. 3, 4. [c] Josh. 3. 3. [d] Luke 10. 39. [e] Acts 20. 20. [f] Acts 5. 42. [g] Mat. 17. 27. [h] Ecc. 12. 11. [i] Isa. 50. 4. [k] Mal. 2. 7.

[a] Jer. 23. 37. [b] John 20. 19, 21. [c] Isa. 57. 19. [d] Ps. 120. 7. [e] Rev. 14. 6. [f] Heb. 13. 8. [g] Ps. 122. 8. Gal. 6. 16.

militant

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militant, sang: *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace;*[a] and when he was brought into *Jerusalem*, the disciples on earth, in token of their communion with the church triumphant, sang: *Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest;*[b]—so that both the upper and lower world share in, and give thanks for this peace. The ministers of the gospel bring good tidings, for they publish peace.[c] We are warranted to make a general offer of peace to all, upon easy and reasonable terms; PEACE, that is,

[1.] Reconciliation,—and no war. The case is plain that sin has been the parent of disagreement between God and man. As soon as ever man had eaten the forbidden fruit, his God who made him, became his enemy and fought against him;[d] in token of which, a cherubim was set, with a flaming sword that turned every way, threatening death, while he kept the way of the tree of life.[e] The quarrel is hereditary; we are by nature children of wrath, because children of disobedience; the broken law lays us under the curse, and sets the terrors of God in array against us. And if God proceed in his controversy with us, it will certainly terminate in our endless ruin; for who knows the power of his anger?

But is the breach wide as the sea, that it cannot be healed? Is the case desperate? Blessed be God, it is not; the gospel we preach shews us that God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace;[f] that Christ undertakes to be our peace;[g] and thus the counsels of peace were *between them both.*[h] It discovers to us how satisfaction was made for the violation of the first covenant, and a foundation laid for a treaty of peace; how the enmity was slain by the cross of Christ, and a happy expedient found to bring God and man together again in a New Covenant. Behold *we bring you glad tidings of great joy,* the best news that ever came from Heaven to Earth, that *God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*[i] There is not only a cessation of arms, and a truce for a time, but methods proposed for a lasting, an everlasting accommodation; infinite wisdom having found a ransom.

Now when we say, *Peace be unto you,* we thereby proclaim to the rebellious children, That whoever will may come and take the benefit of this act of indemnity; conditions of peace are offered them, which they cannot with any colour of reason except against: God is willing to be reconciled to you upon Gospel terms; and, therefore, we as ambassadors for Christ beseech you in his stead to be reconciled to him.[k] You deceive yourselves into your own ruin, if you say you shall have peace though you go on still in your sins;[l] but we court you to your own happiness, when we tell you you shall have peace, if you return, and repent, and yield yourselves to the Lord. The great God, by his prophet, has assured us, that he is not implacable, for fury is not in him;[m] (righteous he is, but not furious;) yet withal that he is irresistible, and we are unable to stand before him, for *Who would set the briars and thorns against him in battle?* which will be so far from giving check to a consuming fire, that they will bring fuel to it; he will *go through them, yea, he will burn them together.* What must a man do then who sees himself ready to be swallowed up by the divine wrath? The God of Heaven tells him what he must do, *Let him take hold on my strength* (take hold by a lively faith on Christ crucified, who is the power of God, and his arm revealed) *that he make peace with me;* let him submit, and return to his allegiance, accommodate himself to his God, and to his duty,—and *he shall make peace with me; he* shall have the comfort of it, and all shall be well.

[2.] Riches—and no want. It is not only the extinction of an unhappy controversy, but the settling of a happy correspondence: *Peace be to you,* is as much as, *All good be to you.* When the Psalmist prayed for *Peace within Zion's walls,* he explained himself in the next words, *Prosperity be within thy palaces;*[a] and meant no less, when, for his brethren and companions' sake, he said, *Peace be within thee.* So when we say, *Peace be to this assembly,* we make you in God's name a fair offer of life and all happiness; of all that which is agreeable to the nature of your souls, as you are rational and immortal creatures,—and to their necessity, as you are guilty and sinful: of the benefit of all those exceeding great and precious promises, which will make a portion for you, a *portion for ever,* for the life that now is, and that which is to come.

Peace be to you, that is—prosperity, soul prosperity, all the welfare of both worlds, the *unsearchable riches of Christ,*[b] and all that substance which they who love wisdom are made to inherit;[c] not only food that you may live, but gold tried in the fire that you may be rich.[d] All the treasures that are hid in the new Covenant,—in that abridgment of it, *God will be to you a God;* they are all your own, if you please to make them so by a lively faith. This spiritual wealth and riches shall be in that house on which this peace rests, even righteousness that endures for ever.[e]

Peace be to you, that is—comfort and joy, and a holy serenity and satisfaction of soul, such as the smiles of the world cannot give, nor its frowns take away; that peace which is the effect of righteousness, even quietness and assurance for ever;[f] everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. This is that wine and milk, that nourishment and refreshment for the soul, which are to be bought without money and without price;[g] that water of life, of which we may take freely, abundantly, and free of cost.[h] *This day is* SALVATION *come to this House,*[i] so our Saviour himself explains this comprehensive word: PEACE *be to this House,* all the THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION.

We are in God's name to make a general offer of this peace to all, not knowing to whom it belongs, or who will accept of it: as Cyrus proclaimed liberty to all the children of the captivity, though none shook

[a] Luke 2. 14. [b] Luke 19. 38. [c] Isa. 52. 7. [d] Isa. 63. 10. [e] Gen. 3. 24. [f] Jer. 29. 11. [g] Eph. 2. 14. [h] Zec. 6. 13. [i] 2 Cor. 5. 19. [k] 2 Cor. 5. 20. [l] Deut. 29. 19. [m] Isa. 27. 4, 5.

[a] Psa. 122. 7, 8. [b] Eph. 3. 8. [c] Pro. 8. 21. [d] Rev. 3. 18. [e] Psa. 112. 3. [f] Isa. 32. 17. [g] Isa. 55. 1. [h] Rev. 22. 17. [i] Luke 19. 9.

off

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off their chains, but those *whose spirits God raised to go up.*[a] The offer is made to you this day, and we *beseech you that you receive not the grace of God herein in vain.* You are not sure that ever you shall have another offer made you, and therefore, for the Lord's sake, do not reject this.

(2.) We are to pray for peace to all; not only to make a tender of it, but to seek unto God for it. *Peace be unto you* is the benediction, which with *Grace*, necessarily prefixed, the apostle Paul gives to all his friends to whom he directs his epistles, *Grace be unto you and peace.* And all the ministers of Christ must give themselves to prayer as well as to the ministry of the word,[b] must speak *to God for you*, as well as *from God to you.* The priests under the law were not only to teach the people the good knowledge of God, but to bless them in the name of the Lord, to bless them with this blessing in the text, *The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*[c]

Our prayers should be mixed, with our preaching; as St. Paul's are, with his writing, in all his epistles. A devout and pious ejaculation in the midst of a discourse, may help to raise the hearts of those we speak to, as well as our own. However, our preaching must be both prefaced and attended with our prayers, else we do but half our work, nay, we do none at all to any purpose. The Watchmen on Jerusalem's *walls* must give God no rest, but continue instant in prayer:[d] and certainly we shall do so if we be in good earnest in our work, and desire to see the fruit of it; for it depends intirely on the divine blessing. We labour in vain, if God say of us as he did of some of the prophets of old, *they shall not profit this people at all:*[e] nor will our pains in dressing the vineyard turn to any account, if God *command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*[f] And the dews of this blessing must be fetched down by prayer: *God will for it be enquired of*, and it is fit he should.

It is certain that God's grace can bring people to heaven without our preaching: but our preaching can never bring people to heaven without God's grace; and, therefore, we should be as much in care, as much in earnest to pray for the operations of grace, as to *propose* the offers of grace; and may better expect in that way to succeed. If we cannot preach people to Christ, let us endeavour to pray them to Christ; for in vain do we merely prophesy upon the dry bones, saying, *O ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord*, for though the effect of it may be a noise and a shaking, yet still there is no breath in them; we must therefore look up, by prayer, to the spirit,—as the prophet did,—*Come, O breath, and breathe upon these slain;*[g] and if a spirit of life from God enter into them, then, and not till then, we gain our point. God can persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem,[h] when we cannot.

Let us therefore pray for the peace of—the church; the house—the heart into which we enter with the Gospel: that is,

We must earnestly desire the welfare and salvation of precious souls; and not be cold and indifferent about it. We know not God's secret will, and therefore must concur with his revealed will; by which it appears, not only that he does not desire the death of sinners, but that he most pathetically wishes their life and happiness; *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandment!*[a] says he; *O that Israel had walked in my ways!*[b] And when they promised fair, *O that there were such a heart in them!*[c] And, thus, should we stand affected:—"Here are precious souls, capable of eternal bliss, but in danger of eternal ruin; O that we could prevail with them to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on everlasting life! O that we might be instrumental to snatch them as brands out of the burning, and to present them as living sacrifices to God!"

We should earnestly desire the *salvation of all*, and the *success of the Gospel in the hands of others;* St. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles: and yet his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, That they may be saved,[d] and that the apostles of the circumcision might see of the fruit of their labours. But we should, in a special manner, be solicitous for the spiritual welfare of those *to whom we are sent*, and with whom *we deal;* the flourishing of the vineyards which we are made the keepers of. *These* were to the apostle—as his children, his little children, whom he had a particular tenderness for, and of whom he even travailed in birth again to see Christ formed in them;[e] he was even pained to see the accomplishment of his desires and hopes concerning them. How greatly did he *long after them all in the bowels of Christ Jesus.*[f] The Lord fill all his ministers with such a love as this to precious souls,—that, as Titus did, we may walk in the same spirit, in the same steps, with blessed Paul; being willing and glad, as he was, to spend and to be spent for their good.[g]

[2.] These desires of the salvation of souls must be offered up to God in prayer. We must look up to God; and beg of him to pity and help those whom we pity, but cannot help without his grace, that are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and to deliver them from going down to the pit. We bring them the means of grace; but we must look up to him for a blessing upon those means, and for grace to go along with them, to make them effectual. When as friends of the bridegroom, we court the affections of souls for him, that they may be espoused to him,—we must do as Abraham's servant did, look up to Heaven for success: *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day;*[h] let the message of peace be entertained, and that faithful saying, which is so well worthy of all acceptation, be believed, and accepted.

When we say, *Peace be unto you*, we mean, *The Lord of Peace himself give you Peace*,—true peace, all peace—*always, by all means;*[i] that peace of God which will rule in your hearts,[k] and make them holy, and which will keep your hearts and minds,[l] and make

[a] Ezra 1. 3, 5. [b] Acts 6. 4. [c] Num. 6. 26. [d] Isa. 62. 6. [e] Jer. 28. 32. [f] Isa. 5. 6. [g] Ezra 37. 7, 8, 9, 10. [h] Gen. 9. 27.

[a] Isa. 48. 18. [b] Psa. 81. 13. [c] Deut. 5. 29. [d] Rom. 10. 1. [e] Gal. 4. 19. [f] Phil. 1. 8. [g] 2 Cor. 12. 15, 18. [h] Gen. 24. 12. [i] 2 Thes. 3. 16. [k] Col. 3. 15. [l] Phil. 4. 7.

them

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them calm and easy. We can but *speak the words of peace*, it is God only who can *speak peace*, that can *create peace*, and in his hands therefore we leave the work. We do but go, as Gahazi, with Elisha's staff, —which will not awake the dead child: nay, Elisha can but stretch himself upon the child; he must look up to the God of life for the spirit of life to enter into him.[a] We cannot by any power of our own make dead sinners alive, or drooping saints lively; we must therefore have our eyes up to the Lord, to *say unto them "live,"*[b]—to say, as one having authority, (for *we* can only shew our good will,) *Peace be unto you.*

[3.] It is good to let those we preach to know that we pray for them. We must not only say to God, *Peace be to this house*, but we must say it in the hearing of those that dwell in it. St. Paul, in his epistles, often tells his friends what those then were for which he prayed for them,—that they might be encouraged to hope they should obtain those blessings in answer to his prayers, and might with the more boldness ask them of God for themselves. The blessings which Christ's ministers pronounce on the congregations of his people, is not to be thought lightly of, but to be reverently waited for, and gladly received, because God, in it, puts his name upon them.[c] And if we in faith say *Amen* to it, we may hope that God will,—and then we are blessed indeed.

We should take all opportunities to make those we preach to sensible how, truly and earnestly, desirous we are of their eternal peace and welfare,—that, if possible, we may awaken them to a due concern about it,—and convince them that we love them, which will very much facilitate the entertainment of our message. We should make it appear, even to those who turn a deaf ear to our calls, that nevertheless we dare not *sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them.* Our Lord Jesus by his tears and good wishes testified his good will to Jerusalem, even when the things which belong to her peace were hid from her eyes.[d]

We now see our work,—and, something of the meaning of the words, here put into our mouths: *Peace be to this house,* Peace be to this congregation. The Lord help us to carry them through all our preaching and praying, with a sincere love to Christ and souls.

II. What the success of ministers is, and is likely to be, in their preaching and praying: what is the fruit of their labour,—and what the effect of their going thus from place to place: speaking *peace* wherever they come, *peace and truth*:

As to themselves:—If they be faithful in the trust reposed in them, and their hearts upright with God in the discharge of it, whatever acceptance they and their message meet with among men, they are sure to be accepted of the Lord,[e] and that they are ambitious of, and labour for. *We are a sweet savour unto God in those that perish, as well as in those that are saved:*[f] if we be sincere in doing our part. Though we should not gain our point, yet we shall in no wise lose our reward; though it be not well succeeded,—if it be said *"Well done thou good and faithful servant,"* we shall *enter into the joy of our Lord.*[a] Our Master himself, though as to the chosen remnant, he was sure to see of the travail of his soul[b] to his satisfaction; yet, as to others, he had recourse to this for his comfort, *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious.*[c] As we must deliver our message to those with whom we deal, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,[d] so when we come to return an answer—if we have delivered it faithfully, we shall give up an account of ourselves with joy, though of many we give up our account with grief. Though wisdom herself calls, and yet is refused,—she will be justified of all her children,[e] and glorified of God; and so shall Wisdom's maidens. But—

As to those to whom we minister:—the success is varied; not the same with all. On some, the peace comes which we preach, and pray for; on others, it does not. Some are the better, for our preaching and praying: to them, the word is a savour of life unto life;[f] of life spiritual unto life eternal: they are our comfort, and will be our crown. But others get no good at all by the instructions given them, and the pains we take with them: even the word of life is to them a savour of death unto death; instead of making them better it makes them worse, hardens their hearts, and aggravates their corruption, and so they are twice dead![g] Those of the same family, the same fraternity, who have had the same education, have sitten under the same ministry, and have given to each other the right hand of fellowship: may yet experience the effects of the word, thus vastly, different. *Two in a bed together,—one taken* for life, *the other left* to perish.[h]

We are ready to think the case is so plain on religion's side, that with all to whom it is fairly stated it should of itself carry immediate conviction; that Christ and holiness have such beauty in them, without comparison, and without controversy, that all we preach to should presently be brought to be in love with them: but alas it is not so; after all, many do not believe our report;[i] nay, few in comparison do; as it was among Pharaoh's servants, some took the warning given of the impending plague of hail, and housed their cattle;[k] others did not, but left them in the field: so when St. Paul preached, some believed the things that were spoken,[l] but others believed not, though they were spoken with such convincing evidence. Thus it has been constantly from the days of the prophets unto this day; and thus *it will be:* the good seed of the word falls on some ground where it is lost and thrown away; on other, where it takes root and brings forth fruit. The preaching of Christ and the apostles, was acceptable and profitable to some, while others contradicted and blasphemed it. And if we see the like still, we are not to marvel at the matter.

[a] 2 Kings 4. 31, 34. [b] Ezek. 16. 6. [c] Num. 6. 27. [d] Luke 19. 41. [e] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [f] 2 Cor. 2. 15.

[a] Mat. 25. 21. [b] Isa. 53. 11. [c] Isa. 49. 5. [d] Ezek. 2. 5. [e] Pro. 1. 24. [f] 2 Cor. 2. 16. [g] Jude 12. [h] Luke 17. 34. [i] Isa. 53. 1. [k] Exod. 9. 20, 21. [l] Acts 28. 24.

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2. It is unknown to us what the success of our ministry *will be*, and perhaps what it is. When the disciples were to say, *Peace be to this house*,—they could not tell whether the Son of peace were there or no; nay, it may be when they became better acquainted with the house, yet they could not with certainty discover whether their peace did rest upon it, or no: *The Lord knoweth them that are his*,[a] but we do not. God did indeed assure Paul, for his encouragement to preach the Gospel at Corinth, that he had much people in that city.[b] But, ordinarily, we cast the net into the sea, not knowing whether any thing will be inclosed; nay, oftentimes we toil all night, and catch nothing, when we promised ourselves a full draught.[c] And, on the other hand,—after many disappointments, at Christ's word, we let down the net, and inclose a great multitude.

Sometimes we meet not with the success we hoped for. Those who seemed very willing to hear us, yet we cannot persuade to heed us, nor to mix faith with what they hear. We are to them as a lovely song,[d] but that is all. Paul was called, by vision, to Macedonia: and yet, at his first coming, there appeared but a slender harvest to be gathered in. Nay, those with whom we thought we had gained our point, sometimes disappoint us, and prove not as we expected; the hopeful buds and blossoms are blasted, and no fruit is brought forth to perfection. Those who seemed inclosed in the Gospel-net, slip through again and are gone; and after they had escaped the corruption that is in the world, are again entangled therein, and overcome;[e] and forfeit the peace we hoped should have rested upon them. It was Christ's prerogative to know what was in men, and what they would prove.

Sometimes ministers have better success than they looked for. Nineveh repents at the preaching of Jonah; and the publicans and harlots were wrought on by John the Baptist's ministry, notwithstanding the great austerity of his conversation. The church has sometimes been herself surprised with the multitude of her converts, and has asked, *Who hath begotten those?*[f] *Who are these that fly as a cloud?*[g] The beginning perhaps was small, and as a grain of mustard seed: but the latter end greatly increases. The seed that seemed lost under the clods, springs up a great while after. One labours, and another enters into his labours;[h] one hand lays a foundation, and another builds upon it. John the Baptist was sent to *prepare* the way of the Lord, and much of the good effect of his ministry appeared when he was gone. Many a minister does more good than he thinks he does, more than he can know, and more than perhaps it is fit he should know. It will be all in good time to know what fish are inclosed in the net, when it is brought to shore. There is a day in which the secrets of all hearts will be manifested; and let us judge nothing before that time.

3. The success of our ministry will be *according as people are*. So much is intimated in the text; according as the inhabitants are sons of peace, or not, accordingly our peace will, or will not, rest upon the house. The physic operates according to the constitution of the body; the same sun softens wax, and hardens clay; *recipitur ad modum recipientis—the effect depends upon the temper with which it is received*. The same parables which made divine truths more plain and familiar to those who were humble and willing to be taught,[a] made them more obscure to those who were proud and prejudiced, and willingly ignorant.[b] Christ himself is a precious stone to them who believe: but to them who be disobedient he is a stone of stumbling. There are scorners, who when we have said all we can, will delight in scorning, and fools who will hate knowledge;[c] but there are Bereans who are more noble and better disposed,[d] wise just men, who will receive instruction, and will be yet wiser, and increase in learning.[e] If our Gospel be hid, it is hid from those whose minds Satan has blinded.[f] If it be revealed,—it is to those who have the spirit of wisdom and understanding, though they be but babes.[g]

4. The success of our ministry will be *as God pleases*; according as he gives, or with-holds, his grace. The word of God, like the rain, shall accomplish that for which he sends it,[h] and causes it to come, *whether* (as Elihu says of the rain) *it be for correction, or for his land, or for mercy*;[i] but whatever errand it is sent upon, it shall not return to him void. If Lydia attend to the things that are spoken by Paul,—it is not because *he* is an eloquent preacher, or because *she* is a considerate hearer, but because the Lord opens her heart.[k] *Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but it is God only that giveth the increase.*[l]

We have but the dispensing of the means of grace; and we must be careful and faithful in doing it: but we have not the dispensing of the grace which is necessary to make those means effectual; God reserves that in his own hand, and dispenses it according to his own pleasure, as it is fit he should, for it is his own. In this, our blessed Saviour himself acquiesced; and thereby has taught us to do so: *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*[m] *Hath not the potter power over the clay?*

As to our Success:—

(1.) The text gives us encouragement to hope, that some shall be the better for our praying and preaching; we shall meet with those who are sons of peace, who are disposed to submit to the commands, and qualified to partake of the privileges of the Gospel-peace. As Wisdom is said to be justified by her children,—so peace, to be welcomed by her sons; and on the houses where these sons of peace are, our Master does us the honour to tell us, that *our peace shall rest*. It is *his* peace: but he is pleased to call it *ours*,—because we are concerned, in the first place, to make sure an interest in it ourselves; and because we are

[a] 2 Tim. 2. 19. [b] Acts 18. 10. [c] Luke 5. 5. [d] Ezek. 33. 32. 2 Pet. 2. 20. [e] Isa. 44. 21. [f] Isa. 60. 8. [g] John 4. 38.

[a] Mat. 13. 13, 16. [b] 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8. [c] Prov. 1. 22. [d] Acts 17. 11. [e] Prov. 9. 9. [f] 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. [g] Mat. 11. 25. [h] Isa. 55. 10. 11. [i] Job 37. 13. [k] Acts 16. 14. [l] 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7. [m] Luke 10. 21.

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intrusted to make a tender of it to others. It is our peace, in the same sense that St. Paul calls the Gospel *my Gospel*,[a] because he was a minister and messenger of it. If the master of the family be a son of peace, your peace shall rest upon the whole house; they will all fare the better for his acceptance of your ministry; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*[b] And the more diffusive your benign influences are, the more satisfaction it will be to you. We may comfort ourselves with this, as St. Paul does, that we so run, not as uncertainly, *we* so fight, not as those that beat the air;[c] though some reject our message, to others it will be acceptable; so that whatever our melancholy fears sometimes may be, we shall not labour in vain, nor spend our strength for nought and in vain. But—

Who are the sons of peace, on whose heads and hearts and houses the blessing of peace shall come? I answer,

[1.] Those who are so by the designation of the divine counsel; the chosen of God, whom he hath set apart for himself to be vessels of mercy.[d] We read of those whom God has as his people, and whom Christ has as his sheep,[e] who are yet to be effectually called, and brought home. As a son of death is one destined to death, so a son of peace is one predestined to peace. The elect are sons of peace; for they are heirs of it,—and were from eternity, in the covenant of redemption, given to Christ who is our peace, and the Prince of peace, to be his children, to bear his image, partake of his nature, and be under his tuition,—and as such to be presented to the Father; *Behold! I, and the children which God has given me. My peace I leave with you.*[f] The covenant of Peace between God and Man is grounded upon the counsel of peace, which was between the Father and the Son[g] from eternity, concerning the salvation of the chosen remnant.

Now it is certain, that all who were given to Christ shall come unto him, and none of them perish;[h] for he will be able to give a good account of them all in the great day, and none of them shall be missing. Therefore it is, that as many as were ordained to eternal life shall infallibly believe,[i] for the election shall obtain though the rest be blinded,[k] because the foundation of God stands sure, and none of his purposes are abortive. Those whom God has ordained to glory shall be brought to it by the ordinary means of grace and peace; and ministers are sent in pursuance of that design, that the purpose of God according to election may stand.[l]

[2.] Those who are so by the operations of the divine Grace. They are the sons of peace in whom God has wrought a gracious readiness to admit the word of the Gospel in the light and love of it; whose hearts are made soft to receive the impressions of it, so that they are turned as clay to the seal. Those come to Christ, and so come under the dominion of this peace, whom the Father draws[m] by preparing grace, and whom, though unwilling, he makes willing in the day of his power,[a] by opening their understandings, and making their hearts to burn within them; of which two great works of divine grace, one on the intellectual, the other on the active, powers of the soul, our Lord Jesus gave remarkable specimens while he was here upon earth, after his resurrection, Luke 24. 32, 45.

They are the sons of peace; that is, qualified to receive the comforts of the everlasting Gospel; in whom there is a good work of grace wrought,—that whereas they were by nature vain and carnal and worldly, are become serious and holy and heavenly who are born again, born from above, and partake of a new nature. To those who are sanctified, and to those only, we are commissioned to speak peace. Therefore the apostolical benediction puts grace before peace; *Grace be unto you, and,* then, *Peace.* Those only who have received the spirit of holiness, are intitled to the consolations of God.

(2.) Wherein, shall those who are thus the sons of peace be the better for our ministry? We are here told, that our peace shall rest upon them, that is,

[1.] Our *prayers* for them shall be heard. And even with an eye to our prayers, and in answer to them as well as to his own promises, and in performance of them God will bestow upon them all that good which is necesssary, and will be sufficient, to make them happy for ever and easy now. When we bespeak peace *for* them, God will speak peace *to* them, he will bless his people with peace;[b] will pay out the legacy which Christ has left, by his last will and testament, to all who are his disciples indeed, upon our suing it out for them,—even his peace.[c] This—is an encouragement to us to pray particularly for good Christians who are troubled in mind, and are of a sorrowful spirit; and to be humbly earnest with God in prayer for them, when it may be they cannot with any confidence pray for themselves—that it is here promised that peace shall be given, to all those to whom it belongs, in answer to our prayers; so that the effectually fervent prayer of a righteous man may avail much:[d] and what a joy may it be to us, if we thus become helpers of the joy of the Lord's people! And though the answer of peace does not come quickly,—we must continue to pray and wait, and hearken what God the Lord will speak; for, sooner or later, he will speak peace to his people and to his saints.[e] Light is sown for them,[f] and in due time it will come up in a harvest of joy, though it may be it was sown in tears.

When we pronounce the blessing of peace upon a *mixed* congregation,—as to them who are indeed the sons of peace, God will say *Amen* to the blessing, will put his *fiat—let it be done,* to it, "They are blessed and they shall be blessed." We pray for *all*,—God will hear us for those who are the *Children* of the covenant, and the promise; as Abraham prays for Ishmael,[g] and God hears him for Isaac. As the hand

[a] Rom. 2. 16. [b] Acts 16. 31. [c] 1 Cor. 9. 26. [d] Acts 18. 10. [e] John 10. 16. [f] Heb. 2. 13. [g] Zech. 16. 13. [h] John 6. 39, 40. [i] Acts 18. 48. [k] Rom. 11. 7. [l] Rom. 9. 11. [m] John 6. 44.

[a] Ps. 110. 3. [b] Ps. 29. 11. [c] John 14. 27. [d] Jam. 5. 16. [e] Ps. 85. 8. [f] Ps. 97. 11. [g] Gen. 17. 18. 19.

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of his wrath shall find out all his enemies;[a] so the hand of his grace and blessing shall find out all his friends, wherever they are,—none of them shall be lost in the crowd.

[2.] Our *preaching* to them shall answer the end, and be effectual. If they be the sons of peace, the glad tidings of peace we bring shall instruct them, and increase their knowledge; shall invite them to Christ, and strengthen their faith in him; shall work upon their affections, and inflame their love to him; shall govern them, and influence their whole conversation; shall comfort them, and enlarge their hearts to run the way of God's commandments. Our peace shall come upon them as a light shining from heaven to guide their feet *into* the paths of peace, and *in* those paths; nay, it shall come upon them as power from on high,—both to rule their hearts,[b] and give law to them; and to keep their hearts,[c] and give comfort to them. It shall come upon them, as the rain comes copiously upon the earth to water it; and they shall drink in this rain, and bring forth *herbs meet for them by whom they are dressed.*[d]

But O what a comfort is it—To be instrumental in furthering the holiness, and joy, of the sons of peace; in carrying the heirs of heaven forward toward their inheritance? Herein, we have the honour of *being workers together with God;* and as under shepherds, serving the gracious purposes of the chief Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom.[e]

[3.] The fruit of *both* shall *remain*;[f] your peace shall not only come, but rest upon the sons of peace, it shall continue with them, and they shall never lose the power and benefit of it; it is a good part which shall never be taken away[g] from those who have it; this peace shall take such deep rooting in the soul that it shall never be extirpated; it shall be a well of living water which shall still spring up to life eternal.[h] Our Saviour encouraged his disciples with this, when he sent them forth into his harvest,—That they were gathering fruit unto life eternal:[i] in which both he who sows and they who reap, shall for ever rejoice together.

(3.) The text also shews us that we ought not to be overmuch discouraged in our work, though there be many who are never the better for our praying and preaching. If the sons of peace be not among those to whom we bring the glad tidings of peace; if those to whom we minister be wilful and obstinate, and turn a deaf ear to the calls of the word, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmer; if we cannot fasten any thing upon them, to convince them of their folly in a sensual indulgence of the body, and a senseless neglect of their souls;—they who *were* filthy, are filthy still; and all the day long do we stretch out our hands in vain to a rebellious gain-saying people.

In this case, our own hearts suggest to us many sad thoughts: It is a temptation to us to question the credibility and acceptableness of the truths we preach, when there are so many who cannot be brought to entertain them, and submit to them; to question whether it be any advantage to have the oracles of God and the means of grace, and whether it were not as good be without them, since to so many who have them they are in vain. But we have ready an answer to this temptation, *What if some did not believe?* (Nay, what if many did not?) *Shall their unbelief* invalidate the Covenant of grace and peace, and *make the truth of God of none effect? God forbid!*[a] We are told, previously, that so it would be; and, therefore, it ought not to be a stumbling-block to us. And the reason why they do not believe, and are not sons of peace, is, not because there wants any thing to recommend this peace to them, but because their minds are *blinded* by the love of the world and the lusts of the flesh, and they will not come to Christ for eye-salve, will not come to him that they might have life.[b]

It is likewise a temptation to us to question, Whether we have the presence of God with us in our ministry, or no? We are ready to say as Gideon did, *If the Lord be with us, where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?*[c] the wonders that were wrought by the powers of the word, in casting down imaginations, and bringing high thoughts into obedience to Christ:[d] we now see not such signs: there are no more any converts: or, very few like the grape-gleanings of the vintage.

As to this: the text intimates that which may encourage us, and give us satisfaction. If we meet with those who are not the sons of peace,—

[1.] It is true that our peace shall not come, or rest, upon them, as it does upon them who are the sons of peace: our prayers are not heard for them. We know not who have sinned unto death; while there is life, there is hope; and therefore we are to pray for the worst: but if we did know, concerning any—as certainly as Samuel did concerning Saul,—that God had rejected them, we should have very little reason to pray for them. *There is a sin,* a sinner, *unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*[e] Our preaching speaks no comfort to them; for we are to separate between the precious and the vile. And at the same time, we say, *God has redeemed his servant Jacob,* and *they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts,* we must add, yet *there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.*[f] When this blessing is pronounced upon the congregation,—those in it who are not the sons of peace have no part or lot in the matter,[g] it is not designed for them. *Behold* my servants *shall eat: but* ye *shall be hungry.*[h] It is true, that grace and peace shall be with them all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;[i] but it is as true, that if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is, and shall be *anathema: maran-atha—accursed: the Lord comes.*[k] The blessing

[a] Psa. 21. 8. [b] Col. 3. 15. [c] Phil. 4. 7. [d] Heb. 6. 7. [e] Isa. 40. 11. [f] John 15. 16. [g] Luke 10. 42. [h] John 4. 14. [i] John 4. 36.

[a] Rom. 3. 3. [b] John 5. 40. [c] Judges 6. 13. [d] 2 Cor. 10 5. [e] 1 John 5. 16. [f] Isa. 48. 20, 21, 22. [g] Acts 8. 21. [h] Isa. 65. 13. [i] Eph. 6. 24. [k] 1 Cor. 16. 22.

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that rests upon the sons of peace shall never come upon the sons of Belial.

In God's Name, I therefore, testify, to all who hear me this day: If you do not submit your souls to the sanctifying commanding power of the Gospel truths, —they speak, they bring, no peace to you. You have no right to the blessings of the covenant, nor can lay any claim to its comforts, unless you come up to the terms of the covenant, and come under the bonds of it. Those and those only shall find rest for their souls[a] in Christ, who are willing to take his yoke upon them. You have many excellent ministers, and a great deal of lively serious powerful preaching; you have precept upon precept, and line upon line: but all this will bring no peace to you, if you continue under the power of a vain and carnal mind,—nay, it will but aggravate your condemnation another day.

We dare not speak peace to those to whom the God of Heaven does not speak peace; nor tell those, who go on still in their trespasses, they shall have peace notwithstanding; we should be false to God and your souls if we did. However you may flatter yourselves, we dare not flatter you, in a sinful way; we have not seen visions of peace for you; and therefore must not speak words of peace to you. To what purpose would it be to *daub a wall with untempered mortar,*[b] which would soon fall and bury you, and us too, in the ruins of it? We must say to every impenitent sinner as Jehu did to Joram's messenger, *What hast thou to do with peace?*[c] True peace thou canst not have without holiness; be willing therefore and obedient; and now at length in this thy day, understand the *things which belong to thy peace;* for (blessed be God!) yet, they are not hid from thine eyes.

[2.] The peace that does not find sons of peace to rest upon shall turn to us again. And this ought to satisfy us; as it quieted David, when he prayed for his persecutors, that though his kindness did not work upon them, nor were his prayers heard for them perhaps, yet they returned into his own bosom.[d]

Our peace shall turn to us, that is,

(1.) We shall have the comfort—of having done our duty to God, in discharge of our trust; and of having done our part toward their salvation, in love to their souls. This will be peace to us, though it be not peace to them. Abundance of peace we may have in our own bosoms—If we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that we have dealt plainly with them, have given them fair warning of their misery and danger by reason of sin, have said again and again, *O wicked man, thou shalt surely die;*[e] have endeavoured to open to them the remedial law of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and have not wilfully kept back any thing that was profitable to them,[f]—though we have piped to them and they have not danced; have mourned unto them, and they have not lamented.[g] We have done what we could, to frighten them from sin, with the terrors of the law; and to allure them to Christ, with the comforts of the Gospel; but all in vain; they have not been wrought upon either by the one or by the other, yet their infidelity and obstinacy shall be no bar to our acceptance with God, who will have an eye to our sincerity, not to our success.

This peace will be *our* peace still,—if we have some good hope through grace, that though we cannot prevail with others to come to Christ, yet we have ourselves an interest in him; that we shall save ourselves, though we save not all who hear us;[a] that whatever becomes of them we shall not be cast away at last. If *others* be not the better for our labours, the peace may return to ourselves, if we be the better; for we preach to ourselves, and must edify ourselves; and the less good we think we do to others' souls, the more good let us endeavour to get to our own souls, and then take the comfort of it. When those disciples returned, to whom Christ gave these instructions in the text, though they had had wonderful success even beyond their own expectation,—yet Christ directs them to rejoice more in the assurances they themselves had of their own bliss, than in their triumphs over Satan in others: *In this rejoice not, that the Devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.*[b] And this cause for joy every faithful minister has, though he have not the success he wishes for.

(2.) We shall have commission to go on in our work notwithstanding. Our peace shall turn to us again; not only to be enjoyed by ourselves, but to be bestowed upon others, and communicated to them,— to the next we meet with who are sons of peace. If one will not be wrought upon, it is to be hoped another will. Though many disbelieve our report, yet all do not, there are some who will bid it welcome. Though the body of the Jewish nation rejected the Gospel of Christ, yet *at this present time*[c] (says the apostle) when the ferment is at the highest, and the opposition given to the Gospel is most violent, yet *there is a remnant according to the election of grace,* a remnant even of that nation who are sons of peace. And when the Jews thrust the kingdom of God away from them by their unbelief, the Gentiles embraced it with both arms. The peace which the apostles made a tender of to them, but they refused, was still in their hands, to carry to the Gentiles: *Lo, we turn to them.*[d]

It is indeed a temptation to us—when our message is slighted—to say, We will go no more on this errand; as Jeremiah was ready to say, when his ministry was ridiculed, *I will not make mention of the Lord, nor speak any more in his name:*[e] but we must never yield to any temptation of this kind, for Woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel, *as we have opportunity,* whatever the issue be. If men will not hear us, our God will; and will crown humble honest labours in his service with comfort and glory, though they should not be crowned with any remarkable success.

[a] Mat. 11. 29. [b] Ezek. 13. 10, 16. [c] 2 Kings 9 18. [d] Psa. 35. 13. [e] Ezek. 33. 8. [f] Acts 20. 20, 11. [g] Mat. 11. 17.

[a] 1 Tim. 4. 16. [b] Luke 10. 20. [c] Rom. 11. 3. [d] Acts 13. 46. [e] Jer. 20. 9.

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(3.) We shall be witnesses against those who refuse so fair an offer. Our peace shall return to us again, as the summons is returned to the officer, if the party summoned is not to be found, that it may be produced in evidence, that he was legally summoned. The Gospel is a testimony *to* us:[a] but if we receive it not, it will be a testimony *against* us.[b] And the ministers of that Gospel—who now follow you with importunity from day to day, beseeching you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, but all in vain—will give up a sad account concerning you; and you will be upbraided with all the pains they have taken among you; it will all be brought into the account, with a "*Son remember*;" that will enhance the reckoning, and inflame the torment. The servant who was sent to invite the guests to the wedding supper, when he met with a repulse, came and shewed his Lord all these things.[c] Ministers bring in an account of the fruit of their labours. While the sons of peace will be their joy and crown of rejoicing,—those who continue in a state of enmity will be for ever struck speechless by their testimony against them: "Lord, we called, but they refused; we warned them, day and night, with tears: but they stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts, and sent us away grieved." Many a time, they complained of it at the throne of grace; and it made their work go on heavily upon their hands; their souls wept in secret for it: but when they shall testify it before the throne of judgment, they will awfully applaud and acquiesce in the sentence past upon them, and be content to see them perish.

Let us now make some application of all briefly.

1. Let this awaken us who are ministers to be faithful, and serious, and diligent *in* delivering our message; as those who are in some measure sensible of the vast importance of the work we are employed in, and the dispensation that is committed to us. O that I could stir up my own heart, and your's, duly to consider the inestimable value—of that treasure which is lodged in us, though we are but earthen vessels;[d] that peace which we are to bring in God's name to mankind; those talents with which we are to trade till our Lord comes. Let us think who we are, in trust for: for Christ and his honour, and the interests of his kingdom among men; for precious souls, and their everlasting welfare. We deal in matters of life and death; O let our care and zeal be proportionable; and let us make a business of our ministry, let us wait upon it,[e] and give ourselves wholly to it,[f] as those who must give account,—that our Lord when he comes may find us doing, *so* doing.

If we be unskilful, and know not how to divide the word of truth and peace aright;[g] if we be unfaithful, and sooth men up in their sins, or any way handle the word of God deceitfully, seeking our own things more than the things of Christ; if we be slothful, and unwilling to take pains, not affected ourselves with the great things of God with which it is our business to affect to others; if we be lifeless and careless in praying and preaching, and defeat the end of the matter of both by the slight manner of the performance;—we shall have a great deal to answer for another day; if the watchmen do not give warning, or not so that it is likely to be heard or heeded, the sinners will perish: but their blood will be required at the watchmen's hands.[a]

And let us remember that we are to bring peace with us in all our ministrations, that peace of God which passeth all conception and expression; and therefore we ought to apply ourselves to that business, and not meddle with things that belong not to us. We are ambassadors of peace, let us not then sow discord, nor foment divisions; for if we do, we contradict our character, and forfeit the honour of it. Let us be at peace among ourselves, and covet the blessedness of those who are peace-makers.

2. Let us when we have done what we can, look up to God for the success. We ought earnestly to desire that our labour may not be in vain, and to be in care that nothing may be wanting on our part, in order to the good effect of it; we should do more good if we were but more solicitous to do good, and set ourselves to devise things proper for that end, to chuse out words wherewith to reason with people about their souls. But, still, we must depend upon the blessing of heaven for our success; and must be earnest in prayer for that blessing. We can but speak to the ear, it is God only that can teach the heart, and seal the instruction there.

When we go to study, let us pray to God to put a word into our mouth that shall suit the case, and reach the consciences, of those to whom we are to speak; to direct us both in the choice and management of our subjects, to fill our hands, (as the Hebrew phrase for consecration) that we may fill the peoples' hearts, when we go to preach. Still we need help from heaven to deliver our message as become the oracles of God; with purity, gravity and sincerity; with an air of tenderness and humility, as those who know the worth of souls, and our own unworthiness; and yet with an air of assurance, as those who are confident of the truth of what we say, and who know whom we have trusted. When we have preached, we have but sown the seed; still we must look up to God to water it, and to give to every seed its own body. When we proceed to pray, we must fetch in the influences of the Blessed Spirit, to help us against our praying infirmities. Nay we must look up to God for a blessing—upon every word of advice, reproof, and comfort that we give, that it may answer the end.

And as we are to pray for the success of our own endeavours; so likewise we must be earnest with God in prayer for the concurrence of his grace with the labours of others. Thus we *must* help one another; and thus we *may*,—though we are at a great distance from each other, and cannot otherwise be helpful. When the Apostle forbids wishing "good speed" to

[a] Mat. 24. 14. [b] Mat. 10. 18. [c] Luke 14. 21. [d] 2 Cor. 4. 7. [e] Rom. 12. 7. [f] 1 Tim. 4. 15. [g] 2 Tim. 2. 15.

[a] Ezek. 33. 6.

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those who bring any other doctrine,[a] it is intimated, that it was usual with the primitive christians and ministers to bid those "God speed" who brought the true doctrine of Christ. Those who labour in Christ's harvest should be prayed for; as of old the reapers were, by them who passed by: *The blessing of the Lord be upon you, we bless you in the name of the Lord.*[b] God speed the Gospel-plough!

3. Let us be very careful that we do not, by any irregularity in our conversation, hinder the success of our praying and preaching, and defeat the ends of them. If we be proud and vain, and loose in our walking; if we be intemperate, and indulgent of the flesh; if we be covetous, selfish and worldly; if we be contentious, peevish and passionate; or if any corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth;—we pull down with one hand what we build up with the other; and not only tempt people, but even force them to think, that we *ourselves* do not believe what we would persuade them to believe;—and when we appear most serious in our public performances do but act a part, and talk thus only because it is our trade;—we do also provoke God to withdraw his presence from us, and to say as he does of those prophets, who walk not in his counsels, *They shall not profit this people at all.*[c]

Let our conversation be not only blameless and harmless, but exemplary for every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy; thus, let our light shine; that others may be taught, and guided, and quickened by it. Then may we hope it shall be with us as it was with Levi of old, who, while he walked with God in peace and equity, turned many away from iniquity.[d]

4. What success of our labours we have the comfort of, let God have all the glory of. Do we meet with any of those to whom we minister in holy things, who are awakened to a concern about their souls and eternity, and are asking the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward?[e] Are there any of the children we have catechized who hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love, and have we the satisfaction of seeing them walk in the truth? When we look into the vineyards we are made the keepers of, do we find that the vines do in any measure flourish, and the tender grapes appear;[f] that the souls we watch over prosper and are in health? We cannot but rejoice herein, rejoice greatly; yet let us rejoice with humility; for I am sure we have nothing to be proud of, nothing to boast of, but a great deal to be ashamed of, and great reason to admire God's gracious condescention that he is pleased thus far to own us, to honour us, though most unworthy. Let us rejoice with thankfulness, with many thanksgivings to God, whose strength is perfected in weakness and his praise ordained out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. St. Paul in his Epistles, gives thanks to God for those churches that he had comfort in, and hopes of.

But let us rejoice with trembling, lest those whom we think espoused as chaste virgins to Christ should yet be beguiled, as Eve was, by the subtilty of the Tempter; and let us always be jealous over them, as Paul was over his friends, with a godly jealousy,[a] lest it should prove at last we have bestowed upon them labour in vain.[b]

5. What disappointments we meet with, let us bear them patiently. Let us inquire whether we have not been wanting in our duty, and be humbled for our defects, and acknowledge that the Lord is righteous. St. Paul owns, that by the miscarriages of those among whom he had laboured, his God humbled him among them: and the same good use we should make of the same trial, let it help to hide pride from us, and oblige us to depend upon the sufficiency of divine grace, and not upon any thing in ourselves, for without Christ we can do nothing.

When we suspect we do little good, yet let it be a comfort to us that we are going on in the way of our duty; that we are presiding in solemn religious assemblies, *from one new moon to another, and from one subbath to another,* and so are serving Christ, and his glory in the world. Good may be in operation, and we not aware of it; the Gospel works like leaven, silently and insensibly;[d] and, like the seed cast into the ground, —which grows up, (we know not how,) while we sleep, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.[e] Nor let it be any uneasiness to us that we are kept in doubt and in the dark concerning the success of our labours. When the net is drawn to shore we shall see what is enclosed; what good fish, and what bad;[f] and let us judge nothing before the time; the great day will clear all, and we must wait till then.

But if there be those whose sins go before unto judgment, who manifestly hate to be reformed, and will go on frowardly in the way of their heart:—though we cannot but look upon them, many a time, with a sad heart,—yet in this, we must be satisfied, that *God will be glorified:* if God be not honoured by them, he will get him honour upon them, as he did on Pharaoh. They to whom our labour is in vain are not sons of peace; and, therefore, it should not be expected that our peace should rest upon them; Christ will see his seed, and we must not think to see any other for ours. If divine mercy be not glorified in their salvation, divine justice will be glorified in their destruction; and they will have nothing to say for themselves, nor will their ministers have any thing to say for them: the dresser of the vineyard who had interceded for the barren fig tree, will be pleased, if at length it bear fruit,—but if not, he gives it up, *Then after that thou shalt cut it down.*[g]

To conclude: Let this be an awakening word to all of you. You are, in this world, probationers for eternity; accordingly as you are, now, sons of peace or not, it is likely to be with you for ever. Are your

[a] 2 John 10. [b] Ps. 129. 8. [c] Jer. 23. 32. [d] Mal. 2. 6. [e] Jer. 50. 5. [f] Cant. 7. 12.

[a] 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3. [b] 1 Thes. 3. 5. [c] 2 Cor. 12. 21. [d] Mat. 13. 33. [e] Mark 4. 26, 27, 28. [f] Mat. 13. 48. [g] Luke 13. 9.

ministers

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ministers desirous to have their peace rest upon you, and are not you desirous of it? Are they in care about your souls, and will not you be in care about them? You have life and death, good and evil set before you: chuse life, that you may live, may live for ever: but if you will not come up to the terms of peace, but will perish in your rebellion, you cannot say but you have had fair warning given you of the consequences of it, so that your watchmen have delivered their souls, and left your blood to lie upon your own heads.

DISPUTES REVIEWED:

IN A

SERMON,

Preached at the Evening-Lecture, at Salters' Hall, on Lord's-Day, July 23, 1710.

MARK 9. 33.

——*What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

OUR Lord Jesus is here calling his disciples to an account about a warm debate they happened to have among themselves, as they travelled along, upon a question often started, but not yet determined, *Which of them should be the greatest?* They thought no other but that their Master should shortly enter upon the possession of a temporal kingdom, and all the pomp and grandeur of it, and they should be preferred with him; but they could not agree who should be prime ministers of state, and have the first post of honour. It is a sad instance of the remainders of corruption in the hearts even of good people; and shews that pride, ambition, and affectation of worldly honour, are sins that do most easily beset even Christ's own disciples; which, therefore, we should all carefully watch and strive against.

Probably our Lord Jesus over-heard some words that passed in this dispute; for those who are hot upon an argument are apt to speak louder than becomes them: and when the temper is not kept within due bounds, commonly the voice is not: but whether he over-heard them or no, he knew very well what they had been talking of, and every word that had been said, and—which was more than any *man* could know—from what principle it was said, and what more they would have said; for as there is not a word in our tongue, so there is not a thought in our heart, though newly risen and started there, though industriously suppressed and stifled there, but he knows it altogether.[a] He is that essential eternal Word of God, who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and before whom all things are naked and open.[b] Let all the churches take notice of this, That our Lord Jesus not only knows our work, but is He who searches the reins and hearts.[a]

And yet though Christ knew what his disciples had been talking of, he asked them what it was,—because he would know it from *them*, and would have them to confess their fault and folly in it; that from thence he might take occasion to rectify their mistakes, and to instruct and reason them into a better temper.

Think not that my design from this text is to arraign, examine, or inquire into any disputes or contests that may be among you, of any kind: for as (blessed be God) I know of no *particular* occasion for it, nor have any thing else in my eye, in the choice of this subject, but what is *common to all;* so if there were, I should think myself the unfittest man in the world to be a judge or a divider. And besides, if I should thus go about to take my master's work out of his hands, I should contradict that which is my design—in putting this question to you, *What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way?*—and that is to shew you that our blessed Lord Jesus does and will enquire into these matters, and bind you over to his judgment.

Four things this text teaches us, who are all in profession *disciples* of Christ, as we are baptized Christians.

I. That we must all expect to be called to an account by our Lord Jesus.

II. That we must, in a particular manner, be called to an account about our discourses among ourselves.

III. That, among our discourses, we shall especially be called to an account about our disputes.

IV. That, of all our disputes, we shall be most strictly reckoned with for our disputes about precedency and superiority.

[a] Ps. 139. 4 [b] Heb. 4. 12, 13.

[a] Rev. 2. 18, 23.

I. We

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I. We must all expect to be called to an account shortly, by our Lord Jesus, concerning the temper of our minds, and the course and tenor of our lives, now we are *in the way*.

1. We are all now *in the way;* following Christ, as his disciples here; in *consort*. We are *viatores—travellers*, under the conduct of our Great Master, towards the better country. And here we are upon trial: it is the state of our probation: and according as our steps are, while we are in the way, our rest will be when we are at our journey's end. It concerns us therefore—What we have to do, to do it while we are yet in the way;[a] and whatever we do while we are in the way, to do it with an eye to our end.

2. There will be a review of what passes *in the way;*[b] it will all be called over again; every work and every word will be brought into judgment, will be weighed in a just and unerring balance, will be produced in evidence for us or against us. There will not need any repetition, every thing is now recorded in the book of God's omniscience; and it is enough that, in that day, the *books will be opened*, and all will be *judged out of those things which were* found *written in the books, according to their works.*[c] It concerns us therefore, whatever we do *in the way*, to do it as those who must give account, and to consider how it will pass in the account; how it will look in the review; that we may dread doing that which will make against us then, and may abound in that which will be *fruit abounding to our account*,[d] and which we shall meet again with comfort, on the other side death and the grave.

3. The account in the great day must be given up to our Lord Jesus, for we call him *Master and Lord*, as these disciples did; and to him therefore we are accountable, as *scholars* and *servants*, how we spend our time. He is our Judge, for he is our law-giver;[e] and to him the Father has committed all judgment,[f] particularly that in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained.[g] Christ shall have the honour of it, and let all good christians take the comfort of it, that he who is an advocate for all believers will be their judge: but withal, let it oblige us to the utmost care and circumspection in our walking: we must therefore labour to be accepted of the Lord, and approve ourselves to him in our integrity, because we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,[h] to give account of every thing done in the body. God made the world, by his Son; and by him, as the fittest person, he will judge the world.

Now this is a good reason:

(1.) Why we should judge ourselves, and prove our own work, and see that our matters be right and good against that day. Let us examine ourselves concerning our spiritual state, that we may make sure work for our own souls; and often call ourselves to an account concerning the way we are in, and the steps we take in that way, that we may renew our repentance for whatever we find to have been amiss, and make our peace with God in Christ. And *if we would* thus *judge ourselves, we should not be judged*[a] of the Lord. When we come to our journey's end, it will be asked, How we carried ourselves *in the way?* Let us therefore carry ourselves accordingly, and *ponder the path of our feet*.

(2.) It is a good reason why we should not judge one another, or be severe in our censures one of another: we thereby invade Christ's throne, for it is his prerogative to call his disciples to an account; and though he designed them to be one another's helpers, he never intended they should be one another's judges. *We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*, and therefore must not judge one another. We must be judged ourselves; and may expect to be judged with severity, if we be severe in judging our brethren, for the measure we mete will be measured to us.[b] Our brethren likewise must be judged by the Lord Jesus, and, therefore, if we pretend to judge them, they are *coram non judice—before a judge without authority*. Who are we that we should judge another man's servant? *to his own master he stands or falls*,[c] and to his judgment it is fit we should leave him.

II. Among other things that pass *in the way*, we must expect to be called to account for what we have talked *among ourselves*. We are apt to make a light matter of this; and when we have talked at random, what comes uppermost, without regard to God or man, we think to turn it off with an excuse that it was but talk, and *words are but wind*: but we wretchedly mistake, and put a cheat upon ourselves, if that be true which our Saviour has told us, and undoubtedly true it is, that not only for every profane and wicked word, for every false and spiteful word, but *for every idle word that men speak*, they must *give account in the day of judgment*; nay, and so shall their doom be, for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.[d] Christ takes notice of what we say, now; and we should think we hear him say to us when we are in conservation, as he did to the two disciples going to Emmaus, *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad*,[e] or, as ye sit and are merry? Are they such as become christians? Are you not saying that which must be unsaid again by repentance, or you will be undone? And as Christ takes notice of it now, so he will call it over again in the day of account.

What we talk *among ourselves* with the usual freedom of conversation, we do not expect to hear of again; it is *inter nos—between ourselves*, and therefore we think we may allow ourselves a liberty. What is said under the seal of conversation, we think almost as safe in point of honour, as what is said under the seal of confession: none but a tale-bearer, that great mischief-maker, will reveal such secrets:[f] but though it be talked *among ourselves*, it cannot escape either the cognizance or the judgment of our Lord Jesus.

[a] Mat. 5. 25. [b] Ecc. 12. 14. [c] Rev. 20. 12. [d] Phil. 4. 17. [e] Is. 33. 22. [f] John 5. 22. [g] Acts 17. 31. [h] 2 Cor. 5. 9, 10.

[a] 1 Cor. 11. 31. [b] Mat. 7. 1, 2. [c] Rom. 14. 4. [d] Mat. 12. 36, 37. [e] Luke 24. 17. [f] Prov. 11. 13.

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1. If we talk any thing which is good among ourselves, and which is to the use of edifying;[a] which manifests grace in the speaker, and ministers grace to the hearers; Christ takes notice of that, and we shall hear of it again to our comfort, in that day, when those who thus confess Christ before men[b] shall be owned by him before his Father, and the holy angels. When they who *feared the Lord spake often one to another*, for their mutual encouragement to hold fast their integrity in a time of general apostasy, *the Lord hearkened and heard it*, as one greatly well pleased with it, and *a book of remembrance was written before him*, in which were entered all those pious conferences *of them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name*;[c] and the day will come when this book, among the rest, shall be opened.

There is not a good word coming from a good heart, and directed to a good end, but it is heard in secret, and shall be rewarded openly, though, perhaps, there are those now who ridicule and banter such language. What is spoken for the edification of others, will turn to a good account to ourselves; and it will add to our joy in heaven, to have been any way instrumental to help others thither. Nay, if it should not reach their hearts for whom it is designed, yet the comfort of it will return into our own bosoms; and what was well intended for the honour of Christ, shall not be overlooked in the day of account.

This should engage and encourage us to keep up religious discourse, that it will be remembered to our advantage in the accounts shortly, though we may forget it; as the righteous could not say that ever they saw Christ hungry and fed him, or thirsty and gave him drink;[d] yet Christ will not forget it, but will place it to account, as an acceptable service done to him.

2. If we talk, any thing that is ill, among ourselves; if any corrupt communication proceeds out of our mouths, dictated by the corruption of our own minds, and which has a tendency to corrupt the minds and manners of others; Christ observes that too, is displeased with it,—(and we shall hear of it again, either by the checks of our own consciences, in order to our repentance, or in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, when according to Enoch's prophesy, The Lord shall come[e] to reckon with sinners, not only for all their ungodly deeds, but for all their hard speeches, spoken against him. It will be asked sooner or later, What was it that you said such a time, proudly, vainly, filthily, that foolish talking and jesting which is not becoming? What was it that you said in such and such company by way of reproach to your neighbour, when you sat deliberately, sat magisterially, and spoke against your brother, and slandered those,[f] whose good names you ought to have protected?—or, which aggravates it, by way of reflection on your superiors; reviling the Gods, and speaking evil of the rulers of your people,[g] little thinking that a bird of the air may carry the voice?[a] Let this consideration oblige us all to take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our tongue, and to keep our mouth as it were with a bridle,[b] that we may say nothing but what we can bear to be told of again. And we have need to beg of God, that by his grace he would *set a watch before the door of our lips*,[c]—a double watch upon the door of our hearts, *out of the abundance of which the mouth speaks*,—that nothing may proceed from them to his dishonour.

III. As our other discourses *among ourselves by the way*, so especially our disputes, will all be called over again, and we shall be called to an account about them. *What was it that ye disputed among yourselves?* What was the subject of the dispute? and how was it managed? Disputing supposes some variance and strife, and a mutual contradiction and opposition arising from it. Disputing by the way is falling-out by the way, a thing directly contrary to the charge which Joseph as a type of Christ gave to his brethren, *See that ye fall not out by the way*;[d] and therefore we may expect to be reproved for it.

There are disputes that are of use among the disciples of Christ, and which in the review we may reflect upon with comfort. Did we dispute—For the conviction of atheists and deists, and other the enemies of our holy religion; or for the confirmation of those who were in danger of being drawn away by their delusions? Did we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,[e] and with meekness and fear both instruct others that oppose themselves,[f] and give a reason of our own hope that is in us?[g] Did we, fairly and calmly, discuss lesser matters in difference between us and our brethren, that we might find out the truth, and have our mistakes rectified; or, if we cannot, hereby, come to be of the same mind,—yet we may see that even those we differ from have so much colour of reason on their side, as that they may still differ from us, and yet not forfeit their reputation either for wisdom or honesty? Did we, with prudence and mildness, debate our cause with our neighbour himself, and not go forth hastily to strive;[h] did we tell him his fault between us and him alone,[i] before we told it to the world or the church; in order to a friendly accommodation? These are disputes which will pass well in the account, when they come to be called over again.

But our disputes are too often such, that when we come to be asked about them, as the disciples were here,—we shall, like them, hold our peace, as being ashamed to have them spoken of again, and having nothing to say in our own vindication: and (as the town-clerk of Ephesus apprehended,) when we are called in question for the uproar, can shew no justifiable cause, whereby we may give an account of it.[k]

Three things may occasion disputes—among christians, among ministers, neighbours, friends, relations

[a] Eph. 4. 29. [b] Mat. 10. 32. [c] Mal. 3. 16. [d] Mat. 25. 37. Jude 15. [f] Ps. 50. 20. [g] Exod. 22. 28.

[a] Ecc. 10. 20. [b] Ps. 39. 1. [c] Ps. 141. 3. [d] Gen. 45. 24. [e] Jude 3. [f] 2 Tim. 2. 25. [g] 1 Pet. 3. 15. [h] Prov. 25. 8, 9. [i] Mat. 18. 15. [k] Acts 19. 40.

—which

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—which, perhaps, when they come to be reflected upon, as here, will be found to have a great deal in them that was culpable: different opinions, separate interests, and clashing humours.

1. Disputes commonly arise from *difference of opinion*, —either in religion and divine things; (about which often-times the disputes and contests are most violent;) or, in philosophy, politics, or other parts of learning; or in the conduct of human life. While men differ so much in capacity, temper, genius and education; and different sentiments are received by tradition from our fathers; it cannot be expected that men should all agree in the same notions. The same thing seen with different eyes, and by different lights, may appear to one true and very good, and to another false and very bad, though both employ their faculties about it with equal diligence and sincerity. This cannot but give rise to diputes, for we are naturally forward (and sometimes over-forward) to clear ourselves, and convince others; and have such a conceit of our own judgment, as to think that every body ought to be of one mind, and that if they will be ruled by reason, they will be so: for vain man would be wise, would be thought to be so, though he be born as the wild asses' colt.[a]

But these disputes are often such as we may justly be ashamed of, when we come to look back upon them.

(1.) Upon account of the matter of them. What was it that we disputed among ourselves? What was it we were so hot and eager about?

Perhaps it was something *above us*,—about the nature and attributes, the counsels and decrees of God; and the operations of his providence and grace; and the person of the Mediator: those *secret* things which belong not to us:[b] things which we did not understand, nor could: things which it was presumption for us to dispute about; for the angels with an awful reverence humbly desire to look into them,[c] as not pretending to be masters of them. And the great apostle, who had been in the third Heavens, not only owned that the words he heard there were unspeakable,[d] but was so much at a loss to express himself concerning the work of redemption, though it is in some measure revealed, that despairing to find the bottom, he sits down at the brink, and adores the depth of that mystery: *O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*[e] O what reason have we with Job to abhor ourselves, and to repent in dust and ashes, because, like him, in our disputes with our friends,[f] concerning the reasons and methods of God's proceedings, we have darkened counsel by words without knowledge; and have uttered that which we understood not, things too wonderful for us.

Perhaps it was something *below us*, not worth disputing about, especially, with so much warmth and violence: it was a trifle, a mere strife of words,[g] a dispute *de lana caprina,—about a thing of no value*; as if the matter were started only for want of something to wrangle about; so inconsiderable a thing, that which way soever it goes, the costs are much more than the damage. In the reflection, we may justly blush to think that we should make so much ado, so great a noise about nothing.

Perhaps it was something *foreign to us*, that we were no way concerned in; some matter of politics it may be, which belongs not to those of our rank and station, but must be left to wiser heads, whose business it is to deal in things of that nature. Our Lord Jesus after his resurrection twice checked his disciples for a vain curiosity:—once in inquiring concerning one another's affairs; when Peter asked concerning John, *What shall this man do?* Christ answered him, *What is that to thee? Follow thou me*;[a]—and another time in inquiring concerning God's counsels, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons.*[b]

Perhaps is was something *indifferent*; like the controversy among the primitive christians concerning the observing of days, and making a distinction of meats,[c] which the apostle himself does not think fit to determine, but leaves each side to practice according as their judgment was, without imposing upon either, since they might be of either mind, and yet be accepted of God: only he forbids them to fall out about it, or to despise, or judge one another.

(2.) Upon account of our management of them. When our disputes among ourselves by the way come to be reviewed,—it will be found that the mischief was done not by the things themselves, concerning which we differed, but by our mismanagement of the controversy.

Our Master will be displeased with us if it be found that we have been hot and fierce in our disputes, and have mingled our passions and peevish resentments with them; if a point of honour has governed us more than a point of conscience, and we have contended more for victory and reputation, than for truth and duty; if we have contended about things of small moment—for, or against, them—and have neglected the weightier matters of the Law and Gospel; if we have spent more of our zeal on matters in difference than they deserve; and have lost the vitals of religion, in our heat about circumstantials, and have disputed away our seriousness and devotion, *What then shall we do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall we answer him?*[d]

If in our disputes for the truth, we lie against the truth, and *speak deceitfully for God*,—the good intention will be so far from justifying the lie, that the lie will condemn the good intention, and convict it of hypocrisy; for if the intention were really good, such a practice would be abhorred. If we have the itch of disputing, and a spirit of contradiction, that is certainly one of those foolish hurtful lusts, from whence come wars and fightings. If we receive, our brethren who are weak, *to doubtful disputations*;[e] and love to perplex and puzzle them, and run them aground with objections

[a] Job 11. 12. [b] Deut. 29. 29. [c] 1 Pet. 1. 12. [d] 2 Cor. 12. 4. [e] Rom. 11. 33. [f] Job 42. 3, 6. [g] 1 Tim. 6. 4.

[a] John 21. 22. [b] Acts 1. 7. [c] Rom. 14. 2, &c. [d] Job 31. 14. [e] Rom. 14. 1.

against

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against what they and we believe; it shews a great contempt both of the truth and of their souls, and is a jesting with both. If we judge and censure and condemn our brethren who are not in every thing of our mind, and though we call ourselves disciples, set up for masters, many masters;[a] if we give reproachful language, and call foul names, which commonly betrays the weakness of the cause, and is ingloriously pressed into the service to make up the deficiency of argument; we shall have a great deal to answer for, when all our disputes shall be called over again by our Master.

2. Many disputes arise from *separate and interfering interests in this world.* Neighbours and relations quarrel about their rights and properties, their estates and trades, their honours and powers and pleasures; *Meum* and *Tuum—My rent* and *Thy bond*—are the great subjects of dispute, and engage people in endless strifes. The first dispute we read of in the Primitive Church was about a money-matter: the Grecians quarrelled with the Hebrews *because* they thought their *widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*[b] Many disputes of this kind happen, which will be inquired into as well as those about differences in opinion; and therefore it concerns us to reflect upon them, that whatever we find to have been amiss in them may be repented of.

We may, in godly sorrow, quarrel with *ourselves* and justly, for our unjust unbecoming quarrels with *our brethren:*

Ask then,—What was it that you disputed about with such a neighbour, or such a friend, at such a time? Perhaps you disputed that which you ought to have yielded without dispute,—a just debt or a rightful possession,—which you thought to have carried, by dint of opposition, against equity. Perhaps you disputed about something very trivial, and of small value, which was not worth controverting, but which if the right were indeed of your side, you might have receded from it for peace' sake, without any detriment to yourselves or families. Perhaps the dispute might have been prevented,—or when it was began, might quickly and easily have been accommodated—with a little wisdom and love; as the strife between Abraham and Lot was soon ended, and the matter compromised by Abraham's prudent condescension.[c] A little yielding would pacify great offences, and put an effectual stop to that threatening mischief which sometimes a little fire kindles.

Review your law-suits. And it may be you will find, that how stiff soever you were in the heat of the prosecution of them, your cooler thoughts tell you they were not managed as become Christians; you did not try to end things as you ought to have done in an amicable way. Perhaps they were begun rashly, and in passion; and then no wonder if they be carried on unfairly, and that which was a hasty sudden passion in the beginning of the quarrel, is in danger of ripening into a rooted malice before the end of it,—and they who at first pretended that they designed only to *right themselves*, at length, as their resentments have grown more and more keen, are not ashamed to own that they are resolved to *avenge themselves.*

These disputes, as they are most common, so they are most scandalous, among relations, and those who are under particular obligations to love one another. And whatever keeps brethren from dwelling together in unity: is very provoking to Christ, who has made brotherly love the livery of his family: and it is very hardly removed; for a *brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are as the door of a castle;*[a] witness Jacob and Esau.

3. Some disputes, and hot ones too, arise merely from *passion* and *clashing humours*, where really there is nothing of judgment or interest in the case. Some indulge themselves in a crossness of temper, that makes them continually uneasy—to their relations, the nearest, the dearest; and to all about them. They love to thwart and disagree, and to dispute every thing, though ever so plain, or ever so trifling. Many make their lives, and the relations wherein they stand uncomfortable by this; especially when both sides are of such a spirit,—one will have their humour, their saying, and the other will have theirs, and so they are ever and anon disputing which shall be greatest, and instead of aiming to please, are contriving to displease and contradict one another.

But do such consider, that they must give an account to Christ for all these *disputes among themselves by the way*, that they will all be called over again? How ill does it become the disciples and followers of the humble Jesus to carry things with a high hand, imperiously and with rigour, toward their inferior relations; not suffering them to speak for themselves; nor willing to hear reason from them! How ill does it become the worshippers of the God of love to be envious and spiteful, and ill-natured, and quarrelsome with all they have any dealings with! The father of the prodigal, when his elder son was out of humour, angry, and would not come in,—did not dispute with him, chide him, and threaten him, though he very well deserved it; but he went out and intreated him,[b] spoke to him smoothly, and so brought him into good temper again: which is written for our *learning*, that we may go and do likewise,—but withal for our *shame*, that we have not done so. By the account which the Scripture gives of some peevish passionate disputes, it appears that notice is taken of the height to which the ferment of the spirit rises at such a time: when the men of Ephraim quarrelled with Gideon upon a point of honour, it is left upon record, that they did *chide with him sharply*,[c] though by his exemplary mildness, as well as by his eminent services, he deserved better at their hands. When, in a like case, Judah and Israel fell out,—it is observed, that *the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.*[d] And if it be so indeed, that an account is kept of the sharpness of our chiding, and the fierce-

[a] James 3. 1. [b] Acts 6. 1. [c] Gen. 13. 8, 9.

[a] Prov. 18. 19. [b] Luke 15. 28. [c] Judg. 8. 9. [d] 2 Sam. 19. 43.

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ness of our words, we are concerned by true repentance to judge ourselves for it, that we may not be judged of the Lord.

And whatever we find has been amiss in our disputes of any kind, let it be amended for the future.

(1.) As far as we are able to make a judgment, let us see to it that we have truth and right on our side, in all our disputes, and not be confident any further than we see just cause to be so. We must not only never contend for that which we know to be false and wrong, but also never for that which is doubtful, or which we do not know to be true and right. Let us not wrong our consciences in any of our contests: nor say we believe that to be true, and therefore dispute for it, which really we do not believe to be so; nor demand that *as* our own, which we know or have reason to suspect we have no good title to; nor deny that to another which we cannot but think is justly his.

And, if, in the progress of any dispute or controversy, it be made to appear to us, at length, that we were mistaken, and in the wrong,—we must be ready to acknowledge it, thankful to those who have discovered it to us, and not ashamed to let fall the controversy: and we have a false notion of honour, if we think this will be any real disparagement to us; for certainly St. Paul shewed more true courage, and merited more true praise, when he said, *I can do nothing against the truth,*[a] than Goliah did when he defied all the armies of Israel.

(2.) In matters of doubtful disputation: while we are contending for that which we take to be right, let us at the same time think it possible that we may be in the wrong. When we contend for the great principles of religion, in which all good Christians are agreed, we need not fear our being in a mistake, they are of undoubted certainty, *We know and are sure that Jesus is the Christ.* But there are many things that are not so clearly revealed, because not of so much moment, in which the truth indeed lies but on one side, and yet wise and good men are not agreed on which side it lies: Here, though we both argue and act according to the light that God has given us, yet we must not be over-confident of our own judgment, as if wisdom must die with us; others have understanding as well as we, and are not inferior to us;[b] nay perhaps they every way excel us; and, therefore, who can tell but they may be in the right? However, they argue and act according to the light they have, which we ought to pay a deference to, so as not to condemn all those for weak men, or bad men, who are not in every thing of our mind, and will not say as we say. Job in dispute is not unwilling to put the case, *Be it that I have erred.*[c]

In matters of fact on which right depends, it is possible we may be mistaken; *Humanum est errare—to err is human.* Words may be misunderstood and misapprehended; and the wisest, and most cautious and observing, may be guilty of an over-sight, and may forget something that would very much alter the case; and, therefore, it will be no credit to our wisdom and goodness to be too positive, too peremptory, as long as there is a possibility of our being deceived. Never let our assertions go beyond our assurances, nor let us give that as certain and great, which was given us doubtful and little: but be very wary in what we maintain, not only for our reputation's sake, lest our neighbour search us and put us to shame, but for conscience' sake, toward God, who hates a proud look, and a lying tongue;[a] two very bad things that commonly go together, to support one another.

(3.) Let us keep the full possession and government of our own spirits, in all our disputes. Let us carefully suppress all inward tumults, whatever provocation may be given us; and let our minds be calm and sedate, whatever argument we are engaged in. Let no contradiction put us into a heat or disorder; for when passion is up, we are not so capable as we ought to be either to hear reason or to speak it, nor is it likely we should either convince or be convinced of truth and right. Meekness and mildness of spirit do as much befriend a cause, as they are the beauty and ornament of its advocates.

If we contend for that which is wrong,—the more passionate we are, the greater is the sin of the contention; and the more there is of the image of the Devil upon it, who is, not only, the *Father of Lies* and falsehoods, but a *red dragon*, and a *roaring lion.* But if we have truth and right on our side,—that needs no intemperate heats and passions for the support of it, nor can have any real service done it by them. The cause of Heaven can never be pleaded with any credit or success by a tongue set on fire of hell. *The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.*[b] Parties may be served by fury and violence, but the common interests of pure Christianity will certainly be prejudiced by it. Christ was therefore fit to teach us, and we are invited to come and learn of him; it is not said—because *in him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,* though that is certainly true, but *because he is meek and lowly in heart,*[c] *and can have compassion on the ignorant;* and herein all who undertake to instruct others, must study to imitate him. And this is the likeliest way to gain our point, if indeed we be in the right; for *the words of the wise are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that rules among fools.*[d]

(4.) Let us never lose the charity we ought to have for our brethren in our disputes of any kind, nor violate the sacred laws of it. Our Lord Jesus foresaw, and foretold, that the preaching of his gospel would occasion much division, that it would set men at variance,[e] and be the subject of much dispute: and therefore he thought it very requisite to bind the command of mutual love so much the more strongly upon his followers, because there was danger lest it should be lost in these disputes: he makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom, the *new commandment, That we love one another;* and the livery of his family,

[a] 2 Cor. 13. 8. [b] Job 12. 2. [c] Job 19. 4.

[a] Pro. 6. 17. [b] James 1. 20. [c] Mat. 11. 29. [d] Ecc. 9. 17. [e] Luke 12. 51.

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by which all men might know who are his disciples. *See how these christians love one another.*

Let us, therefore, in all our disputes keep ourselves under the commanding power and influence of holy love: for that victory is dearly purchased, that is obtained at the expence of christian charity. Let us honour all men, and not trample upon any, nor set those *among the dogs of our flock*, whom, for ought we know, Christ has set with the lambs of his. Let us never bring a railing accusation against any:[a] Michael the arch-angel, though he was sure in the dispute he had right on his side, and the glory of God was nearly concerned, and it was with the devil that he contended, yet he would not thus attack his adversary. The scourge of the tongue has driven more out of the temple, than ever it drove into it. Let us always put the best construction on men's words and actions that they will bear, not *digging up mischief*, as evil men do, nor *rejoicing in iniquity*; but *rejoicing in the truth*, hoping the best as far as we can. Let us not aggravate matters in variance, nor by strained inuendoes and misrepresentations make either side worse than it is; for that is a method which may harden one side, but can never convince the other, nor can be used with any other design but to make the contending parties hate one another: and whose kingdom that serves the interests of, it is easy to say,—not Christ's I am sure. Let us not judge of men's spiritual and eternal state,—and send men to hell presently as reprobates, because they are not in every thing of our mind, or cannot fall in with our measures. They who do so usurp a divine prerogative, take the keys of hell and death out of the hands of Christ, and shew themselves to be as destitute of the fear of God, as they are of love to their neighbour.

(5.) Let us often think of the account we must shortly give to our Great Master of all our disputes with our fellow-servants by the way. Let us consider how our disputes will look in that day, and what our own reflections will be then upon them. When the apostle asks, *Where is the disputer of this world?*[b] "Perhaps (says the excellent Archbishop Tillotson) he intends to insinuate, that the wrangling work of disputation hath place only in this world, and upon this earth, where only there is a dust to be raised; but will have no place in the other, where all things will be clear, and past dispute: and a good man would be loth to be taken out of the world reeking hot from a sharp contention with a perverse adversary, and not a little out of countenance to find himself in this temper translated into the calm and peaceable regions of the blessed, where nothing but perfect charity and good-will reign for ever."

Let our *moderation* therefore *be known unto all men*[c]—moderation in all disputes—because *our Lord is at hand*; nor let us *grudge one against another, because the Judge standeth before the door:*[d] and we may tremble to think what our doom will be, if we be found *smiting our fellow-servants;*[e] and how we shall answer it, if it be proved upon us, who have had so much forgiven us by our Master, that, for a small matter, we have *taken them by the throat.*[a] But seeing we look for a day of account, in which there will be a review of disputes,—let us give diligence, that we may be found of Christ in peace.[b] When Job and his friends had maintained a long dispute, in which many hasty peevish words were exchanged,—God at length interposed as moderator, and gave judgment upon the debate, That they were all to be blamed, and had taken a great deal of pains (as most disputants do) to make work for repentance; and, therefore, the contending parties must ask pardon of God and one another, must forgive and forget, and live in love for the future. And this is the best end of controversies; happy were it if they were all brought to this issue now; to this issue all the controversies that are among good men will be brought at last, when they shall meet in the world of everlasting light and love.

IV. Of all disputes, Christ will be sure to reckon with his disciples for their disputes about precedency and superiority; that was the dispute here, *Who should be greatest:* and Christ does not *determine* the matter: as it might justly be expected he should have done, if he had intended that Peter, or any other of them, should have a primacy and supremacy above the rest; no, he is displeased with them for starting such a question, and disputing about it, because it was an indication that they all aimed at being great in the world, and were ambitious of it,—and whenever preferments were to be had, they would quarrel among themselves, which should get the best,—notwithstanding the meanness of their first education, when they were bred fishermen, which might have done *something* to curb aspiring thoughts; and the goodness of their late education, when they were trained up to be apostles, which might have done *much more.*

Now there are five reasons why this disposition of theirs was very displeasing to our Lord Jesus.

1. Because it came from a *mistaken notion of his kingdom;* which they had learned at the feet of their scribes; and had not yet unlearned, though they had sat so long at Christ's feet, so hard is it to conquer the power of prejudice. The Jews, misunderstanding many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which spake of the Messiah and his kingdom; expected him to appear in external pomp and splendour, and to exercise a temporal jurisdiction, to break the Roman yoke from off their necks, and give them dominion over the neighbouring nations. The disciples had imbibed this notion from infancy, and imagined (as should seem by many instances) that our Lord Jesus, though he appeared meanly at first, would soon by it thus reign; and that this was the kingdom of heaven, which they were to preach as at hand: and this they had an eye to, when they strove who should be the greatest.

Now this was a great mistake; and the constant tenor and tendency of Christ's life and doctrine might

[a] Jude 9. [b] 1 Cor. 1. 20. [c] Phil. 4. 5. [d] James 5. 9. [e] Mat. 24. 49.

[a] Mat. 18. 28. [b] 2 Pet. 3. 14.

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have convinced them, that it was so, that Christ's kingdom was not to be of this world,[a] but was intended to be all spiritual; the laws and powers of it, the rewards and punishments of it all spiritual; (the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;) that the Messiah was to rule by his Spirit in the spirits of men. The design of it was to refine men from the dross and dregs of worldliness and sensuality; and to raise them up to a holy, heavenly, spiritual, divine life; and to teach them to look down upon all earthly things with a gracious and generous contempt; such as this was the constitution and complexion of Christ's kingdom, and, therefore, it could not but be displeasing to him, for them to dote on earthly greatness.

2. Because it was directly contrary to the two great lessons of his school, and laws of his kingdom, humility, and love. It is against the law of humility to covet to be great in this world, and against the law of love to strive who shall be greatest. Had not Christ taught them both these lessons, both by precept and by example? Had he not made it the first condition of discipleship, that whosoever would come after him must deny themselves? Does not the great law of love oblige us in honour to prefer one another,[b] and to give place to our brethren? What unapt scholars then were they, who had not learned such plain and needful lessons as these! How well is it for us that we have a kind Master, who does not expel out of his school dull scholars, but gives them his Spirit to open their understandings, and bring things to their remembrance!

When we are eager in our pursuits of the world, and seek and aim at great things in it; when we are quarrelsome with our brethren, and carried out into indecencies by our contests and passions; let us think how unbecoming Christians this is, how contrary we walk to the laws of that holy religion we make profession of. And can we glory in the honour of it; can we, with any confidence, plead the promises of it; or please ourselves with the privileges of it; or feed ourselves with the hopes of it; when we have so little regard to the precepts of it? Will those be willing to lose their lives for their religion, who cannot deny themselves the gratification of a foolish lust or passion for it?

3. Because it was utterly repugnant to the example which Jesus Christ himself had set them, and the copy he had given them to write after. The word of command which he gave them when he called them to be his disciples, was, *Follow me;* Do as you see me do. But when they were disputing who should be greatest, and each setting up a title to worldly pomp and power,—they were far from resembling him, who was among them as one that served,[c] and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.[d] The same mind should have been in them, that was in him; who was so great an example of humility and love, condescension and affection; who *emptied himself,* and *made himself of no reputation;*[a] who not only in the general scheme of his undertaking, but in the particular passages of his life, gave such instances of self-denial, as justly are the wonder of angels; who to teach them this lesson, and oblige them to learn it—with this very argument, not long after this—washed their feet, and bid them do as he had done.[b] Could the followers of such a Master contend for precedency, and not blush at the reflection upon their own folly and unworthiness?

Let us shame ourselves out of our pride, and passion, and affectation of worldly honour, and inordinate pursuit of worldly wealth, with this consideration: Shall I set my heart upon that which my Master was dead to, and denied himself in, and for my sake too? Am I not a Christian, a follower of Christ? I must then either change my name, or recover a better temper. Ought I not to walk in the same spirit, in the same steps?

4. Because it would render them very unfit for the services which he had appointed them to. It was very absurd for them to strive who should be greatest, who should live most at ease, and most in state, who should have the most power and the largest command, when they were all to labour and suffer reproach,[c] to live in meanness and poverty, to be loaded with disgrace and ignominy, and *counted as the off-scouring of all things;* nay, to *be killed all the day long,* and devoted to death, *as sheep to the slaughter,* and *ruled with rigour.* Such dispositions and expectations as these would be but a bad preparative for sufferings. They who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness,[d] and not affect greatness.

And, therefore, though this infirmity, and the mistake it was grounded upon, seems—by many instances after this—to have continued as long as they had Christ's bodily presence with them: yet, before they *launched out into the deep* of their service, they were perfectly cured of it, by the pouring out of the Spirit upon them; after which, we have them no more dreaming of a temporal kingdom, nor striving who should be greatest; for those whom God designs to employ in any service for him, he will either find them fit, or make them so: and *as the day, so shall the strength,* so shall the spirit be. And if we would be ready for all the will of God, and stand complete in it, so as not to be driven from our work by the difficulties we may meet in it,—we must be dead to worldly wealth and grandeur, and live above them, as those who look beyond them.

5. Because it was a corrupt temper that would be, more than any thing, the bane of the Church in after-times; would be the reproach of its ministry, an obstruction to its enlargement, the disturbance of its peace, and the original of all the breaches that would be made upon its order and unity. Our Saviour foresaw this, and, therefore, took all occasions to check and repress it in his disciples, for a warning to all others;

[a] John 18. 36. [b] Mat. 16. 24. [c] Luke 22. 27. [d] Mat. 20. 28.

[a] Phil. 2. 7. [b] John 13. 4—15. [c] 1 Tim. 4. 10. [d] 2 Tim. 2. 3.

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that all who are called by his name, and profess relation to him, may be jealous over themselves with a godly jealousy, and may look diligently lest this root of bitterness spring up and trouble both themselves and others, and thereby many be defiled[a] and disturbed.

When we see how early in the primitive times the mystery of iniquity began to work—in strifes among ministers, who should be the greatest—in Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence:[b] and in the Man of Sin, who, by degrees, under the influence of this principle, came to usurp an universal authority, and to exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;[c] let us acknowledge with what good reason Christ so often cautioned his disciples against this, and lament the mischief that is done by it to the Church. It must needs be that such offences would come; and we are told of them before, that we may not be stumbled at them, but woe to those by whom they do come. The prevalency of such a temper as this, as far as it appears, is very threatening. But when the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high, there shall be no more such disputes as these, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field.[d]

Upon the whole matter, therefore, let our strife be—Who shall be best, not who shall be greatest.

1. Let us never strive who shall be greatest in this world; who shall have the best preferment; who shall be master of the best estate, or make the best figure; but acquiesce in the lot Providence carves out to us, not aiming at great things, or striving for them.

Consider what worldly greatness is:

(1.) What a *despicable* thing it is to those who *have their eye upon another world.* All who by faith have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who are acquainted with the grandeur of the upper and better world, and are conversant with that world, have laid up their treasure in it, and set their hearts upon it, and hope shortly to share in the enjoyments of it: what a poor thing are the pomps and pleasures of this world to them! how easily can they write *Vanity* upon them! for they know better things. What are purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, to one who is clothed with the robes of righteousness and garments of salvation, and has a continual feast upon the promises of the new covenant? What are titles of honour, or splendid attendance, to one who is called a friend of God, and about whom the holy angels encamp? What are the fading withering glories of time, in comparison with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is to be revealed? Let us be ashamed then to strive, or seem to strive, for that, which, if we act as becomes our character, we cannot but look upon with a holy contempt and indifference.

(2.) What a *dangerous* thing this worldly greatness is to those who have *not their eyes upon another world:* how apt it is to keep their hearts at a distance from God, and from the consideration and pursuit of a future blessedness; and to fix them to this world, and make them willing to take up with a portion in it: and especially what a strong temptation it is to break through all the sacred fences of the divine law to compass it. The Devil would not have tempted Christ to worship him, with a promise of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, but that he had caught many a one with that bait. As they who will be rich—so they who will be great, and cannot think themselves happy unless they be—fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts:[a] let us, therefore, never court our own trouble; nor covet to enter into temptation, as they do, who, when they are as great as God saw fit to make them, are still aiming to be greater, and striving to be greatest.

2. Let all our strife be *who shall be best*, not disputing who *has been best*, that is a vain-glorious strife, but humbly contending *who shall be so*; who shall be most humble, and stoop lowest, for the good of others; and who shall labour most for the common welfare. This is a gracious strife; a strife that will pass well in our account, when all our disputes will be reviewed. If we will covet, let us covet earnestly the best gifts,[b] covet to be rich in faith, and rich in good works. If we will be ambitious, let it be the top of our ambition to do good, and therein to be accepted of the Lord.[c] If we will aim to excel, let it be in that which is virtuous and praise-worthy, and in a holy zeal for the honour of God, and the advancement of the true interests of Christ's kingdom. Herein, let us strive to excel others, and to do more good than they do: not that we may have the praise of it, but that God may have the glory of it, and that we may provoke others to love and to good works:[d] not that we may be many masters, but that we may make ourselves *servants of all.* Let us go before—in zeal: and yet be willing to come behind—in humility and self-denial; do better than others, and yet, in love and lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves.[e]

But especially let us strive to *excel ourselves,* and to do more good than we have done. Let it be a constant dispute with our own souls, Why we do not lay out ourselves more for God. And when we remember the kindness of our youth, and the love of our espousals,—instead of leaving that first love, and cooling in it, let our advanced years contend earnestly to excel our early ones, that our last days may be our best days, and our last works our best works. *Forgetting the things that are behind,* let us still *press forward* toward perfection; press forward *toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling,*[f] that at length we may have not only an entrance, but *an abundant entrance ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*[g]

[a] Heb. 12. 15. [b] 3 John 9. [c] Thes. 2. 4. [d] Isa. 32. 15.

[a] 1 Tim. 6. 9. [b] 1 Cor. 12. 31. [c] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [d] Heb. 10. 24. [e] Phil. 2. 3. [f] Phil. 3. 13. 14. [g] 2 Pet. 1. 11.

FAITH

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FAITH IN CHRIST INFERRED FROM FAITH IN GOD:

IN A

SERMON

Preached at the Tuesday-Lecture, at Salters' Hall, May 29, 1711.

JOHN 14. 1. latter Part.

—Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

A Dominion over your faith[a] is what your ministers are far from pretending to; but the direction of your faith is what they are intrusted with, that thus they may be *helpers of your joy*, for *by faith you stand*. What is Paul himself, or what is Apollos?[b] those great men: not masters in whom ye believed, but ministers only by whom ye believed; not oracles, but stewards of the oracles of God. Now how can we better direct your faith, nay how dare we otherwise direct it, than as we have received direction from the Lord Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith, the foundation and fountain of it? And in the text we have his law concerning it, the rule of faith he prescribes to us. What he said here to those who were his immediate followers, he says to all, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

This is here recommended in particular to the disciples of Christ; as a sovereign antidote against trouble of mind; proper to fortify the soul against the invasions of grief and fear, when they are most violent and threatening, and all other supports and succours fail. Christ was now leaving those who had left all to follow him, and he told them that whither he went they could not follow him yet,[c] which seemed to bear hard upon them, that they who had followed him in his sorrows, might not follow him to his joys; nay, must be left behind as sheep in the midst of wolves: because of this, *Sorrow filled their heart.* And though in Christ's departure from them there seems to be enough to justify their sorrow, yet there really is enough to pacify; and, therefore with good reason, as well as with good authority, he commands down those boisterous winds and waves, saying, *Peace, be still.* Let the sinners in Zion be afraid, and let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites, but let not your hearts be troubled. Though trouble surround you on every side, yet be wise, be watchful, and keep trouble from your hearts: and that you may do so, *Believe in God*, and in his providence; *believe also in me*, and in my grace. And you will be kept from fainting by believing:[d] but if you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.[a]

But that which is here intended as a cordial in time of trouble, will not be so: unless it be our practice—for it is certainly our duty at all times, the duty of all those who hear the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel, not only to believe in God, but to believe also in Jesus Christ: and therefore I shall take it more generally, not only as an antidote against trouble of mind, but a caveat against practical deism

1. Our Lord Jesus does here take it for granted concerning his disciples, that they did believe in God, and that in the belief of him they paid him the adorations due to his name, and the submissions due to his government, and that that faith was so firmly fixed in them, that it would not be shocked by any event of Providence, though ever so grieving, ever so frowning. *You believe in God*, that is, you receive and embrace natural religion, you admit the light of it, you submit to the laws of it: you believe the perfections of God, that he is infinitely and eternally wise and holy, just and good: you believe his relations to his creatures, as their Protector and Benefactor, their Owner and Ruler; his relations to his own people, as their Father and Felicity: you believe his providence, that it extends itself to all the creatures, and all their actions, to you, and all your affairs, with a certain cognizance and a faithful steady conduct. Nay, you go further, you not only believe in the Lord your God, but you believe his prophets;[b] you receive the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and subscribe to them: and you do well. Observe here,

(1.) That our Lord Jesus knows who believe in God, and who do not; for all hearts are open to his view, and he knows what is in man. When with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,[c] it is to give honour to him, not to inform him what the heart believes; for he knows it before we tell him, and better than we can tell him. That which is the prerogative of the Eternal Mind, is one of the flowers of the Redeemer's crown: *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.*[d] He knows the sincerity of some, whom men suspect and reproach, and the insincerity of others, whom men confide in and applaud. We read of some who professed

[a] 2 Cor. 1. 24. [b] 1 Cor. 3. 4. [c] 1 Cor. 13. 36. [d] Ps. 27. 16.

[a] Isa. 7. 9. [b] 2 Chr. 20. 20. [c] Rom. 10. 10. [d] Rev. 2. 23.

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professed to believe in Jesus Christ, when they saw the miracles which he did: but *Jesus did not commit himself to them,* did not *believe* them, so the word is, *because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man.*[a] He knew that his disciples here did believe in God, and witnessed for them that they did so. And because he does thus infallibly know every man's true character, he is therefore fit to be the Judge of all at the great day, and to pass the definitive sentence upon every man's everlasting state; for we are sure that His judgment is according to truth, and cannot mistake.

(2.) That our Lord Jesus is highly well pleased with those who believe in God, and will take notice of it to their comfort and honour. He came into the world to reveal and reconcile God to us, and to reduce and restore us to God, not to draw us *from* him, but to draw us *to* him; and nothing is more acceptable to him than our believing in God, nor shall any thing be more comfortable to us. Christ fortifies us with this faith against all assaults: *Let not your hearts be troubled,* for ye *believe in God.* And those who believe in God need not be cast down and disquieted; as those have reason to be who are strangers to him, who have no dependence on him, or communion with him. They who believe in God, according to his word, have reason to rejoice in him with joy unspeakable: for their confidence in him shall not *make them ashamed.* They *know whom they have believed.*

2. He calls upon them who believe in God, to believe in Him too. But did not the disciples believe also in Christ? No doubt they did: else, they had not so easily left all to follow him, and continued with him in his temptations. When St. Peter in the name of the rest, gave this for the reason why they would never quit their Master, *We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*[b] they all subscribed to it as the confession of their faith, except Judas, whom Christ at that very time particularly excepted. And yet, Christ saith to them, *Believe also in me:* use the faith you have, set it on work, exert it, employ it, that by it you may keep your minds composed and quiet at this time. *Believe in me,* that is, live by faith in me. Even those who believe, as they have need to be prayed for, that God would help their unbelief, and increase their faith, so they have need to be preached to, and called upon to exercise their faith: *These things are written to you who believe* in Christ, *that you* MAY *believe* in him,[c] may be confirmed in your faith, and have the comfort of it.

Believing in God is a very great duty, and there are few but what profess at least to do it. They who have little else to say for themselves, will say this, "We trust in God:" And O that there were *such a heart* in all them that say so! But from those who believe in God, there are two things further required:—*One* is a dictate of the light and law of nature; we have it given in charge by St. Paul to Titus, *This is a faithful saying, (and these things I will that thou affirm constantly;*[a] let it be frequently inculcated, and earnestly pressed upon all Christians,) *That they who have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works:* for *faith without works is dead;*[b] *it doth no good to others,*[c] and therefore will do *us* no good:—The other is a dictate of revealed religion, and we have it here in the text, "Ye believe in God, *believe also in me.*"

DOCT. It may justly be expected, and required, from those who believe in God, that if they are within the sound of the Gospel, they should believe also in Jesus Christ.

I speak to those who are favoured with the Gospel, who see that joyful light, who hear that joyful sound, and who are therefore concerned in this doctrine. As for those who enjoy it not, we cannot say it is required of them to *believe* in Christ; for *how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?*[d] Yet we cannot say, it is impossible for any of them, though they live up ever so closely to the light they have, to be saved by Christ they never heard of. It is *out of our line* to judge concerning them, for it is not *in our bibles;* but let us judge this rather, that we who enjoy the gospel shall find it more intolerable for us in the day of judgment, than they will, if we obey not the gospel. As for them, it becomes us rather to leave them to God's uncovenanted mercy, than to his unpacified justice. For our own part, whatever favour they may find who are destitute of the light of Christianity, I see not how they can expect it, who rebel against that light, and reject the counsel of God against themselves.[e] The case is plain,—It is *good* to believe in God; but that is *not enough,* we must believe also in Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient to our acceptance with God that we embrace natural religion, though it is indispensably necessary that we do so; but we must go further, we must admit the light, and submit to the laws, of the Christian religion likewise, which is consonant to and perfective of natural religion, and helps us out, where that leaves us at a loss. And this is that which I am here to day to press upon you, with all seriousness, that you sink not into a practical deism, as many do into a practical atheism; but, in every thing wherein you have to do with God, you may have a believing regard to Jesus Christ. *You believe in God, believe also in Jesus Christ.*

I shall here endeavour to explain:

I. The *objects* of this faith; and what that is which those who believe in God are to believe also, concerning Christ.

II. The *acts* of this faith; and what that regard is which we must give to God, and must give, also, to Jesus Chsist.

III. The connexion between these two; and how necessarily it follows, That those who, truly, believe in God will, readily, believe in Jesus Christ, when he is made known to them. And then make application.

I. Let us enquire, *what* man is to believe concern-

[a] John 2. 23, 24, 25. [b] John 6. 69. [c] 1 John 5. 13.

[a] Tit. 3. 8. [b] James 2. 17. [c] James 2. 14. [d] Rom. 10. 14. [e] Luke 7. 30.

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ing God; and compare with that, *What* he is also to believe concerning Jesus Christ; and see, *what relation they have* to each other.

1. Do we believe in God, as the *Father Almighty?* We must believe in Christ, as his *only begotten Son*; for Father and Son correlates, by the prescribed form of baptism—that great foundation on which the doctrine of the Trinity is built—we are directed to devote ourselves to the Father and Son; which plainly speaks a divine relation,—not to us, (for though God may be said to be a Father to us, and a Holy Spirit to us, yet he can in no sense be said to be a Son to us) but a relation to one another; and therefore they must be distinct persons; and so, as that, the Son is the *express image of the Father's Person.* We cannot believe in God as the *Father*;[a] but we must believe in him, who is the *Son of the Father*;[b] who is the *only begotten of the Father*,[c] and therefore of the same nature with him. If any *deny the Son*, though they say they believe in God, as the Creator of heaven and earth, yet really *they have not the Father*, they have not the knowledge of him, nor an interest in him, as the *Father*; for they only who by faith continue in the *Son*, so continue *in the Father.*[d] Shall we think that God has the title of the Father ascribed to him so frequently, so solemnly,—only as he is the Fountain of Being, to the creatures which are infinitely below him? (So the heathen called him Father, so he is the *Father of the rain, and hath begotten the drops of the dew.*)[e] No, he himself plainly intimated, why he is called the *Father*, when he said to the Redeemer: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*;[f] which must be understood in a far higher sense than that of creation; for when the apostle would prove, that Christ has obtained a more excellent name than the highest rank of created beings, he thus argues: *To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*[g] They were *sons of God* who *shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were fastened:* he was the *Image of the invisible God*, that existed *before all things.*[h] It is not—as some would have it—that he WAS *flesh*, and WAS MADE *God*, only as Moses was made a God to Pharaoh; for the Scripture says quite the contrary, that Θεὸς ἦν—*he* WAS *God*,[i] and σὰρξ ἐγένετο—WAS MADE *flesh.*[k] This mystery we firmlybelieve the *truth* of, but awfully adore the *depth* of.

2. Do we believe in God as the *Eternal Mind?* We must also believe in Christ as *the Eternal Word and Wisdom.* God is an infinite Spirit, and as such is to be adored by every one of us; and he has told us that the Redeemer we are to believe in is the *Logos*, that—*in the beginning, was with God; and was God*,[l] in the constitution of all things. And (to shew that he is the *Omega* as well as the *Alpha)* we find that in the consummation of all things, when he obtains a final victory over all the enemies of his kingdom, he appears, and acts under the same title, his name is called, *The Word of God.*[a] It signifies both *Ratio* and *Oratio*, a word *conceived*, and a word *uttered?* Christ is both; as the thought is one with the mind that thinks it, and yet may be considered as distinct from it, so Christ was and is—*one with* the Father, and yet *distinct* from the Father.

In all the divine counsels, Christ is the *Eternal Wisdom*, that when God *prepared the heavens* and *laid the foundations of the earth*, and made man, who is *the highest part of the dust of the world*, was *by him as one brought up with him*,[b] he is the *Wonderful Counsellor*, in whom are *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Between the Father and the Son there is a perfect mutual consciousness, and particularly in the affair of man's redemption, *No man knows the Son but the Father, neither knows the Father, save the Son.*[c] The counsel of peace is between them both.[d]

In all divine revelations, Christ is *the Word* of the Father; that Word of God which is quick and powerful, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.[e] He only having lain in his bosom from eternity, none but he could declare him,[f] and though it is in these last days, that he has in a more especial manner, spoken to us by his Son, yet the Spirit, in the Old Testament prophets, was the Spirit of Christ.[g] And as he was the Maker and Mediator, so he was the *Messenger of the Covenant*, the *Amen*, the *faithful and true Witness.*

3. Do we believe that *God made the world and governs it?* We must believe also that he made it, and governs it, by his Son, who is not only the *Wisdom of God*, and his eternal Word, but the *Power of God*, and his Almighty *Right Hand. The Father worketh hitherto*,[h] we believe he does, that he is the Fountain of all being, and the Spring of all life, power, motion, and perfection: but the Son has told us withal, that he worketh, and that *what thing soever the Father doth, these also does the Son likewise.*

Nothing appears more evident, by the light of nature—than that God made the world, and all things therein, that by his power, and for his pleasure and praise they are and were created: nor does any thing appear more evident, by the light of the Gospel—than that God *made the worlds by his Son*[i] that he *created all things by Jesus Christ*,[k] *that all things were created by him and for him*, and that *he is before all things, and by him all things consist*,[l] nay, *that without him was not any thing made that was made:*[m] so that if we receive the Gospel, we must discern even in the things that are seen, not only the eternal power and godhead of the Father, but the universal agency and influence of the Son,—and particularly with reference to the children of men, with whom his delights were; for, in him, in a special manner, was that *life which is the light of men.*[n] Therefore he is called the Ἀρχὴ,—*The principle* (so it might better be read than *The beginning*) of the crea-

[a] Heb. 1. 3. [b] 2 John 3. [c] John 1. 14. [d] 1 John 2. 23, 24. [e] Job 38. 28. [f] Ps. 2. 7. [g] Heb. 1. 5. [h] Col. 1. 15, 16. [i] John 1. 1. [k] John 1. 14. [l] John 1. 1.

[a] Rev. 19. 13. [b] Prov. 8. 26. 30. [c] Mat. 11. 27. [d] Zech. 6. 12. [e] Heb. 4. 12. [f] John 1. 18. [g] 1 Pet. 1. 11. [h] John 5. 17, 19. [i] Heb. 1. 2. [k] Eph. 3. 9. [l] Col. 1. 16, 17. [m] John 1. 3. [n] John 1. 4.

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tion of God.[a] And hence arises his sovereignty over all the creatures, and his property in them. He is *the first born of every creature,*[b] that is, as the apostle himself explains it, he is *the Heir of all things;*[c] and has not only by purchase, but *by inheritance obtained* the *more excellent name.*

We are satisfied that God governs the world, and an abundant satisfaction it is to us that he does so, that his kingdom ruleth over all; but we must also be assured, and it will add greatly to our satisfaction, that the administration of the kingdom of providence is put into the hands of our Lord Jesus, and is united to the mediatorial kingdom; that he has an incontestable title to all, *All things are delivered to him by the Father,*[d] and for this reason, because *he loves him;*[e] that he has an uncontroulable dominion over all. Things are not only given into his hand, but put under his feet;[f] not only great power, but all power is given unto him, both in heaven and in earth; and he is not only Head of the Church, but *Head over all things to the church.* All the angels in Heaven are his active servants, all the devils in Hell are his conquered captives: the kingdoms of the earth are his, and he is the Governor among the nations;[g] *By him Kings reign,* for to him the Father has committed not only the future judgment, but *all judgment.*[h]

4. Do we believe that God is our owner by right of *Creation?* We must believe also, that Christ is our owner by right of *Redemption*; and yet we have not two masters to serve; Christ and the Father are one, as to us. Nor do these properties stand in competition with each other: no, Christ owns his property to be derived, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me,*[i] and yet withal it is acquired.

As to God we owe our *being,* because he made us, and not we ourselves, therefore we are not our own but his; so to Christ we owe our *well being,* our recovery from that deplorable state, unto which by sin we were fallen, and our restoration to the favour of God, and an eternal happiness in him. Thus, besides the original right he has to us as our Maker, he has an additional right by purchase; a right to command us, a right to dispose of us; we are his servants, for he has loosed our bonds; not only born in his house, but bought—not with his money indeed, but with that which is infinitely more valuable, his own most precious blood: and therefore we are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we might be devoted to him, to serve him without fear.[k] We are not our own but his, for *we are bought with a price;* more was paid for us a great deal than we were worth; and it was paid to him into whose hand our all was forfeited, so that no dispute can be made of his interest in us, and the authority he has to demand our best affections and services. As *one is our Father,* even God, so *one is our Master, even Christ:*[l] he is our Lord, and we are bound to worship him.[m]

5. Do we believe that God is our *Judge,* to whom we must every one of us give an account of ourselves? We must believe also, that Christ is our *Advocate* with him, and that he is the *propitiation for our sins.* We are all conscious to ourselves that we are sinners, that we are guilty before God, have incurred his wrath, and laid ourselves open to his curse; and from him our judgment must proceed, a judgment against which there will lie no exception, and from which there will lie no appeal; a judgment which in its *inquiries* will look back as far as our beginning, for *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing:*[a] and which in its *decisions* will look forward as far as our everlasting state, which must by it be irreversibly determined.

Now, whenever we think of giving an account to God, we must have an eye to the Lord Jesus, as the one only Mediator between us and God, that blessed *Days-man* who has *laid his hand upon us both:* who is *our peace,* who arbitrates matters in variance between us and God; who takes up the quarrel; slays the enmity; and—in whom—God was so far reconciling the world unto himself, as that all those who perish in the quarrel, have their blood upon their own heads. And he is our Advocate, who having *made* peace for us, *speaks* peace for us in the intercession which he EVER *lives to make,* in the virtue of the satisfaction he ONCE FOR ALL *died to make.* It is he who interposed between us and God, by whom God speaks to us, and we plead with God; who appears for us, acts for us, answers the charges exhibited against us, and sues out the blessings purchased for us, and promised to us. This is his office, and he attends continually to this very thing.

6. Do we believe that *God is our end,* and that in his favour our happiness is bound up? We must believe also, that *Christ is our way,* and that we cannot obtain the favour of God, but in and through him. If we know ourselves, and the nature and capacities of our own souls, we cannot but know that he who made us, is he whom we are made for, and is alone able to make us happy, and not the world which was made for us; that he who is the fountain of our being, is the alone felicity of it; that his loving kindness is therefore better than life, this natural life; because it is the life of the soul, it is our spiritual and eternal life.

It is certain those are happy whom God loves: but the question is how we poor sinners may come at this happiness? The Gospel will resolve that question: for it tells us that Christ is the *true and living way* to the Father;[b] the old way; the new way; the only way: that there is no coming to God as a Father, but by Jesus Christ the Mediator. That he is the door by whom we enter into covenant and communion with God: that he is the light to guide us in the way: that he is our High-Priest, who is *ordained for men in things pertaining unto God;* and as the forerunner, is for us entered: that it is by him that we have access to God,[c] are introduced into his presence, and recommended to his favour and grace, and may come boldly to the throne of his grace; and as such a one we are to believe in him.

[a] Rev. 3. 14. [b] Col. 1. 15. [c] Heb. 1. 2. 4. [d] Mat. 11. 27. [e] John 3. 35. [f] Mat. 28. 18. [g] Psa. 22. 28. [h] John 5. 22. [i] John 17. 6. [k] Luke 1. 74, 75. [l] Mat. 23. 8, 9. [m] Psa. 45. 11.

[a] Ecc. 12. 4. [b] John 14. 6. [c] Eph. 2. 18.

II. I come

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II. I come now to shew, that the *acts* of this faith in Christ must be the same with the acts of our faith in God. The same word is used concerning both, signifying the same thing. We believe in God, we must believe also in Jesus Christ; that is,

1. *We acquaint ourselves with God,* we must *acquaint ourselves also with Jesus Christ.* Grace and peace are multiplied to us through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,[a] through that faith which arises from right knowledge, and presses after more knowledge; for as knowing is necessary to our believing, so believing is necessary to our further knowing. We think we are concerned to know the only true God; we are so, but that will not be life eternal to us, unless withal we know Jesus Christ; whom he has sent,[b] to acquaint us with him, and lead us back to him, and make us happy in him. It is the knowlege of Christ which blessed Paul saw such a transcendant excellency in, and for which he was willing to suffer the loss of all things:[c] he desired, he *determined* to *know nothing but Christ, and him crucified,*[d] because he knew that Christ's death is our life. Those therefore are grossly ignorant of God and themselves, (however they may boast of their knowledge,) who desire not to be acquainted with Jesus Christ, but make light of the knowledge of him. Let us then who follow on to know the Lord, follow on to know the Lord Jesus, to know yet more and more of him. We know something of God by the light of nature, but much more by the light of divine revelation; and by that light we come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ too: so that in studying that, we get and grow in the knowledge both of God and Christ, that is, of *the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*[e]

2. We adore *God,* we must also *adore Jesus Christ.* They who believe in God as a being infinitely bright, and blessed, and glorious, and the Sovereign Lord of all, will see themselves obliged to give him the glory due to his name, and to profess their faith in him, by paying their homage to him, and seeking to him for mercy and grace. And thus we must express our faith in Christ, as that blind man, the eyes of whose mind were opened with those of his body; and then he said to Christ, *Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.*[f] It is the will of God that *all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,* that they should give him divine honours, as one with the Father. And our confessing that he is Lord redounds tot he glory of God the Father, whose person he is the express image of.[g] All the angels of God were appointed to worship him,[h] even when he was brought into this lower world,[i] and they did so. Much more reason have we to do it, now he is entered into his glory; we who lie under greater obligations to him than the angels do. And every creature is brought in ascribing the same *blessing and honour and glory and power,* both *to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb.*[k] Do we express our faith in God by praying to him? We do so; for as we cannot call on him in whom we have not believed,[a] so we cannot but call on him in whom we have believed. Thus, therefore, we must express our faith in Christ, we must pray to him, as many did when he was here upon earth, and none in vain. It is made the description of Christians, that they *call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,*[b] because they trust in that name. Stephen testified his faith in Christ, when he prayed, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.*

3. *We stand in awe of God,* we must also *stand in awe of the Lord Jesus.* Faith and fear go together: Noah by faith was moved with fear. If we believe the Majesty of God, we shall tremble at his presence, and be afraid of falling under his displeasure, much more of remaining under it. Let us also believe in Jesus Christ: and thus express it,—Let us have awful thoughts of him, and of that Authority which he is invested with, as Lord of all, and our Judge. Let us rejoice in him with a holy trembling, and kiss the Son with a religious fear, lest he be angry, and we perish from the way,[c] and be undone for ever; lest we be found among his enemies, that he will order to be brought forth and slain before him; among those rebels who shall be tormented *in the presence of the holy angels,*[d] *and in the presence of the Lamb,*[e] even he looking on and reckoning himself glorified in the final rejection of those who rejected him: for whether he be feared now or no, the day is coming when even the great and mighty men would be glad to hide themselves, not only from the face of him that sits upon the throne, but from the wrath of the Lamb;[f] finding to their confusion, that this Lamb is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah,* whose wrath more than that of any earthly King is as the *roaring of a lion,* and as *messengers of death.* Justly therefore is the kingdom of the Messiah introduced with this command, *Fear before him all the earth,*[g] for he is great and greatly to be feared.

4. We *study to do the will of God:* all who believe in him do so: we must also *study to do the will of Jesus Christ,* and in the temper of our minds, and the tenor of our lives, to comply with it. Faith in God produces obedience to him. Those do not really give credit to his promises, whatever their professions and pretensions are, who are not willing to come up to the conditions of them; for so truly rich, so very rich are the blessings proposed, and so very easy and reasonable are the duties required, to which those blessings are annexed, that those who will not be brought to the duties, must be looked upon as not believing either the truth of the promise, or the value of the things promised. But those who really believe that *God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him,*[h] will set themselves to seek and serve him: and thus faith in Christ will produce obedience to him. It is for the obedience of faith that the gospel is

[a] 2 Pet. 1. 2. [b] John 17. 3. [c] Phil. 3. 8. [d] 1 Cor. 2. 2. [e] 2 Cor. 4. 6. [f] John 9. 38. [g] Phil. 2. 11. [h] Heb. 1. 6. [i] Luke 2 14. [k] Rev. 5. 13.

[a] Rom. 10. 14. [b] 1 Cor. 1. 2. [c] Psa. 2. 11. 12. [d] Luke 19. 27. [e] Rev. 14. 10. [f] Rev. 6. 16. [g] Psa. 96. 9. [h] Heb. 11. 6.

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made known to all nations;[a] and it is in vain to call Christ Lord, if we do not the things that he saith;[b] in vain to call him our King, if we conform not to the laws, and serve not the interests of his kingdom; in vain to expect from him the privileges of adoption, if we do not as obedient children fashion ourselves[c] according to the spirit of his family, and the rules by which it is governed. If we do indeed believe in Christ as the *author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him,*[d] and to those only, and believe that salvation is from everlasting misery, and to everlasting blessedness, surely we shall make no difficulty of obeying him, yea though his precepts be to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross daily.[e] If we do indeed believe that Christ loved us and gave himself for us, and that we owe our all to his love,—surely it will be an easy thing to us to love one another,[f] in conformity to his example, and in obedience to that new commandment which he has given us. If we do indeed believe that Christ sits at the right hand of God, and has there prepared a place for us,[g] we shall thereby find ourselves strongly engaged to set our affections on things above.

5. We *delight ourselves in God,* and rejoice and triumph in him; we must *also delight ourselves in Jesus Christ,* and rejoice and triumph in him. *We believe in God,* and therefore take a complacency in him, in contemplating his beauty, participating of his bounty, and in the relishes of that benignity of his, which is better than life. Our souls not only return to him, and repose in him as their rest, but please themselves in him as their *exceeding joy,*—the *gladness of their joy,*[h] so the word is. And thus we must make it appear that we believe also in Jesus Christ; we must take a pleasure, a transcendant pleasure in the views of his loveliness in himself, and his love to us. Our meditation of God must be sweet, and so must our meditation of Jesus Christ: we must love to think of him, as of one we love and have an interest in. They are the circumcision,[i] they are indeed the children of the covenant who rejoice in Christ Jesus;[k] who in his name lift up their banners, who glory in the Lord;[l] who glory in his cross, so far are they from being ashamed of it. In him shall *all the seed of Israel be justified;*[m] and, as a fruit and evidence of it, *in him they shall glory,*[n] in him, as *The Lord their righteousness.*

If, believing, we rejoice in God,[o]—believing, we must rejoice also in Jesus Christ; for in him dwell not only all the awful, but all the amiable perfections of the divine nature. Is God light? Christ is the light of the world, and a pleasant thing it is with the eye of faith to behold the Sun of Righteousness. Is God love? in nothing does it more appear that he is so than in sending his Son to die for us, in him he commended his love.[p] Nor could we—in our guilty and polluted state—delight ourselves in a just and holy God, no nor think of him without terror, if there were not a Mediator between us and him. It is in Christ Jesus that we rejoice, and in God through him.

6. We depend upon God, and put our confidence in him, let us also depend upon Jesus Christ, and put a confidence in him. We believe in God, that is, we trust in him, we rely upon his wisdom to direct us, his power to support and strengthen us, his goodness to pity us, and his all-sufficiency to give all that *to us,* and work all that *in us,* and *for us,* which the necessity of our case calls for. And we therefore refer ourselves to him, and encourage ourselves in him; now let us thus believe also in Jesus Christ, and make him our hope. As we confide in the providence of God for all things that relate to the natural life; and cheerfully submit ourselves to the conduct of that providence, hoping by it to be carried comfortably through this world: so we confide in the grace of the Lord Jesus for all things relating to the spiritual life, and cheerfully submit our selves to the operations of that grace, hoping by it to be carried safely to a better world; desiring not more to secure our present and future welfare, than to have the *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ with our Spirit.*[a] Our dependence must be upon Christ both for righteousness and strength,[b] the two great things we stand in need of; from a full conviction of our own guilt and weakness, and of his ability and willingness to save us from sin and wrath, we must venture all our spiritual concerns with him. In every thing wherein we have to do with God, we must make mention of his righteousness, and make use of his grace,—and, of both, as all-sufficient for us; must depend upon him to bring us safe through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan; and having done this, as those who know whom we have trusted, we must be willing to venture all our temporal concerns for him, to leave and lose, and lay out all for his sake, being well assured that though we may be losers for him, we shall not, we cannot be losers by him in the end.

III. I come in the next place to shew the necessary connection that there is between these two great duties of believing in God, and believing also in Jesus Christ; and how the latter will follow of course—if the former be sincere—in all those to whom the glad tidings of the Gospel salvation are brought, they must needs embrace the Christian religion, who cordially entertain natural religion; and they who do not believe in Christ, whatever they pretend, do not indeed believe in God: for,

1. If we *believe in God,* we must believe in Him who is *One with him, The Brightness of his glory,* and *the express Image of his Person.*[c] Christ in his gospel has expressly told us: *I and my Father are one.*[d] And when he says: *My Father is greater than I,*[e] the comparison is not between the Person of the Father and of the Son, but between the Son's state of exaltation with the Father, and his present state of humiliation; as *plainly* appears; because it comes in—as a reason, why the disciples should not mourn, but rejoice rather in his

[a] Rom. 16. 26. [b] Luke 6. 46. [c] 1 Pet. 1. 14. [d] Heb. 5. 9 [e] Mat. 16. 24. [f] John 13. 34. [g] Col. 3. 1, 2. [h] Ps. 43. 4. [i] Phil. 3. 3. [k] Ps. 20. 5. [l] 1 Cor. 10. 3. [m] Gal. 6. 14. [n] Isa. 45. 25. [o] 1 Pet. 1. 8. [p] Rom. 5. 8

[a] Gal. 6. 18. [b] Isa. 45. 24. [c] Heb. 1. 3. [d] John 10. 30. [e] John 14. 28.

departure

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departure from them, because he had told them he was to go to the Father, where his state would be not only more glorious to himself, but of greater capacity to serve them than his present state was. When he was entering upon his sufferings,—he comforted himself with this, that *he and his father were one, Thou Father art in me and I in thee*:[a] and therefore he has reason to expect, that *the world will believe*—that *they who believe in God*, will believe also in him. So much are the Father and the Son *one*, that Christ says, *He that has seen me, has seen the Father.*[b] We come to the knowledge of God, by the knowledge of Jesus Christ, for the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ: and, therefore, he who believes in the *Father*,—as far as the *Son* is revealed to him, to be one with the Father, will believe also in him: and by that faith we come to be one *with* the Father and the Son, and one *in* them.[c] And thus by keeping Christ's commandments *we abide in his love*, even as he kept his Father's commandments, *and abode in his love.*[d] Such a close and inseparable union the Gospel all along shews us between the Father and the Son, as that we cannot divide them in our belief: the heathen worshipped their idols as rivals with God, we worship Christ as one with God: *Believe me*, says Christ, that *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*; so let us believe in him.

2. If we *believe in God*, we must believe also in him who is *sent by him*, has a *commission from him*, and to whom he has *given testimony*. We do not believe in God, unless we believe what he has said concerning his Son, and rest upon it; what he said by the Prophets of the Old Testament, who all bare witness to him. And those predictions of theirs were all exactly and completely accomplished, which had reference to his estate of *humiliation*, and the afflictions of it; not one iota or tittle of them fell to the ground. Christ himself observed this when he said, *It is finished:* which ratifies those predictions that had reference to his estate of *exaltation*, the honours of it, and the graces that flow to us from it; for *the Spirit of Christ, in them, testified before-hand* both *of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glory that should follow.*[e] We must also believe what he said by a voice from heaven concerning him, once and again: *This is my beloved* Son, *in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*;[f] and must concur with him by a sincere declaration, *This is my beloved* Saviour, *in whom I am well pleased, and whom I will hear.*[g] Thus we set to our seal that he is true,[h] and subscribe to the record we have received in the everlasting Gospel, which we are willing to venture our souls and our salvation upon, that *God has given to us eternal life*, and *this life is in his Son:* which if we receive not we make God a liar,[i] we not only declare that we do not believe in him ourselves, but that he is not fit to be believed by any one else. Justly therefore has Christ said, *He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me*; as an affront done to an ambassador, is justly construed an affront to him who gave him his character and credentials.

We must also, if we believe in God, give credit to the many confirmations which we have of his testimony to his Son; the many miracles which were wrought to prove his divine mission—miracles of mercy, healing mercy—which served likewise to explain and illustrate it; especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power,[a] and in which God gave him glory,—that our faith and hope might be in God;[b] that believing in him whom he raised from the dead, our faith and hope in him might be both evidenced and encouraged. The pouring out of the Spirit likewise—both in his gifts, and in his graces—is a further attestation given to Christ's mission, for in them God bare him witness;[c] nay, the Holy Ghost whom God gave to them who believed in Christ, and obeyed him,[d] is said to be his witness; so that if we believe in the Spirit of God, we must believe also in Christ, and, therefore, the imputing of Christ's miracles, which were wrought by the Spirit of God, to Beelzebub the prince of the Devils, is justly reckoned an *unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.*

3. If we *believe in God*, we must *give honour to him*, by *believing also in Jesus Christ*; for thereby he reckons himself honoured. If *we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*, it is to the *Glory of God the Father.*[e] It is certain, there is nothing in which the glory of God, and of all his attributes, shines more bright, or more strong, than in the great work of our redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ; and therefore, when the first-begotten was brought into the world, the angels who were charged to worship him sang, *Glory to God in the highest*, because—in Christ—there was *on earth peace and good-will towards men*:[f] so that, unless by faith in Christ we receive that peace and good-will, and the record given concerning it,—we do not as we ought give unto God the glory due, to him, from that greatest of all the works of wonder, by which he has made himself known. Do we believe in God? We ought then to give him the glory of all that infinite Wisdom which contrived our redemption in such a way, that divine justice might be satisfied, and yet sinners saved; this is the *wisdom of God in a mystery, hidden wisdom, manifold wisdom, ordained before the world for our glory.*[g] We ought also to give him the glory of that kindness and love of God: which designed this salvation, those tender mercies, whereby the Day-spring from on high visited us: love without precedent, love without parallel, whereby God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son for us. But how can we say we believe in him, which is giving glory to him, if we rob him of so great a part of his glory, by not believing in Jesus Christ, in whom his glory shines in a special manner?

If we *believe God speaking by Moses and the prophets*, we must believe also in Jesus Christ; for to him bare all the prophets witness, and in all the ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, he was typified: if we believe the Old Testament, we must also believe the

[a] John 17. 21. [b] John 14. 9. [c] John 17. 21. [d] John 15. 10. [e] 1 Pet. 1. 11. [f] Mat. 3. 17. [g] Mat. 17. 5. [h] John 3. 33. [i] 1 John 5. 10, 11.

[a] Rom. 1. 4. [b] 1 Pet. 1. 21. [c] Heb. 2. 4. [d] Acts 5. 32. [e] Phil. 2. 11. [f] Luke 2. 14. [g] Cor. 2. 7.

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New; for such an exact correspondence and agreement is there between them, as between two tallies. The same grace which the Old Testament represents in shadows, promises, and predictions, the New Testament produces in the substance and accomplishment, so that they mutually confirm and illustrate one another. This our Lord Jesus insisted upon, as one of the strongest proofs of his divine mission, that the scriptures of the Old Testament *testified of him*; and therefore he tells the Jews, who set up Moses in opposition to him, that Moses instead of condemning him, he condemned them for not believing in him; for, says he, *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.*[a] In *the volume of the book,*[b] ἐν κεφαλίδι—*in the head* of it, (so the word is) in the very beginning of the book of Moses, it was written of Christ, that as *the seed of the woman,* he should *break the serpent's head.* It is plain, therefore ye *believe not his writings,* because ye *believe not my words.* Christ blamed the two disciples, and afterwards all the rest, for their slowness to believe what was written concerning him in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, all which was to a tittle fulfilled in him.[c] They who believed in the God of Israel, and received the oracles which by him were committed to them, knew very well that there was a salvation to be revealed in the last times: that a Messiah should come to be a prophet like Moses, a priest like Aaron, a king like David,—and, like the sacrifices, to make reconciliation for iniquity; and that he should be cut off, not for himself, but for the sins of his people.[d] And do we not see all this abundantly made good in the Lord Jesus? Has he not done, has he not suffered, all that which it was foretold he should do and suffer? If therefore, we believe that a Messiah was to come, we must believe that *this was he that should come, and we are not to look for any other.* The apostles therefore all along appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, *saying no other things than those which Moses and the prophets said should come,*[e] and putting the unbelief of the Jews to their ignorance of *the voice of the prophets,* though they were *read among them every sabbath day.*[f] So that, in short, if we believe that there is such a thing as a divine revelation, that God has made a discovery of himself and of his will and grace to the children of men—we must believe the Gospel and the testimony it bears, *God has sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have* righteousness and life.

5. If we rightly apprehend how matters stand between God and man since the fall, as those must do who believe in God, who believe his holiness and justice, and his relations to man, we shall readily receive the notice which the Gospel gives us of a Mediator between God and man; not only because we shall soon perceive how desirable it is that there should be such a Mediator, (and we are easily brought to believe what is for our honour and advantage, *Quod volumus facile credimus—what we wish we easily believe,)* but because we shall perceive likewise how probable it is that a God of infinite grace and mercy should appoint such a Mediator, and make him known to us. It is a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, that it not only agrees with, and is a ratification of the principles and laws of natural religion, and is an improvement and advancement of them, but that it supplies the deficiencies of it; it takes us up and helps us out, where that fails us and leaves us at a loss. So that if we make just reflections upon ourselves, and our own case as it appears to us by the light of nature, there cannot but be a disposition in us to receive and embrace the gospel, and to entertain it not only as a faithful saying, but as well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If we rightly believe in God, and with all, rightly understand ourselves, we cannot but perceive our case to be such as calls for the interposition of a Mediator between us and God; and we are undone if there be not such a one; and we will therefore cheerfully receive him.

(1.) We cannot but perceive that man has in a great measure lost the knowledge of God, and therefore should gladly believe in him who has revealed him to us. It is certainly the greatest satisfaction and best entertainment to our intellectual powers, to know God the author and felicity of our beings. The understanding of man cannot *rest* short of this knowledge: but we find that by the entrance of sin, our understandings are darkened,[a] and the children of men are generally alienated from the divine light and life, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: *The world by wisdom knew not God,*[b] and *The things of God are foolishness to the natural man.*[c] Are we sensible of this as our misery, that we cannot by any researches of our own come to such a knowledge of God, as is necessary to our communion with him? If we are so, we shall readily embrace Christ as a Prophet, who having lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, has declared him[d] to the children of men, and has brought into this dark world, the light of the knowledge of this glory, with such convincing evidences of a divine truth, and such endearing instances of a divine grace and love in this light, as are abundantly sufficient both to captivate the understanding, and engage the affections. This is the true light which is sufficient to *lighten every man that cometh into this world,*[e] and to direct him through it to a better world. And shall we not open our eyes to such a light? Can we be such strangers, such enemies, to ourselves, and our own interests, as to love darkness rather than this light?[f]

(2.) We cannot but perceive, that there is an infinite distance between God and man, and therefore should gladly believe in one, in whose person the divine and human natures are wonderfully united. The light of

[a] John 5. 45, 46, 47. [b] Heb. 10. 7. [c] Luke 24. 25, 27, 44. [d] Dan. 9. 26. [e] Acts 26. 22. [f] Acts 13. 27.

[a] Eph. 1. 18. [b] 1 Cor. 1. 21. [c] 1 Cor. 2. 24. [d] 1 John 1. 18. [e] John 1. 9. [f] John 3. 19.

nature

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nature shews us the glory of a God above us; *as heaven is high above the earth*, so are his *thoughts and ways above ours:* whence we are tempted to infer, that there is no having any communion with him, that he is not conversable with us, and that we cannot expect that he should take any cognizance of us; shall we not therefore welcome the tidings of a Mediator between God and Man, even the Man Christ Jesus? Shall we not be glad to hear, that this God *above us* is—in Christ—*Immanuel, God* WITH *us*,[a] God in our nature, *God manifested in the flesh;* the Eternal Word incarnate, which will facilitate our communion with God, and represent it to us as a thing possible? When we look upon God as the Almighty Creator and Sovereign of the world, a Being of infinite perfection and blessedness,—we are tempted to say, *Will* this *God in very deed dwell with men*, with mean and sinful worms, *on the earth?* But when we look upon the Son of God clothed with a body, and visiting in great humility this remote corner of the universe, which God has let out to the children of men, as a vineyard to unthankful husbandmen,—we are encouraged to say with triumph, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men*, and *his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*[b] We are quite lost in our thoughts, when we come to meditate seriously on the divine perfections, for they are an unfathomable depth, which we cannot find out; concerning which we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness; *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up:*[c] but when we come with an eye of faith to see the Father in Christ, who is both God and man, and are brought by faith to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and through him to God the Judge of all,[d]—this makes his glory the more intelligible, *(He that hath seen me*, says Christ, *hath seen the Father)* his example the more imitable, his favour the more attainable, and man's communion with him the more practicable.

(3.) We cannot but perceive the matter to be yet worse,—that there is a quarrel between God and man by reason of sin: that the God who made us is not only a God *above us*, but a God *against us;* and therefore we should gladly believe in him by whom that quarrel is taken up, in whom God was reconciling the world to himself,[e] and who is our peace. *You believe in God*, your great Lord and Law-giver: and do you not believe, that he requires of you an exact conformity to the law of your creation; that since he made you for himself, to shew forth his praise, you should accordingly live to his honour; that he who endued you with the powers of reason, designed that your appetites and passions should always act under the direction and dominion of those powers? Does not even the light of nature tell you, that God who is the *best* of Beings, is to be loved and delighted in *above all;* that all the gifts of his bounty are to be received by us with thankfulness, and all the rebukes of his justice submitted to with patience? These are the rules which you know you should have been ruled by: but you know you have come short of these rules; that those affections of your souls have been set upon the world and the flesh, which should have been set upon God only; that the appetites of a mortal body, by which you are allied to the earth, have been indulged, to the unspeakable disgrace and detriment of an immortal spirit, by which you are allied to the upper world. It is not only the scripture, but even natural conscience, that has concluded us all under sin. Those who had not the law, yet shewed the accusing convincing work of the law written in their hearts.[a] And will not your own hearts tell you likewise, that you having offended God, he is displeased with you, and you lie under his wrath? If God be infinitely perfect, as certainly he is, he is infinitely just and holy; and as the Governor of the world, is engaged in honour to punish sin, that his law may not be trampled on, and his dominion made contemptible. Do you believe *this* concerning God; and, *this* concerning yourselves? and will you not welcome the tidings of a reconciliation between you and God, and gladly believe in Him who was made sin and a curse for us, that we through him might have righteousness and life? Was Christ slain as a sacrifice to slay this enmity between us and God, and shall not we by faith lay our hands on the head of this sacrifice, and apply for an interest in it? Shall not the Prince of peace be our peace? Shall not we receive the atonement,[b] consent to it, confide in it, and take the comfort of it, when it is an atonement which God himself has appointed and accepted? When we see that God contends with us, and that it is in vain for us to think of contending with him; *with ten thousand* we dare not meet him that *comes against us with twenty thousand;*[c] it is like setting briars and thorns before a consuming fire, which are fuel to it, instead of being a fence against it;—sure we shall see it is our interest to take hold on his strength, that we may make peace with him, especially when this method of reconciliation is not an uncertain thing; for he has told us *we shall make peace with him.*

(4.) Yet this is not the worst of it: we cannot but perceive that we are corrupt and sinful, that our nature is depraved and vitiated, and wretchedly degenerated from what it was, as it came out of God's hand; and, therefore, we should gladly believe in him who is *made of God to us not only righteousness but sanctification,*[d] and who came into the world, not only to restore us to the favour of God, but to renew his image upon us. Do we not sensibly find by daily experience, that our minds are alienated from God, and there is in them a strong bias toward the world and the flesh; that we are not of ourselves either inclinable to, or sufficient for any thing that is good, but continually prone to that which is evil? And being thus *sick;* from the crown of the head to the soul of the foot distempered; shall we not rejoice to hear of *Balm in Gilead*, and a *Physician there?*[e] And shall we not apply that balm, and put ourselves under the care of that Physician?

[a] Mat. 1. 23. [b] Ez. 37. 26, 27. [c] Job 37. 20. [d] Heb. 12. 23, 24. [e] 2 Cor. 5. 19.

[a] Rom. 2. 14, 15. [b] Rom. 5. 11. [c] Luke 14. 31 [d] 1 Cor. 1. 30.

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Physician? If you believe in God, you believe that as he is holy, so you should be holy: but you find you are not so, nothing of his resemblance appears upon you, and therefore you cannot expect he should put you among his children, or give you the pleasant land.[a] Will you not then believe also in him, who has undertaken not only to shew us the glory of the Lord, but by his Spirit to change us into the same image from glory to glory;[b] and is able to make good his undertaking? For therefore *it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell,* that *from his fulness all we might receive, and grace for grace;*[c] that being grafted into that good olive, we might partake of his root and fatness; and though severed from him we can do nothing, yet we may be able to do all things through Christ strengthening us.[d] If it be indeed, as it ought to be, our shame and sorrow, that we are by nature so much under the dominion of a vain and carnal mind, —no saying will appear to us so well worthy of all acceptation, as this, that Christ Jesus came to *save his people from their sins,*[e] and to *purify* them *a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works.*[f]

(5.) If we believe that God is the Father of our Spirits, we cannot but perceive that they are immortal, that they must shortly return to God who gave them, and that we are made for another world,—and therefore will gladly believe in One who will be our guide to that world, who will stand our friend in the judgment, and secure our welfare in the future state. Do we not find our souls strongly impressed with a belief of their own existence in a state of separation from the body? The thinking part, even of the heathen world, did so. Natural conscience, which is either a *Heaven* or a *Hell* in mens' own bosoms, plainly intimates to them, that there is a state of rewards and punishments on the other side death, and a righteous doom of every man to the one or to the other: but when we come to enquire—" How shall we make the Judge our friend? What plea will bring us off in the judgment? What is the happiness that is set before us in another world? And what course shall we take to make it sure to ourselves?" When we ask—" What shall we do to get above the fear of death?" (we see its stroke inevitable;) " what have we wherewith to arm ourselves against its terror? From what advances here can we take a comfortable prospect of our state hereafter? We must shortly be stript of all our enjoyments in this world: what is there that will befriend us in our removal to another world?"—Here the light of nature leaves us quite at a loss. Neither the Philosophers with their wisest considerations, nor the infidels with their boldest contradictions, could ever reconcile men to death, or enable them upon any good grounds cheerfully to quit this world: *Animula vagula, blandula,* (said one of the wisest of the heathen upon his death-bed) *quæ nunc abibis in loca?—Whither art thou now going, O my poor soul?* Death, with a noted Atheist, was a *great leap in the dark.* It is certain nothing but Christ and his gospel can furnish us with such comforts as will carry us without the fear of evil through the valley of the shadow of death; shall we not then readily believe in Christ, and bid his gospel welcome into our hearts, that light by which such clear and full discoveries are made of life and immortality? Shall we not depend upon him with an intire satisfaction, and give up ourselves to his conduct, who has enabled us to triumph over death and the grave, and to say, *O Death, where is thy sting,* where is thy terror? Have we not reason to entertain that institution as of a divine original, which is so wisely, so kindly suited to our case in the last and greatest exigence of it? Which shews us the way, through this wilderness, to an everlasting rest for souls; which divides Jordan before us, and makes a path through it for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over. Do we believe that our souls must go to God: and shall we not believe in him who will introduce us, who will receive our spirits, and present them to the Father, and lodge them in the mansions which he himself has prepared in his Father's house? How forward should dying creatures be to embrace a living Saviour, who is and will be life in death to all who by faith are united to him, and who has said, *Because I live ye shall live also.*[a]

Now lay all this together: and then tell me, whether those who believe in God have not a great deal of reason to believe also in Jesus Christ; not only to desire such a Saviour, but to depend upon the Lord Jesus, as every way fitted to be the Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost.

And now will you hear the conclusion of the whole matter?

1. Let us be more and more confirmed in our belief of the principles of natural religion, which Christianity supposes, and is founded upon. Let the dictates of the light and law of nature be always sacred with us, and have a commanding sway and empire in our souls. So agreeable is revealed religion to right reason, and the established rules of good and evil, that what contradicts and violates them, how plausible soever its pretensions may be, ought to be rejected as no part of Christianity.

Therefore they, who, under colour of zeal for Christianity, hate and persecute their brethren, kill them, and say they do God good service, or under that pretence despise dominion, resist the powers that are ordained of God, break the public order, and disturb the public peace, who think no faith is to be kept with those they call heretics, and that it is lawful to lie for the truth; these put a high affront upon the Christian religion, and do it the greatest wrong and injury imaginable. To such we may say, You profess to believe in Christ, but do you believe in God? *Is Christ the minister of sin?* If he came not to *destroy the law and the prophets,* but to fulfil them,—can we think he came to set up a religion that should be served and advanced by a flat contradiction to those principles and rational instincts (if I may so call them) which were prior and

[a] Jer. 3. 19. [b] 2 Cor. 3. 18. [c] John 1. 16. [d] Phil. 4. 13 [e] Mat. 1. 21. [f] Tit. 2. 14.

[a] John 14. 19.

superior

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superior even to the law of Moses, and the prophetical inspirations? Christ came to renew the tables which sin had broken, not to blot out any thing that was engraven in the heart of man by nature, but to write upon the tables *according to the first writing*, and to *add thereto many like words*. If it *became Christ*—no doubt, it becomes Christians—to *fulfil all righteousness*;[a] for we may say of the principles of natural religion, as St. Paul does of the law of Moses, *Do* we make them *void* by the faith of the Gospel? God forbid; nay, we *establish* them.[b]

2. Yet let us not rest in a mere natural religion, and a compliance with it, but let us with the fullest conviction, and highest satisfaction, embrace and firmly adhere to the principles of revealed religion, and submit to the commanding constraining power and influence of them. Let pure Christianity govern us in every thing, and both give law to us, and give peace to us. Let faith be our guide with relation to another world, as sense and reason are with relation to this world; and then we shall be led into the paths, and brought under the dominion of Christ's holy religion. If there be any divine revelation in the world, it is in the Holy Scripture, on which Christianity is built; and *there* certainly it is, for we cannot think that God has put fallen mankind upon a new trial, (which he has not done for fallen angels) and given him no new rule of duty and expectation, accommodated to that state of trial. The Scripture, therefore, is that which we are to believe, into which we must search, and on which we must build, for that is it that testifies of Christ. Christ therefore is he to whose conduct we must entirely devote ourselves, and on the all-sufficiency of whose mediation we must rely; else we are unworthy to bear the name of Christians, and wear the livery of his family.

As there is a practical atheism, which they are chargeable with who profess to know God, but in works deny him; so there is a practical deism, which they are chargeable with, who profess to believe in Christ, and yet have no regard to his mediation between God and man: and both the one and the other are no less dangerous than the speculative, and so much the worse, that they carry in them a self-contradiction.

Let us who are ministers make it our business to advance the honour of Christ, and to bring all to him; as faithful friends of the bridegroom, who *rejoice greatly to hear the Bridegroom's voice*,[c] and to serve his interests; else we do not answer the character we are dignified with, as *his* ministers. Blessed Paul, though he was a great scholar, determined to know nothing, but Christ and him crucified,[d] counting all but loss, for the excellency of that knowledge;[e] and he did as he determined; for "in all his writings" (as one of the antients observes) "he breathes nothing but Christ." "Preach Christ, Brother," (said the famous Mr. Perkins, to a young minister who asked his advice) "Preach Christ, brother." It is the language of all faithful ministers, *We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for his sake.*[a] It is the character of Christians, that they have learned Christ:[b] but how shall they learn him, if their teachers do not preach him? The whole Gospel centres in Christ, in him therefore let all our preaching centre. Let us preach down sin as an enemy to Christ, and that which he died to separate us, and so to save us, from: let us press duty with an eye to Christ in compliance with him, and gratitude to him. Let us prescribe comforts fetched from Christ, and founded upon his mediation. Do we aim at the conversion of sinners? Let us call them to Christ, persuade them to come and take his yoke upon them, and recommend them to him as the best Master. Do we aim at the edification of saints? Let us lead them into a further acquaintance with Christ, that they may grow up into him[c] in all things, as their Head and Root. Are we God's mouth to his people? Let us do as God did when he spake from heaven, give honour to Christ, and direct all to hear him.[d] Are we their mouth to God? Let us offer up all the spiritual sacrifices upon this altar, that sanctifies every gift. Let this golden thread run through the whole web of our praying and preaching; and in every thing let precious Jesus ever have the pre-eminence.

Let us all, both ministers and Christians, make Jesus Christ all in all to us; to us, *to live must be Christ:* and *as we have received him* by our profession of his name, we must so *walk in him;* and whatever we do in word or deed, do all in his name, with an eye to his will as our rule, and his glory as our end, depending upon him both for strength and righteousness, and continually rejoicing and glorying in him.

It is to be feared, there are some even within the pale of the church, who seem to have some little religion; but they forget Christ, and leave him out of it. if we come to talk with them about their souls, and their eternal salvation, we find they have a reverence for God, and a sense of their duty to him, which they speak of with some clearness and concern: they have right notions of justice and charity, fidelity, patience and temperance, yea and of devotion to God, and invocation of him; and are under convictions of the necessity of these, for they believe in God: but when we speak to them also of believing in Jesus Christ, of their coming to God as a Father by him as Mediator, of the need they have of him in every thing wherein they have to do with God, and the constant dependence they ought to have upon him, they are ready to say, as the people did of Ezekiel, *Doth not he speak parables?*[e] This is a lamentation,—and shall be for a lamentation, that among those who are called Christians, there should be those found who are strangers to Christ, and are content to be so: to whom the *light of the world* is as a *Lamp despised;* and the *Fountain of life* as a *broken cistern;* and who are ready to say to Christ, *Depart*

[a] Mat. 3. 15. [b] Rom. 3. 31. [c] John 3. 29. [d] 1 Cor. 2. 2. [e] Phil. 3. 8.

[a] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [b] Eph. 4. 20. [c] Eph. 4. 15. [d] Mat. 17. 5. [e] Ezek. 20. 49.

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from us, and *What can the Redeemer do for us*, which we cannot do for ourselves? We *pity* those who never heard of Christ, whom this Day-spring from on high never visited; for *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* But *we are* justly *angry* at those to whom the great things of the Gospel are preached, and yet they are accounted by them as strange and foreign things, and things that they are no way concerned in. It it an amazing infatuation, and what we may stand and wonder at. Be astonished, O Heavens, at this!

(1.) It is strange, that any who are baptized, and are called Christians, can forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion; surely they must have forgot their Christian name, for they have wretchedly forgot themselves. What! a Christian, and yet a stranger to Christ? *Aut nomen, aut mores muta—Either change thy name, or change thy spirit.* Is not the whole family, both in heaven and earth,[a] denominated from him, as having a necessary and constant dependence upon him? and yet he shall be out of mind, because for the present he is out of sight? Shall he be made a cypher of, who is to us the only figure, and who in the upper world makes so great a figure? Were not we baptized into his name? and by our baptism entered into his school, hired into his family, and enlisted under his banner; and yet shall we set him aside, as if we had no occasion for him? If circumcision was to the breakers of the law made uncircumcision,[b] shall not baptism be nullified, and made no baptism to the contemners of the Gospel?

(2.) It is strange, that any who are convinced of sin, and see themselves, as all the world is, guilty before God, can forget Christ; and leave him out of their religion, as if they could do well enough without him. What! a sinner, and yet make light of the Saviour? A dying perishing sinner, and yet not believe in him, whose errand into the world was to redeem us from all iniquity? Is the avenger of blood in pursuit of us, and just at our back, and shall not the city of refuge be ever in our eye? Can we see our misery and danger by reason of sin, (and we are shamefully blind and partial to ourselves, if we do not) and not be continually looking unto Jesus, the great propitiation? Can we read the curse of the law in force against us? Can we see the fire of God's wrath ready to kindle upon us? and not be glad to accept of Christ upon his own terms,—Christ upon any terms?

(3.) It is strange that any who desire to have communion with God, to hear from him, and speak to him, and in both to obtain his favour, should forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion. I hope none I speak to are of those who say to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* but that you will each of you say with David, *It is good for me to draw near to God.*[c] Do you indeed think it so? Is that your choice? Is that your delight? Is this the thing you labour after, and are ambitious of, that *whether present or absent you may be accepted of the Lord?*[a] You know not yourselves, you know not your God, if it be not: and if it be, how can you expect to be accepted, but in the Beloved;[b] and that the Holy God should be well pleased with you who are unholy creatures, but in and through a Mediator? It is by his Son that God does in these last days[c] speak to us, and it is by him, that we are to speak to God; so that we cannot with any confidence approach to God, nor have any comfortable communion with him, out of Christ. If we neglect him, we come without our errand, and shall be sent away without an answer.

(4.) It is strange, that any who are in care about their souls and another world, should forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion. Brethren, you see yourselves dying daily, death is working in you; and you know that after death is a judgment, which will fix you in an unchangeable state of happiness or misery in perfection: you are standing upon the brink of an awful eternity, and are just ready to step in; now how can you hope to escape everlasting misery, much less to obtain everlasting happiness, unless you secure your interest in, and keep up your correspondence with him, to whom all judgment is committed, who has the keys of hell and death in his hand, and is himself the resurrection and the life? Are we not concerned still to make mention of him, to whom the Father has given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as were given him,[d] and who opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers. How dare we venture into another world, without being fixed on this foundation? Were our eyes opened, and our consciences duly awakened, the very thoughts of dying and going to judgment, would make such a terror to ourselves, as nothing could relieve us against, but a believing sight of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, ready to receive the souls that are in sincerity committed to him, to *redeem them from the power of the grave*, and to *present them to his Father*.

3. Let us all make it to appear in all our devotions, and in our whole conversation, that we not only believe in God, but that we believe also in Jesus Christ. Let our spirits be purely christian; leavened with the gospel of Christ, and partaking of its relish and savour; delivered into it as into a mould, receiving its shape and impression, and in every thing conforming ourselves to it. The poor are said to *receive the gospel*;[e] they are εὐαγγελιζονται—*evangelized*, so the word is. What will it avail us in the gospel, to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, unless we be changed into the same image, and reflect that light which shines upon us, so that all who converse with us, may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus,[f] and that he dwells in our hearts by faith?

Let Christ be our plea for the pardon of sin, the plea we always put in, and firmly rely upon; let us never expect redemption but through his blood, even

[a] Eph. 3. 15. [b] Rom. 2. 25. [c] Ps. 73. 28.

[a] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [b] Eph. 1. 6. [c] Heb. 1. 1. [d] John 17. 2. [e] Mat. 11. 5. [f] Acts 4. 13.

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the forgiveness of our sins: therefore, we hope it is God who does, and will justify, because it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again: and, therefore, we hope he will be our advocate with the Father, and a righteous gracious advocate for us, because he is the *propitiation for our sins:* let us make him our plea, and he will himself be our pleader.

Let Christ be our peace, and our peace-maker. When our consciences are offended and quarrel with us, when our hearts reproach us, and are ready to condemn us; let the blood of Christ, by which we are reconciled to God, be effectual to reconcile us to ourselves, and let nothing else avail, or be admitted to do it. What satisfied God, let that, and that only satisfy us; and let that pacify our consciences which will also purify them. Let him also be our peace among ourselves. Let all good Christians, however differing in other things, be *one in him,* as he has prayed they may be: and let him who is the centre of their unity, be the powerful cement of their affections.

Let Christ be our prophet, and by him let us ask counsel of the Lord, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.*[a] Let him be our oracle, and by him let us be determined; let the mind of Christ be our mind in every thing, and in order to it let his word dwell richly in us.[b]

Let Christ be our priest, and into his hand let us put all our services, all our spiritual sacrifices, to be offered up to God, because through him only they are acceptable.[c] By this name let us ever know him, let us ever own him, *The Lord our righteousness.*[d]

Let Christ be our pattern; let our spirits be renewed in conformity to his death and resurrection, and let us be so planted together in the likeness[e] of both, that it may be truly said, Christ is formed in us,[f] Christ lives in us,[g] and we are the *Epistles of Christ.*[h] Let our whole conversation be governed in conformity to his example, which he has left us on purpose that we might follow his steps.[i] Let us so bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, as that the *life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body.*[k]

[a] Acts 9. 6. [b] Col. 3. 16. [c] 1 Pet. 2. 5. [d] Jer. 23. 6. [e] Rom. 6. 5. [f] Gal. 4. 19. [g] Gal. 2. 20. [h] 2 Cor. 3. 3. [i] 1 Pet. 2. 21. [k] 2 Cor. 4. 10.

Let Christ be the beloved of our soul, and let us make it appear that he is so by our delight in his presence, our grief for his withdrawings, our constant care to please him, and fear to offend him, and our diligence to approve ourselves to him, as one we esteem and love. Let us have such a constant regard to him, to his will as our rule, and to his glory as our end, that we may truly say, *To us to live is Christ,*[a] and to us living and dying he is gain.

Let Christ be our hope, let him be our joy; and let us make it to appear he is so by such a holy cheerfulness of spirit, as will be a continual feast to us. Let us see, let us find, enough in Christ to silence all our fears, and to balance all our griefs, and so to keep us always calm and easy. Do we believe in God? Do we believe also in Jesus Christ? Then let not our hearts be troubled, whatever happens to us, but let us be kept in perfect peace.[b]

Let Christ be our crown of glory,[c] and our diadem of beauty; let us value ourselves by our interest in him, and relation to him. At his feet let all our crowns be cast; let boasting in ourselves be for ever excluded, and let him that glories glory in the Lord, in the Lord Jesus.

Let Christ be our heaven; let us reckon it one of the chief joys of glorified saints in the other world, that they are gathered to Christ[d] there, they see his glory,[e] and share in it, they sit with him at his table, sit with him on his throne. And let us therefore not only be willing to die when God calls us, but be desirous to depart and to be with Christ,[f] to be together for ever with him, which will be best of all.

To conclude. Let that be the language of our settled judgments, which a learned and religious gentleman of the last age took for his motto, wrote in his books, contrived to have continually before him, and ordered to be engraven in the rings given at his funeral: "CHRIST IS A CHRISTIAN'S ALL."* And let that be the language of our pious affection, with which one of the martyrs triumphed in the flames: "NONE BUT CHRIST, NONE BUT CHRIST."

* Judge Warburton.

[a] Phil. 1. 21. [b] Isa. 26. 3. [c] Isa. 28. 5. [d] 2 Thes. 2. 1. [e] John 17. 24. [f] Phil. 1. 23.

A SERMON

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A

SERMON

CONCERNING THE

FORGIVENESS OF SIN AS A DEBT,

Preached in London, June 1, 1711.

MATT. 6. 12. *And forgive us our Debts.*

COMPARED WITH

LUKE 11. 4. *And forgive us our Sins.*

FROM this petition in the Lord's prayer, thus differently expressed by the two evangelists, we may easily observe: (for prayer may preach, this prayer preaches:)

I. That sin is a debt to God Almighty; nay, it becomes us to express it with application: (for, so, such truths as these look best:) *Our* sins *are our debts.*

II. That the pardon of sin is the *forgiveness of this debt,* and the discharge of the debtor from it: and as the former must be thought of with a penitent application, confessing and bewailing our sins, as our debts; so this with a believing application. This is a privilege offered to us, in the Gospel: O that we might partake of it!

Repentance and remission of sins, are the two great things which ministers are appointed to preach, in Christ's name, to all nations; and which Christ is himself exalted to the right hand of the Father to give,[a] else our preaching them would be in vain. I am here this day to *preach* them, depending upon divine grace to *give* them: as an ambassador for Christ, to beseech you, by repentance for sin, to be reconciled to God,[b] that by the remission of sin he may be reconciled to you. Brethren, these are matters of life and death, matters of everlasting concern; and therefore challenge your serious attention.

Many of you have a prospect of drawing nigh to the Lord, and having communion with him at his table: and what better service can I do you, than to assist your repentance in your preparations for that ordinance, and to assure you of pardon, upon repentance, in your attendance upon it? To shew your sin, that in reflection upon it you may sow in tears; and to shew you Christ, that in dependance on him you may reap in joy,[c] and by him may have your tears wiped away.

This similitude, which represents sin as a debt, and the pardon of sin as the forgiving of that debt, our Saviour often used: and it is a proper one, and very significant, and I hope by the blessing of God may be of use both to let us into the understanding of this great concern, and to affect us with it.

I. The sins we are to repent of are *our debts to God.*

There is a debt to God, which arises from the command of the law: and we do not pray to be discharged from that: A debt of duty, which we always owe, and must be always paying in the strength of his grace: A yoke so easy, that we cannot desire to be eased of it: A service so reasonable, as that, if we understand ourselves aright, we cannot but be reasoned into it.

We are debtors, not to the flesh,[a] says the apostle; we are under no obligation to serve it and please it, and make provision for it; which intimates that we are debtors *to God:* that which is said to be our *duty to do,*[b] is ὀφειλομεν ποιησαι, that which *we owe the doing of.* We owe adoration to God, as a being infinitely bright, and blessed, and glorious. We owe allegiance to him as our Sovereign Lord and Ruler. We are bound in honour and duty, in gratitude and interest, to observe his statutes, and to keep his laws; are bound by all the relations we stand in to him as our Creator, Owner, and Benefactor, to love and fear him, and under the influence of those two commanding principles to serve and obey him: and we must reckon it our happiness, that we are thus obliged, and labour to be more and more sensible of the obligations. The loosing of our other bonds strengthens these; so the Psalmist thought, when in consideration thereof he said, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant,* for thou hast *loosed my bonds.*[c]

There is likewise a debt we owe to one another, which we must not pray to be discharged from, but always kept under the bonds of, and that is, brotherly love. When we are commanded to render to all their due, so as to owe no man any thing; yet we are told we must still owe this, *to love one another;*[d] which when we do we pay a just debt, and yet must still abound more and more.[e]

There is a debt to God, which arises from the curse and condemnation of the law, which we are fallen under, by our breach of the command of the law; and this is that which we here pray to be discharged from: the debt of punishment, that death which we are told

[a] Luke 24. 47. Acts 5. 31. [b] 2 Cor. 5. 20. [c] Psa. 126. 5. 6.

[a] Rom. 8. 12. [b] Luke 17. 10. [c] Psa. 116. 16. [d] Rom 13. 8. [e] 1 Thes. 4. 1.

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is the *wages of sin.*[a] It is a penal bond, by which we are obliged to our duty; so that for non-performance of the duty we become liable to the penalty: and thus our sins are our debts; and being all sinners, we are all debtors. Know then that the Lord has a controversy[b] with you, an action against you, an action of debt, wherein—in his name—I here arrest you all, pursuant to the great intention of the Spirit, which is to convince the world of sin,[c] to charge men with a debt to God, and to prove it upon them.

In prosecution of this, I shall endeavour to shew,

1. How we come to be in debt to God, how this debt is contracted, and what is the ground of the action. That I may keep to the comparison, not forcing it, but fairly following it, you shall see that we run in debt to God, as the children of men run in debt to one another.

(1.) We are in debt to God, *as a servant is indebted to his Master,* when he has neglected his business, and wasted or embezzled his goods. Our Saviour represents our case like that of a servant to a king, who when he came to be reckoned with, (probably the revenues of the crown passing through his hands,) was found in debt to the king his master *ten thousand talents*;[d] and that of a steward who was *accused to his Lord that he had wasted his goods,*[e] either through sloth and negligence, not taking the care and pains about them, that by the duty of his place he ought to have done; or through dishonesty, converting them to other uses than they were intended for, and serving himself with them.

We are servants to God, and have work to do for the advancing of the interest of his glory and kingdom in the world, and in our own hearts. This work is undone; we have stood all the day idle, and have done nothing, or next to nothing of the great work we were sent into the world about, nothing to answer the ends of our creation and redemption, and in pursuance of the intentions of our birth and baptism; and so we become to be in debt, and deserve, not only, to have our wages stopt, but, to lie under the doom of the unprofitable servant, who is therefore called *wicked,* because slothful.[f]

We have been intrusted with talents,[g] which were put into our hands with this charge, *Trade till I come;* make use of them in your master's service, and for his honour: but we have not improved these talents for the end for which we have been entrusted with them, we have hid our Lord's money, have buried our talent, and so we come to be indebted. Time is a talent, it ought to have been filled up with duty; but we have mispent it, and trifled it away, and have not done the work of each day in its day, according as the duty of the day required: we are therefore so much in debt for lost time, time that can never be recalled. Opportunity is a talent, time fitted for the doing of that which will not be done at all, or not so well done another time. The time of youth, sabbath-time, the seasons of grace—the minutes of these are in a particular manner precious; but we have not improved these; we have received the grace of God in them in vain, have had many *a price put into our hands to get wisdom,*[a] which for want of a heart,—*a heart at the right hand,* for want of skill, and will, and courage, we have not made the right use of. Our reason is a talent, with all its powers and faculties, which should have been employed in honouring God, but has been so wretchedly misemployed, that *the world by wisdom* (reason doing its best, as it thought) *knew not God.* Our limbs and senses, our bodily health and strength, are talents; for it is designed we should glorify God with our bodies:[b] but the members of our bodies have been instruments of unrighteousness[c] to his dishonour; and for this abuse of them, we are indebted. What estate we have in the world, what interest we have in others, or influence upon them, is a talent, puts us in a capacity of serving God, and doing good. But have we done so? No, we have all come short, far short of the glory of God, have come short of glorifying him, and therefore deserve to come short of being glorified with him.[d]

We are stewards of the manifold grace of God:[e] A good stewardship it is, an honourable place, and very profitable. But have we been good stewards? It is *required of stewards that they be faithful;*[f] but when instead of living to God, and doing all to his glory, we live to ourselves,[g] eat and drink to ourselves, when self in every thing must be gratified, and self glorified, and our own things sought more than the things of Christ,[h]—then like unfaithful stewards we convert that to our own use, which should have been laid out for our Master's honour; and upon this account we are in debt.

(2.) We are indebted to God, *as a tenant is indebted to his landlord,* when he is behind of his rent, or has committed waste upon the premises. We are all tenants to God Almighty, tenants at will: all things we have, pertaining both to life and godliness, which contribute to the welfare both of body and soul, we hold by, from, and under him; ever since we came into the world we have breathed in his air, gone upon his ground, and lived upon the gifts of his providence: nay, we have not only been—as creatures—his tenants on the common, poor cottagers; but—as christians—he has let out his vineyard to us, as to husbandmen, that he might receive the fruits of it,[i] and that we also might share in its products, and might have the comfort of it, which we gave him the glory of. If Solomon have a thousand pieces of silver from his vineyard at Baal-hamon, they who keep the fruit thereof shall have two hundred.[k]

We have no reason then to complain of a hard bargain; we are not tied to a rack-rent, it is only a chief;* it is only a part of the fruits of the vine-

[a] Rom. 6. 23. [b] Mic. 6. 2. [c] John 16. 8. [d] Mat. 18. 24. [e] Luke 16. 1. [f] Mat. 25. 26, 30. [g] Luke 19. 13.

* An allusion to an ancient mode of tenure, whereby a man held lands immediately of the king, as of his crown; for which the service paid was called a service *in-chief.* Editor.

[a] Prov. 17. 16. [b] 1 Cor. 6. 20. [c] Rom. 6. 19. [d] Rom. 3. 23. [e] 1 Pet. 4. 10. [f] 1 Cor. 4. 2. [g] Zec. 7. 6. [h] Phil. 2. 21. [i] Mat. 21. 33, 34. [k] Cant. 8. 11, 12.

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yard itself; yet this rent has been unpaid, or not paid in current coin. Our love to him, (that is the rent demanded,) has been cold, it is well if it have not been counterfeit. It is required that as tenants we do homage to our Lord: (*I become your man,* that is the form:) but we have not done it, or not done it from the heart, which he looks at, and requires; but (as among men) it degenerates into a mere formality. There are services to be performed, neither hard nor dishonourable; for what greater honour can we do ourselves than to honour him? and yet those services have been neglected, and left undone. God has come to his vineyard *looking for grapes,* but *behold wild grapes.*[a] Upon these accounts we are indebted, and are liable to be distrained upon, and all we have seized. Our lives and beings, and all our comforts, are forfeited into the hands of divine justice; and, if we had not had a very patient landlord, the forfeiture had been taken long ago, and we had been broke, and for ever ruined.

When Belshazzar, the greatest monarch upon earth in his time, is (if I may so say) served with an ejectment by the prophet Daniel, in God's name, and for arrears of rent to the King of Kings; has a vast and rich kingdom subjected to an extent by the mystic characters, *Mene, Mene*—it is *numbered and finished,* it is thine no more, but it is to be put into other hands; (and yet even this comes short of making good the arrears; for still he is *Tekel,—weighed in the balances, and found deficient,*[b] insolvent;) one would think surely the debt was very extraordinary; and yet that which the declaration upon this ejectment charges him with, is the same that we are every one of us chargeable with: *The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified;*[c] thou hast not rendered to God the things that are his, nor paid thy rent, and therefore art turned out.

Our own souls are the vineyards which are let out to us; we are made keepers of these vineyards, are obliged to keep them in good repair, and by constant watchfulness to keep up the fences about them; but we have neglected them, and they have been like *the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding, all grown over with thorns,* the fruits of the curse; and the stone wall thereof broken down.[d] All our enjoyments we receive from God, and they also have been wasted and misemployed. That has been made the food and fuel of our lusts, which should have been oil to the wheels of our obedience. Thus we have forfeited our own souls, and deserve to be put out of the possession and enjoyment of them: *This night shall thy soul be required.*[e] What shouldest thou do with a soul, who knowest no better what to do with it? Thus all our enjoyments are forfeited. When Israel prepared, for *Baal,* the corn, and wine, and oil which *God* gave them,—he justly threatens to return, and take it from them, and to "recover it:"[f] it is a law term: he will recover it, as the lord in an action of waste recovers *Locum vastatum—waste land;* for when God judges, he will overcome.

(3.) We are indebted to God, *as a borrower is indebted to the lender.* God has bestowed many mercies upon us, has been loading us with his benefits all our days; that is, he has been lending to us according as the case has required. Our natures are necessitous, and continually depending upon the divine providence: the new nature is always craving from the divine grace: God has lent us health, estate, relations and comfort in them: he has lent us the means of grace, bibles, ministers, sacraments, and the consolations of his Spirit. He has never been to us as a wilderness, or a land of darkness, or as waters that fail.

But what have we rendered to the Lord for all his benefits toward us?[a] What grateful acknowledgments have we made for his favours to us? Alas! we have all reason to reproach ourselves for that which Hezekiah is charged with, that we have not rendered again according to the benefit done unto us.[b] And thus we come to be in debt. God has sown plentifully upon us, and yet hath reaped sparingly from us; has *given us richly all things to enjoy,*[c] and yet we have served him very poorly. The series of God's mercies has been constant, but the course of our duties has been interrupted, and frequently broken off. When we reflect upon the goodness and mercy which has followed us all the days of our life, and come to ask, *What honour, and what dignity hath been done*[d] to our Great Benefactor for all this; we find our returns of duty and thankfulness no way answerable to our receivings of mercy, and so we become to be in debt.

This debt is still the greater, in that we have made not only poor returns, but ill returns to the God of our mercies: he has nourished and brought us up as children, and yet we have rebelled against him;[e] he has loaded us with benefits, and yet we have loaded him with our iniquities: thus have we requited the Lord, like foolish people and unwise.[f] Much of our debt is contracted by the most base ingratitude imaginable to the best of Friends, the best of Fathers; and if you call a man *ungrateful,* you can call him *no worse.*

(4.) Our debt to God is, *as the debt of a trespasser to him upon whom he has trespassed.* Our sins, which are here in the Lord's Prayer called, *Our Debts,* in the verses following are called παραπτώματα—*our trespasses,*[g] and thence we commonly use that word, in repeating the Lord's Prayer. An action of damage differs not much from an action of debt, and this action lies against us as sinners.

We have broken through the fences and bounds which God by his commands has set us, and by which our appetites and passions should have been restrained and kept within compass; and so we are trespassers in debt to God, for trampling his law under foot, and his authority, as if we were resolved to be like our fore-

[a] Isa. 5. 2. [b] Dan. 5. 26, 27. [c] Dan. 5. 23. [d] Prov. 24. 30, 31. [e] Luke 12. 20. [f] Hos. 2. 8, 9.

[a] Ps. 116. 12. [b] 2 Chron. 32. 25. [c] 1 Tim. 6. 17. [d] Est. 6. 3. [e] Isa. 1. 3. [f] Deut. 32. 6. [g] Mat. 6. 15.

fathers

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fathers at Babel, from whom *nothing would be restrained that they imagined to do.*[a]

Nay, we have broken in upon God's rights, have invaded his prerogatives, by taking that praise to our selves which is due to him only. We have gone upon forbidden ground, and like our first parents have eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree, by enriching ourselves with unlawful gains, and indulging ourselves in unlawful pleasures, meddling with that of which the Lord our God has said, *Ye shall not eat of it,*[b] *neither shall ye touch it.* By presuming on comforts which we were not entitled to, we become trespassers; as he was that intruded into the wedding-feast, not having on a wedding-garment: *Friend, how camest thou in hither?*[c]

By these trespasses upon the divine authority, we have injured God, have injured him in his honour. (And the creature cannot otherwise be injurious to the Creator but in his honour; *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him?)*[d] By this, we are indebted to him; satisfaction is demanded for the injury: for *Shall a man rob God,*[e] and never be called to an account for it? trespass upon him, impeach his honour, and invade his property, and never hear of it?

(5.) Our debt to God is *as the debt of a covenant breaker,* who entered into articles, and gave bond for performance, but has not made good his agreement, and so has forfeited the penalty of the bond, which is recoverable as far as the damage goes, by the non-performance of the articles. An oath is called a "Bond upon the soul," because it was commonly made with an imprecation of evil, if the promise was not performed; so that he who broke his promise so ratified, could not but feel himself under the burthen of his own curse.

This is our case; we are bound out from all sin, and bound up to all duty, not only by the bond of a command, but by the bond of a covenant, to which we have ourselves subscribed with the hand; we have by solemn promise engaged ourselves to be the Lord's, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes;[f] our baptism was an early and lasting obligation upon us to be religious: but we have broken our covenant with God, have violated our engagements, and thereby have not only forfeited the blessings of the covenant, but made ourselves obnoxious to the curses of it, and so we are in debt to God; as they were who transgressed the covenant which they made before God when they cut the calf in twain;[g] wishing that they might so be cut asunder, if they did not deal faithfully. This is assigned as the ground of God's controversy with the world of mankind, and for which they are all laid under the arrest of his curse; they have *changed the ordinance,* and *broken the everlasting covenant, therefore, hath the curse devoured the earth.*[h]

(6.) Our debt to God is *as the debt of a malefactor, to the law and to the government,* when he is found guilty of treason or felony, and consequently the law is to have its course against him. And this is the most proper notion of the debt of sin; for though our Saviour in his parables alludes to money-debts, yet the case between God and man is not as that between debtor and creditor in commerce: for God is our Sovereign, and we are his subjects; he is our law-giver, and we are bound by his laws. The primary obligation is to the command of the law, to obey that, which if we fail in, we fall under a secondary obligation to the curse of the law; and therefore as many as being sinners are under the law, are under the curse, for so it is written, *Cursed is every one, that continues not in every thing that is written in the book of the law to do it.*[a] But God knows, and our own hearts know, that we have not continued, no not in any thing; we are all guilty before God,[b] subject to his judgment. The Scripture hath *concluded us all under sin;*[c] shuts us up as debtors and criminals are shut up in prison, that the law may have its course.

We have all broken the commands of the law, and so are become liable to the sentence of it, *The soul that sins shall die;*[d] shall die, as a soul can die; shall be made completely miserable. Our blessedness is forfeited, as the life, honour, and estate of a traitor is to the public justice, to which he is thus to make the uttermost satisfaction he is capable of making: the case is ours, and a deplorable case it is. As the corruption of our nature makes us odious to God's holiness, so our many actual transgressions make us obnoxious to his justice; and thus we are debtors to him.

(7.) To make the matter yet worse, there is a debt we owe to God, which is *as the debt of an heir-at-law upon his ancestor's account,* of a son who is liable to his father's debts, as far as what he has by descent will go, and as far as he has any assets in his hand. By Adam's disobedience we were all made sinners,[e] were all made debtors; and laid under this charge, *That we are a seed of evil doers.*

The human nature comes to us by descent from our first parents, and it comes to us not only distempered but attainted by law; as the blood of a traitor is corrupted by his attainder. When those are under the dominion of death who yet never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,[f] and God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, we must own ourselves indebted on the score of those who are gone before us.

(8.) There are debts of ours, likewise, which are *as the debt of a surety upon account of the principal,* I mean the guilt we have contracted by our partaking of other men's sins,[g] and making ourselves accessary to them, as if we had not had guilt enough of our own to answer for.

We have, by the influence of our example, by advice or encouragement, by contributing to their temptations, or exciting their corruptions, or by a consent and approbation *ex post facto—after the deed has been done,* made ourselves partners with others in sin, and have had *fellowship with the unfruitful works of dark-*

[a] Gen. 11. 6. [b] Gen. 2. 7. [c] Mat. 22. 12. [d] Job 35. 6. [e] Mal. 3. 8. [f] Deut. 26. 17. [g] Jer. 34. 18. [h] Isa. 24. 5. 6.

[a] Gal. 3. 10. [b] Rom. 3. 19. [c] Gal. 3. 22. [d] Ez. 18. 4. [e] Rom. 5. 19. [f] Rom. 5. 14. [g] 1 Tim. 5. 22.

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ness, which we should rather have reproved, and so must answer not only for our doings, but for the fruit of our doings.

2. Having opened to you the several ways how we come, into this debt to God, let us next inquire, what kind of debt sin is.

(1.) It is an *old debt*, it is an early, nay, it is an hereditary incumbrance upon our nature. The foundation of this debt was laid in Adam's sin, we are in debt for the forbidden fruit he eat, so high does the account begin, and so far back does it look. We were born in debt, were *called*, and not miscalled, *Transgressors from the womb*,[a] debtors from the womb; we began betimes to go astray from God, and so to run further and further into debt: it has been long in the contracting, and continual additions have been made to it, by renewed acts of rebellion against God. Job when he is old is made to *possess the iniquities of his youth*,[b] and Ephraim *bears the reproach of his youth*.[c] And how earnestly does David pray, *O remember not the sins of my youth*.[d]

(2.) It is a *just debt*, and the demand of it highly equitable. We cannot say that we are charged with more than is meet;[e] no, how high soever the penalty is with which we are loaded, certainly it is less than our iniquities have deserved.[f] It is divine justice, the eternal rule and fountain of justice, that charges us with this debt, and brings this action against us; and we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth: nor is he unrighteous who takes vengeance.[g]

(3.) It is a *great debt*, more than we imagine. It is represented by our Saviour as a debt of ten thousand talents.[h] In the computation of money, a talent is the highest denomination, it amounts to above 187 pounds of our money; multiply that by ten thousand, and what an immense sum does it come to. This is designed to shew us what a great deal of malignity there is in every sin, how heinous it is in its own nature, it runs us a *talent* in debt; and withal how numerous our sins are, how many, how very many our actual transgressions, they are *ten thousands*,—more than the hairs on our heads. Well might the master say to that servant, when he upbraided him with his pardon, *I forgave thee that great debt*.

(4.) It is a *growing debt*; a debt we are still adding to, as a tenant who is behind of his rent, every rent-stage makes the debt more: till we return by repentance, we are still running further upon the score; still taking up upon trust, and treasuring up unto ourselves guilt and wrath against the day of wrath.[i]

3. Having seen what kind of debt sin is, let us next see, what kind of debtors sinners commonly are; and we shall find them like other unfortunate debtors, that are going down in the world, and have no way to help themselves.

1. Bad debtors are oftentimes very *careless* and unconcerned about their debts; when they are so embarassed and plunged, that they cannot *bear* the thought of it, they contrive how to *banish* the thought of it, and live merry and secure; to laugh away, and drink away, and revel away the care and sorrow of it. Thus sinners deal with their convictions, they divert them with the business of the world, or drown them in the pleasures of sense; Cain endeavoured to shake off the terrors of conscience, by building a city:[a] it was once said of one who died over head and ears in debt, "Surely his pillow had some extraordinary virtue in it to dispose a man to rest, else one in that condition could not repose himself upon it." One would wonder what pillows sinners lay their heads on, who have been so *long* in debt, who are so *deep* in debt to the justice of God, and never lay it to heart, nor inquire into the things which belong to their peace. O what multitudes of precious souls are lost and perish for ever, through mere carelessness!

(2.) Bad debtors are commonly very *wasteful*, and when they find they are in debt more than they can pay, care not how much further they run into debt. How extravagant are sinners in spending upon their lusts! What waste do they make of their time and opportunity, and of the noble powers and faculties with which they are indued! like the prodigal son, who, when he was run away from his father's house into a far country, there wasted his substance with riotous living. So true is that of Solomon, *One sinner destroys much good*,[b] with which he might honour God, and do service to his generation; and runs through a great deal of valuable treasure.

(3.) Bad debtors are commonly very *shy of their creditors*, and very loth to come to an account. Thus sinners care not how little they come into the presence of God, but rather say to the Almighty, *Depart from us;* they take no pleasure in hearing from him, in speaking to him, or in having any thing to do with him; they desire not the knowledge of his good ways, lest thereby they should come to the sight of their own evil ways. They are shy of communion with their own hearts, and looking into their consciences, because they are not willing to know the worst by themselves. God hearkens and hears, but they speak not aright;[c] they do not take the first step toward repentance and conversion, for they make no serious reflections upon themselves, they never ask, *What have I done?* But the case of those tradesmen is justly suspected, who are strangers to their books, and are afraid of knowing what posture their affairs are in.

(4.) Bad debtors are sometimes *timourous;* and though they strive to cast off all care about their debts, yet, when they are threatened, their hearts fail them, they are subject to frights, and are ready to think every one they meet is a bailiff. Thus sinners carry about with them a misgiving conscience, which often reproaches them, and fills them with secret terrors, and a bitterness which their own heart only knows. When Cain was under an arrest for that great debt he contracted by the murder of his brother, what a terror was he to himself, crying out, *My punishment*

[a] Isa. 48. 8. [b] Job. 13. 26. [c] Jer. 31. 19. [d] Ps. 25. 7. [e] Job 34, 23. [f] Job 11. 6. [g] Rom. 2. 2, 3, 5. [h] Mat. 18. 24. [i] Rom. 2. 5.

[a] Gen. 4. 17. [b] Ecc. 9. 18. [c] Jer. 8. 6.

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is greater than I can bear,[a] though it was much less than he deserved! When Herod heard of Christ's miracles, he presently cried out, *It is John the Baptist whom I beheaded,* he is certainly risen from the dead. The wicked are sometimes made to flee where no fear is, much more where there is fear.

(5.) Bad debtors are apt to be *dilatory* and *deceitful,* to promise payment this time and the other, but still to break their word, and beg a further delay. It is so with sinners; they do not say they will never repent, and return to God, but not yet: *The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built,*[b] but they will assure you, that some time or other it shall be built. They are called to come to an account with their own consciences, to search and try their ways; and they are forward to promise that they will do it; nay, they will set the time, when they will do it. The servant that owed ten thousand talents thought he needed not be beholden to his master for a pardon of the debt, only he begged forbearance: *Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.*[c] They shake off their convictions, and elude them, by shifting off the prosecution of them, like Felix, to a more convenient season, which season never comes; and so they are cozened of all their time, by being cozened of the present time.

4. To affect you the more with the misery of an impenitent unpardoned state, having shewed you what your debt is, I shall next lay before you the danger we are in by reason of this debt. Many who owe a great deal of money, yet are furnished with considerations sufficient to make them easy, but they are such as our case will not admit.

(1.) *An exact account is kept of all our debts.* Some who are in debt please themselves with hopes that their debts cannot be proved upon them, and so they shall escape harm by them: but this will do us no service: all our sins will be proved upon us. *These things thou hast done*;[d] it is in vain to deny it, or to avoid the action by pleading *Non est Factum—It is not thy deed.* If the debtor keep not an account of his debts, yet the creditor does; they are all booked, all kept on record, laid up in store with God, and sealed among his treasures.[e] Job speaks of his transgressions as sowed up in a bag,[f] as the indictments are upon which the prisoners are to be arraigned; or, as bonds and notes are carefully tied up together to be produced when there is occasion. It will be to no purpose to contest the account, when the omniscience of God will attest it. *Went not my heart with thee?*[g] says the prophet to his servant. Was not God's eye upon us, when our backs were upon him, and we were running from him into by-paths? Were not all our ways, our sinful ways ever before him? They were, without doubt they were; but therefore sinners are secure, and see not their danger, because (says God) *they consider not in their heart that I remember all their wickedness.*[h] But consider this, ye who forget God,[i] and his goodness, that God does not forget you and your wickedness. Our sins are never *cast behind his back,* till we have set them *before our faces.*

(2.) *We are utterly insolvent, and have not wherewithal to pay our debts.* If a man be much in debt,—yet if he knows he has wherewithal to answer all his creditors, he needs not much perplex himself, especially, if he can discount with his creditors themselves: and there are those who flatter themselves with a conceit, that this will help them in their dealing with God. For being ignorant of his righteousness, of the strictness of the demands of his justice, they go about to establish a righteousness[a] of their own, and are willing to hope that their good qualities, and their good deeds, will atone for their bad ones, and be a competent satisfaction to the demands of divine justice. Thus it is common for foolish debtors to talk big, as if they had wherewithal to give every body their own, and no body should lose by them, when, perhaps, their all is nothing or next to nothing. Laodicea thought herself rich and increased in goods, when she was wretchedly and miserably poor and naked,[b] but withal blind, and would not see.

But what good will it do us thus to deceive ourselves? Can the all-seeing God be deceived? It is certain we owe more than we are worth; whether our debt be more or less, five hundred pence, or fifty, we are not able to pay it.[c] We cannot plead that we have by any services to God, or sufferings for him, made satisfaction for any part of our debts; nor can we promise that we will; for whatever good there is in us, it is God's own gift, it is his own work, for which we are yet more indebted to him. Whatever good is done by us, it is what we are already bound to. And though a tenant should pay his rent for the future, yet that will not discharge his old scores. We are become bankrupts, must own ourselves so, and for ever undone, if the debt we owe be exacted; for if God enter into judgment with us, and deal with us in strict justice according to our deserts, we are not able to answer him for one of a thousand.[d] *In thy sight, shall no flesh living be justified.* We have no oil to sell, as the prophet's widow had, wherewith to pay our debt; no equivalent to offer, nor any thing wherewith to make a composition. We are debtors to God, but he is no debtor to us, nor is he ever behind-hand with those who do any service for him: none has first given to him, that it should be recompensed to him again, Rom. 11. 35. There were those indeed who thought they had made God their debtor by their devotions. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?*[e] But when the matter comes to be looked into, it appears that they are debtors to God, by reason of the wickedness of their conversations: *ye fast for strife and debate.*

(3.) We have no friend on earth who can or will pass his word for us, or be our bail. Many poor debtors encourage themselves with this, that they have some kind relations, who will stand by them, and appear for

[a] Gen. 4. 13. [b] Hag. 1. 2. [c] Mat. 18. 29. Ps. 50. 21. [e] Deut. 32. 34. [f] Job 14. 17. [g] Kings 5. 26. [h] Hos. 7. 2. [i] Ps. 50. 22.

[a] Rom. 10. 3. [b] Rev. 3. 17. [c] Luke 7. 41, 42. [d] Job 9. 3. [e] Isa. 58. 3, 4.

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them, and help them in a time of need: but poor sinful men can have no such prospect, since all their kindred are in the same helpless condition with themselves, as deep in debt as they are. The wealthiest worldlings who have most money, cannot with it undertake to pay our debts to God; no, *we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.*[a] Pardons are those gifts of God, which are not to be purchased with money in the court of heaven;[b] those, therefore, that are so purchased in the court of Rome, are but sham pardons: even those who boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, yet none of them can by any means redeem his brother.[c] The wisest virgins, who have most grace,—have most oil, yet have none to spare, there is not enough for us and them. If God contend with us, no man on earth, or angels in heaven, can undertake to arbitrate the matter, or as a *Daysman lay his hand upon us both*;[d] can undertake to open the book by which we stand charged, or to loose the seals; none can do it but *the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*[e]

(4.) We are often put in mind of our debts by the providence of God, and by our own consciences. Some who are in debt hope to have benefit by the statute of limitations, and that the debt will be dropt for want of being demanded; but the debts we owe to God are ever and anon demanded, and the right is kept up by a continual claim. God makes it to appear that he takes notice of them, for he frequently gives us notice of them. Conscience is a standing monitor in our own bosoms, to put us in mind of our sins, and of the danger we are in by reason of them; and to stir us up to think of agreeing with our adversary in time. For this reason, they who resolve to go on in sin, and to have peace (such as it is) though they go on,—do all they can to stifle the suggestions of their own consciences; and turn a deaf ear to them; as those who are in debt avoid them by whom they are dunned, and keep out of their way. But sooner or later conscience will be heard, and will force sinners to say as Joseph's brethren did long after they had contracted the debt: *We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*[f]

Afflictions are messengers sent to us on this errand, to remind us of our debts, by awaking our consciences, and setting our sins in order before us: when bitter things were written against us, it is with this design, to make us possess our iniquities.[g] When God distrains upon our comforts, and removes them from us, it is to remind us of the arrears of our rent. *Art thou come to call my sin to my remembrance,*[h] (said the widow of Sarepta) *and to slay my son?* These sharp methods, which God takes to put us in mind of our sins, are intimations how severe the reckoning will be, if we never take care to get them pardoned.

(5.) *Death will shortly arrest us for these debts,* to bring us to an account. It is a Serjeant, whose office is to require the soul, to strip it of the body, and to bring it to him who gave it, and to whom it is accountable. The authority of this officer is not to be disputed, nor his power resisted. When we are summoned by death to come to an account, we shall find there is no discharge in that war,[i] no remedy, but we must yield. *The wages of sin is death,*[k] and its constant attendant ever since it first entered.[l] Death is our discharge from other debts; in the grave the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor,[m] but it lays us more open than ever to these debts, for "*after death the judgment.*" It is a maxim in our law, *Actio moritur cum personæ,—The action dies with the person:* but it will be of no use to us in this case, for God, the creditor, never dies,—and sinners, the debtors, are by death fetched in to appear before him.

(6.) *A day of reckoning will come,* and the day is fixed. As sure as we see *this* day, we shall see *that* day, when every man must give an account of himself unto God,[n] *and every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing.*[o] The young man who indulges himself in carnal mirth and sensual pleasures, is told that *for all these things God shall bring him into judgment.*[p] Though it is after a long time, yet it is in the set time, that the Lord of the servants, to whom the talents were committed, comes and reckons with them.[q] The God to whom we stand indebted, is one with whom we now have to do;[r] for we live upon him, and subsist by him, and have continual business with him, which should make it the more uneasy to us to think of lying under his displeasure. But that is not all, he is one πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος (as some read those words) *to whom for us there is a reckoning;* we now have an account *with* him, and must shortly give up our account *to* him. How careful should we be so to judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord;[s] so to state our accounts, and balance them with the blood of Christ, that when the day of reckoning comes, we may give up our account with joy, and not with grief?[t]

(7.) *Hell is the prison* into which those debtors will at length be cast, who took no care to make their peace, and there are the tormentors to which they will be delivered.[u] This our Saviour gives as a reason why we should agree with our adversary quickly, while we are in the way, because, if the matter be left to run on, we shall be delivered to the judge, to the officer,[w] to him who has the power of death; and so be cast into prison, into *chains of darkness,* a prison, the miseries of which are *endless* and *easeless.* It is a pit in which there is no water, not the least mixture or allay of comfort, not a drop of water, so much as to cool the tongue.[x] Some prisoners for debt live so merily, that one would think their prisons were designed for their protection rather than their punishment: but hell is no such prison; there is nothing there but *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,* and the more for the many fair warnings given those prisoners not to come into that place of torment. It is a pit out of which there is no redemption; the debtor shall not depart thence till he has paid

[a] 1 Pet. 1. 18. [b] Acts 8. 20. [c] Ps. 49. 6, 7. [d] Job 9. 33. [e] Rev. 5. 5. [f] Gen. 42. 21. [g] Job 13. 26. [h] 1 Kings 17. 18. [i] Ecc. 8. 8. [k] Rom. 6. 23. [l] Rom. 5. 12. [m] Job 3. 18. [n] Rom. 14. 12. [o] Ecc. 12. 14. [p] Ecc. 11. 9. [q] Mat. 25. 19. [r] Heb. 4. 13. [s] 1 Cor. 11. 31. [t] Heb. 13. 17. [u] Mat. 18. 34. [w] Mat. 5. 25. [x] Luke 16. 24.

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the last mite, which will never be, no not during the endless ages of eternity.

And now, sirs, what say you to these things? You are many of you great dealers in the world; what a consternation would you be in, if upon casting up your books, you should discover yourselves to be in debt a great deal more than you are worth? You see you are so to God, and does it make no impression upon you? Are you in no care, no concern about it? Is all I have said to you for your conviction of sin, and of your misery and danger because of sin, but as a tale that is told? If so, all I have to say concerning the pardon of sin, will be but *as a lovely song of one that can play well on an instrument.* But I trust you have laid, and will lay these things to heart, that the debt of sin is really a burthen to you, under which you labour, and are heavy laden; and if so, the doctrine of the remission of sins will be to you *glad tidings of great joy,* and as *life from the dead.* Nor would I have taken this pains to shew you your sins—if your case had been desperate, and I could not at the same time have shewed you the great salvation from sin, which the Redeemer has wrought out by bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

II. The sins we are to repent of, being our debts to God,—*the mercy we are to pray for is the forgiveness of these debts.* It is to God we are indebted, and therefore to him we must address ourselves for a discharge from the debt: for none can forgive sins, but God only, and therefore to him only must we go for that forgiveness. Having opened the wound, and shewed you how dangerous it is, you will be ready to ask, *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?* Yes, blessed be God, there is. The same messengers that God sends to put you in mind of your debts, are appointed to put you in the way of obtaining the remission of them: and this is that which, in Christ's name, is preached to all nations;—it is now preached to you.

1. Let us inquire, *what is included in this mercy* of the forgiveness of sin as a debt, and what steps God graciously takes therein toward us, when we repent, and return, and believe the Gospel. He acts as a merciful and compassionate creditor toward a poor debtor who lies at his mercy.

(1.) He stays process, and suffers not the law to have its course. Judgment is given against us; but execution is not taken out upon the judgment. The sinner is arrested by his own conscience as a debtor, and cries out against himself, *I have sinned,* and deserve to die. But pardoning mercy unties the knot between sin and death, and says, as Nathan to David, *The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die;*[a] thou shalt not come into condemnation, thine iniquity is become thy grief and shame, and therefore fear not, it shall not be thy ruin. Thou shalt not have all thou hast seized on, thou shalt not go to prison, as thou deservest. The debt shall not be laid to thy charge.

The sinner is arrested by affliction, it may be, as Elihu's penitent is; and is alarmed by it to expect a much sorer punishment: *He is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain;*[a] and then, under the sense of guilt and dread of wrath, counts upon nothing else but that his life shall go to the destroyers:[b] but he has a friend with *him, an interpreter, one among a thousand,*[c] who shews him—God's uprightness; his hatred of sin; and yet his readiness to pardon sinners. This he begins to give heed to, and take hold of, and thinks of returning to God, as the prodigal to his father's house; and then *he is gracious to him;*[d] meets him in his return, and says, *Deliver him from going down to the pit:* Let him be discharged from these pains, from these terrors, for *I have found a ransom;* a ransom for the soul. The sinner has said unto God, *Do not condemn me;*[e] and God has said, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*[f] They in their repentings condemn themselves; men in their reproaches condemn them; and it cannot be denied, but that there is that in them which deserves condemnation. But *it is God that justifies,* and then *who is he that shall condemn?* Christ died, and therefore the believer shall not; he is afflicted and chastened of the Lord, but he shall not be condemned with the world[g] that lies under the curse.

Well, this is is a good step toward the forgiving of the debt; now there begins to be hope in Israel concerning this thing; herein appears the divine pity and compassion, God's slowness to anger, and readiness to shew mercy; and this long suffering of the Lord is salvation:[h] but the proceedings may perhaps be stopt for the present, and yet may be revived another time; a judgment that has long lain dormant may come against a man when he least thinks of it, and therefore God in forgiving these debts goes farther; for,

(2.) He *cancels the bond,* vacates the judgment, and disannuls the hand-writing that was against us, that was contrary to us, and takes it out of the way.[i] He pardons sin thoroughly and fully, so as to remember it no more[k] against the sinner. He casts it behind his back,[l] as that which he is determined never more to inquire after; casts it into the depths of the sea,[m] as that which shall never more appear or come to light, as it might at low water, if it were cast near the shore side. The iniquity of Jacob shall be sought for and not be found;[n] therefore God is said to blot out[o] the iniquities of poor penitents, as the memorandum of a debt is blotted out when it is paid or pardoned; he not only crosses the book, which leaves it legible, but blots it out, not to be read; for so is the promise to a true penitent, *All his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be mentioned unto him,*[p] he shall not be so much as upbraided with them. It is *blotted out as a cloud, as a thick cloud* by the heat of the sun; it is *vanished,* and there appears not the least remainder of it. The transgression is removed from the transgressors

[a] 2 Sam. 12. 13.

[a] Job 33. 19. [b] Job 33. 22. [c] Job 33. 23. [d] Job 33. 24. [e] Job 10. 2. [f] Rom. 8. 1. [g] 1 Cor. 11. 32. [h] 2 Pet. 3. 15. [i] Col. 2. 14. [k] Heb. 8. 12. [l] Isa. 38. 17. [m] Mic. 7. 19. [n] Jer. 50. 20. [o] Isa. 43. 25. [p] Ezek. 18. 22.

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as far as the east is from the west.[a] These and many the like expressions give us abundant assurance that the sin once pardoned shall not rise up in judgment against the sinner another day; and give us abundant occasion to say, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity!*

Well, this secures the life, and happiness, and eternal welfare of the penitent believer: but still he may want present comfort. The bond may be cancelled, and he not know it; the sentence of absolution passed, and yet he not hear the voice of joy and gladness;[b] so that the broken bones are still complaining: therefore God is pleased many times to carry this act of grace on yet further.

(3.) He gives an acquittance, and delivers it by his Spirit into the believer's hand, speaking peace to him, filling him with comfort, arising from a sense of his justification, and the blessed tokens and pledges of it. When he says, *Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*;[c] (as he spake comfortably unto Zion, saying, Thy warfare is accomplished, thine iniquity is pardoned;)[d] then he gives up the bond cancelled, to the unspeakable satisfaction of the penitent. We read of a woman who had been a sinner, a notorious sinner, who, upon her repentance, had much forgiven her, and shewed it by her loving much;[e] yet afterwards Christ not only said OF her, *Her sins which are many are forgiven*, but turned and said TO her, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, and *Thy faith hath saved thee*, to set forth this further act of divine favour, in causing us to hear God's loving kindness, and to taste that he is gracious.

Well, blessed, thrice blessed are they whose iniquities are thus forgiven, and to whom they are not imputed; who by their own experience of the breaking of the power of sin in them, are made to know that the guilt of sin is removed; and to whom it appears, by their being reconciled to God, and to his whole will, that God is in Christ reconciled to them. But may it be hoped that these criminals shall not only be pardoned, but preferred, and made favourites again? Yes, to complete the mercy, he not only forgives the debts we have contracted; but,

(4.) He condescends to deal with us again, and to admit us into covenant and communion with himself. Though we have gone behind hand in our rent, he remits the arrears, and continues us his tenants; though we have buried and wasted our talents, yet he continues us in his service, and intrusts us with more. Those we have been great losers by, though we may forgive them, yet we do not forget them, nor care for trusting them again. But in this, as in other things, the God with whom we have to do, is *God and not Man;* he *forgives* and *forgets*, and yet will be no loser in his glory by forgiving. Lord! what is man, that he should be thus regarded? that he should not only be delivered from going down to the pit, but that his life should see the light,[f] the eternal light, and the paths that lead to it. When we pray that God would forgive us our debts, we pray not only that we may not be rejected, but that we may be accepted in the Beloved, according to the riches of that grace wherein he has abounded toward us;[a] that with the remission of sins, we may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,[b] the earnest of the Spirit, and *that*, at length, which it is the earnest of, even an inheritance among all them who are sanctified; for whom he justified them he glorified.

2. Having seen how much is included in God's forgiving us our debts, because it is so great a favour, that we may be tempted to think it too much for such worthless unworthy creatures as we are to expect, let us next inquire, *what ground we have to hope for it:* how is it that a God infinitely just and holy, should be thus readily reconciled to a guilty and polluted sinner upon his repenting? If we owe a great sum of money to a man like ourselves, we could not have the face to go to him, and desire him to remit it, when we have not wherewithal to make any composition with him. Why should not a just debt be paid? and if nothing is to be had, why should not the debtor be sold?[c] *Currat lex—and the law take its course?* What reason have we to expect that the lawful captive should be delivered?[d] Blessed be God we may expect it; we may be sure of it, if we repent and believe the Gospel.

(1.) We may ground our expectations upon the *goodness of his nature.* This is so much his glory, that by it he has proclaimed his name not only *gracious and merciful* in general, but in this particular instance, so that he forgives iniquity, transgression and sin;[e] and therefore pardons the sin, because he desires not nor delights in the ruin of the sinner. How vast were the compassions of that prince in the parable, which moved him to forgive so great a debt, as that of ten thousand talents![f] And yet as heaven is high above the earth, so do the divine compassions exceed those; Israel of old found them so, when their transgressions were so very numerous, so very heinous; yet he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. Merciful men will sometimes lend, hoping for nothing again; and where nothing is to be had, will not be rigorous nor extreme in demanding their right: and shall not the Father of Mercies take pity on the miserable? He who is good, and therefore ready to forgive; merciful and gracious,[g] and therefore removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west.[h] He is a God with whom that plea is of force, *What profit is there in my blood?* And whose soul was grieved for the misery of Israel,[i] though they brought it upon themselves by their own sin and folly.

Well, it is true that God is infinitely good, and we have abundant reason to hope in his mercy, and abundant encouragement to plead it with him; but it is as true that he is just and righteous, that he is the great governor of the world, and the honour of his

[a] Ps. 103. 12. [b] Ps. 51. 8. [c] Mat. 9 2. [d] Isa. 40. 2. [e] Luke 7. 47, 48. [f] Job 33. 28.

[a] Eph. 1. 6, 7. [b] Acts 2. 38. [c] Mat. 18. 25. [d] Isa. 49. 24. [e] Ezek. 34. 6, 7. [f] Mat. 18. 27. [g] Ps. 86. 5. [h] Ps. 103. 8, 12. [i] Judg. 10. 16.

government

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government must be maintained; his injured justice calls for satisfaction, and one attribute of his shall not be glorified by the damage and reproach of another. It is true, he is merciful, and yet there is a world of angels who lie, and are like to lie for ever, under the pouring out of the full vials of his wrath: and therefore, though his goodness and mercy, as it is revealed to us in the Scripture, is our great encouragement; yet,

(2.) We are to ground our expectations upon the *mediation of our Lord Jesus;* therefore God forgives our debt, because Jesus Christ, by the blood of his cross, has made satisfaction for it, and given his life a ransom for our's: which is so far from lessening the freeness of that grace which forgives us, that it greatly magnifies it, for it was he himself who found the ransom,[a] it was he himself who gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins;[b] and herein more than in any thing he commended his love;[c] that he would not only forgive our debt, but put himself to such vast expence of blood and treasure, that he might do it so as to secure, nay to declare his righteousness; *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness;* (such an emphasis does the apostle lay upon this;) that he might be not only merciful but just, and the justifier of them who believe in Jesus.[d] If sinners are debtors, it is Christ who is their surety, upon the account of whose satisfaction their debt is forgiven: Christ is called *The surety of the covenant;*[e] not that he was originally bound in the bond with us, as if it were implied in the penalty annexed to the covenant of innocency, which was, *Thou shalt surely die,* that is, *Thou or thy surety.* No, Christ's undertaking supposes us already debtors, and under arrest for the debt; so that Christ comes in rather as bail to the action, than as a secondary undertaker from the beginning. His office as Mediator takes it for granted, that God and man are at variance, for a *mediator is not of one;*[f] we are looked upon as under the law, that is, under the curse, when Christ to redeem us makes himself sin and a curse for us.[g] Let us see how this is done.

[1.] Our Lord Jesus voluntarily undertook to be a surety for us: pitying our deplorable case, and concerned for his father's injured honour, that divine justice might be satisfied, and yet sinners saved,—he offered to make his own soul a sacrifice for sin, and himself a propitiation, answering the demands of the law, as the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, exactly answered the dimensions of the ark. The Father intrusted him with this great piece of service, and he voluntarily and cheerfully consented to it: he said, *Lo, I come,* and not only did this will of God, but delighted to do it;[h] drawn to it, and held to it, with no other cords but those of his own love, and the agreeableness of his undertaking to his Father's commandment.

Christ had no debt of his own to pay: for he always did those things that pleased his Father. Such was the dignity of his person, and such the value of the price he paid, that he had wherewithal to make full satisfaction, and to pay this debt, even to the last mite. He said: *Upon me be the curse,* my Father. Thus he became bound for us: as Paul for Onesimus to Philemon his master: If *he have wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, I Paul have written it with my own hand*—the blessed Jesus has written it with his own BLOOD—*I will repay it.*[a] And this undertaking of Christ's shall redound more to the glory of God, even to the glory of his justice, than the damnation of these sinners would have done; for if they had perished, the righteousness of God would have been, to eternity, but *in the satisfying:* but now, by the merit of Christ's death, it is once for all, *satisfied,* and reconciliation made for iniquity. Thus he *restored that which he took not away.*[b]

Let us pause a little, and think with wonder and thankfulness of this glorious undertaking. How great was that kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, which set this work going! How admirable the wisdom that contrived it! *The wisdom of God in a mystery.*[c] Let every crown be thrown at the Redeemer's feet, and every song sung to his praise. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto God,*[d] as a surety for us? It is he who speaks in righteousness, and will never unsay what he has said, for he is mighty to save,[e]—he is almighty.

[2.] Having made himself a surety for us, he made full satisfaction to divine justice for our debt, by the blood of his cross. He poured out his soul unto death,[f] not only for our good, but in our stead; and paid, though not the *Idem—the same,* that we should have paid, yet the *Tantundem—the equivalent,* that which was more than equivalent; so that in him God might be said to have received double for all our sins,[g] so much was the Father glorified in him.

God charged the debt upon him, acccording to his undertaking. Those he undertook for being insolvent, the action was brought against him; and God laid upon him the iniquity of us all;[h] made it all to *meet upon him* (so the word is,) as the sins of all Israel were made to meet upon the head of the goat, that on the day of atonement was to be sent into a land of forgetfulness.[i] Solomon says, *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it;* shall be broken by it; our Lord Jesus being surety for us who were strangers and foreigners, he smarted for it;[k] for it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief.[l]

He voluntarily and freely paid the debt; his life was not forced from him, but he laid it down of himself.[m] The satisfaction was to be made *to God in his* HONOUR; for in that he had been injured; and to that he had an eye, when he said, *Father, glorify thy name,*[n] take the satisfaction that is demanded. And it was to be made by *his death,* for without shedding of blood, that blood which is the life, there was no

[a] Job 33. 24. [b] 1 John 4. 10. [c] Rom. 5. 8. [d] Rom. 3. 25, 26. [e] Heb. 7. 22. [f] Gal. 3. 20. [g] Gal. 3. 10, 16. [h] Ps. 40. 7.

[a] Phil. 18. 19. [b] Ps. 69. 4. [c] 1 Cor. 2. 7. [d] Jer. 30. 21. [e] Isa. 63. 1. [f] Isa. 53. 12. [g] Isa. 40. 2. [h] Isa. 53. 6. [i] Lev. 16. 21. [k] Prov. 11. 15. [l] Isa. 53. 10. [m] John 10. 18. [n] John 12. 28.

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remission; and, therefore, he laid down his life with these words: *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit;*[a] that life, that soul, which is to be given as a ransom for many, I here give to thee; I put it into thy hands, as the surety pays the debt into the hands of the creditor, the proper person to receive it.

[3.] The satisfaction which Christ made for our sins was graciously accepted, and God was so well pleased in him,[b] as to be well pleased with us in him. This was a further act of divine grace; for in strict justice it might have been insisted on that the law should have had its course against the sinners themselves. Christ intimated, that pursuant to the counsels of peace,[c] which were between the Father and him, concerning man's redemption, his arrest should be our discharge, when he said to those who seized him in the garden; *If ye seek me, let these go their way.*[d] He delivered up himself to suffer and die, that we might be delivered from wrath and ruin, and divine justice agreed to it.

In token of the acceptance of his satisfaction, God raised him from the dead, sent an angel to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and so to release the prisoner; which he did, and then sat upon it[e] in triumph, signifying that then death had no more dominion over him, but was perfectly conquered and abolished. But are we certain that he had a fair discharge? Yes, for he was often seen alive, seen at liberty, and the Father having raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, which would have been no place for him, if he had not fully made good his undertaking. Christ's death being the payment of our debt, for he was delivered for our offences, his resurrection was the taking out of our acquittance, for he rose again for our justification.[f] Therefore the apostle lays the stress of our faith, hope and comfort upon this, *Who is he that shall condemn?* Who can take out an execution against us? *It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again:*[g] by which it appears that his dying for us was accepted, especially since he now is even at the right hand of God making intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction; and it is an effectual intercession, for the Father hears him always.

[4.] The satisfaction being accepted, a release of debts is published and proclaimed in the everlasting Gospel to all penitent and obedient believers. Full assurance is given them that their sins shall be pardoned, and they shall be made accepted in the Beloved. The preaching of the Gospel is called the *proclaiming of the acceptable year of the Lord,*[h] in allusion to — the year of release, which was every seventh; and, especially, to the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth;[i] when all debts were discharged, mortgaged possessions restored, and all incumbrances on men's estates taken off: And this was proclaimed by sound of trumpet in the evening of the day of atonement, to signify, that upon the account of the atonement which Christ was to make, poor sinners should be delivered from that wrath and curse to which they were bound over, and brought into the glorious liberty of God's children, and restored to all the glorious privileges and inheritances of free-born Israelites. *Blessed is the people that hear this joyful sound,*[a] the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel publishing this release, this act of indemnity, *Liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound.*

These glad tidings of great joy are to be brought to all people; whoever will come and take the benefit of this general release, and sue out a particular discharge upon it, on very easy and unexceptionable terms; for the Gospel excludes none, who do not by their own wilful impenitence and unbelief exclude themselves. Nay, we have not only this discharge offered us, but we are courted, and earnestly invited to come in and accept of it. God having in Christ laid a foundation for the reconciling the world unto himself, has sent his ambassadors, not only to propose the matter to us, but to beseech us, nay, God does by them *beseech us to be reconciled to God,*[b] though it had better become us to beseech him first to be reconciled to us.

[5.] It is upon the account of Christ's satisfaction, that our sins are actually pardoned upon our repenting and believing; and that is it which we are to plead with God, and to rely upon as a valid plea in our prayers to God for the forgiveness of our debts. In *his* righteousness we must appear before God; making mention of that, even of that only, and not thinking to justify ourselves.[c] It is through his blood, that we have redemption, even the remission of sins,[d] for that is it which having been shed for us without the city, speaks for us within the veil, and speaks better things than that of Abel;[e] and he still appears *in the midst of the throne,* a Lamb *as it had been slain,*[f] newly slain, and bleeding afresh, to intimate the constant perpetual virtue of his satisfaction, and the continual advantage which believers have and may have by it.

In praying for the forgiveness of our sins, we must have an eye to Christ as our Redeemer; the Redeemer of our persons that were in bondage, and of our inheritance which was in mortgage He is our *Goel,* Job calls him so, and the Prophets often: It is the title of the next *kinsman;* who by the law was to redeem the possession which his brother sold.[g] Christ having taken our nature upon him, is become our kinsman, and he is the next kinsman who is able to redeem, so that to him the right of redemption does belong: and he has graciously condescended to do the kinsman's part; so that we return to our inheritance again, from which we had otherwise been for ever banished; and have the earnest of it until the complete redemption of the purchased possession.[h] We must also in a particular manner have an eye to his death as our ran-

[a] Luke 23. 45. [b] Mat. 17. 5. [c] Zech. 6. 13. [d] John 18. 8. [e] Mat. 28. 2. [f] Rom. 4. 25. [g] Rom. 8. 34. [h] Luke 4. 19. [i] Lev. 25. 9, 10.

[a] Ps. 89. 15. [b] 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. [c] Ps. 71. 16. [d] Eph. 1. 7. [e] Heb. 12. 24. [f] Rev. 5. 6. [g] Lev. 25. 25. [h] Eph. 1. 14.

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som: for the sake of which, we are delivered from going down to the pit.[a] Very fitly therefore is that sacrament which is the memorial of his death, made the seal of our pardon.

3. Having shewed you—how sad your case is upon the account of sin; and what a dangerous debt it is; and yet that your case is not desperate, but there is hope for you through grace,—I promise myself you will now be willing and glad to hear, *what is expected and required from you*, that you may obtain this favour, and that your debts may be forgiven. Christ, as a surety for us has made satisfaction; but what must we do that we may have an interest in that satisfaction? It is true that atonement is made for sin, and is accepted as sufficient to ground a treaty of peace upon; and yet it is as true, that multitudes perish eternally under the load of this debt, and continue in their captivity, notwithstanding the proclamation of liberty. It therefore concerns us all to see to it, that we be duly qualified according to the tenor of the New Covenant for the comforts of a sealed pardon, and a settled peace; and that we may be so,

(1) We must *confess the debt*, with a humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart. We must own ourselves guilty before God, and concluded under sin. Let not those expect to prosper, or recover themselves from under this load, who cover their sins; for they, and they only, who confess and forsake them, shall find mercy.[b] We are charged as debtors, and must not go about to deny the debt, no, nor to excuse or extenuate it; but be ready to acknowledge that we have sinned, and have perverted that which was right, and it profited us not;[c] that we have been both unjust to God, and injurious to ourselves, as debtors are.

In confessing the debt we must be particular; must not only, own that we are sinners, but, in *this* and *the other* instance, we have sinned—not for information to God, he knows our sins better than we ourselves know them; but for humiliation and warning to ourselves. *I have sinned* (says David) *and have done this evil.*[d] *I have sinned* (says Achan) *and thus and thus have I done.*[e] And the more particular we are in the acknowledgment of sin, the more comfort we may expect to have in the sense of the pardon. If I can say, "*This* sin I confessed,—I trust, through grace, *this* sin is pardoned, and shall not be laid to my charge. But then this confession of sin, must be accompanied with true remorse and godly sorrow for it; we must bewail it, and bemoan ourselves because of it; must give glory to God, and take shame to ourselves in making this confession: And—as the prodigal—when we own we have sinned against God, we must own, that we are no more worthy to be called his children; nay, that it were a righteous thing with him to deliver us to the tormentors. And if we thus judge ourselves, we shall not be judged.

(2.) We must *acknowledge a judgment* of all-we-have to our Lord Jesus, who has been thus kind to satisfy for our debt. This is one proper act of faith,—To resign, surrender, and give up ourselves, our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit; all we are, have, and can do; to be under the direction and government of his word and Spirit, to be devoted to his honour, employed in his service, and disposed of at his will. Our own selves we must give unto the Lord,[a] and to us to live must be Christ: our all must be put into his hands, must be laid at his feet. It is indeed a very poor counter-security, but such as it is he requires it, and is pleased to accept of it, provided we be sincere and faithful in the surrender.

There is good reason why we should do this; for therefore he delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him;[b] therefore redeemed us, that we might be to him a *peculiar* people, *purified* from sinful works, and *zealous of good works.*[c] Nor can we do better for ourselves, than to give up ourselves entirely to Christ; we are never *more our own*, than when we are *wholly his.* If we resign ourselves to him, it is in trust for the securing of ourselves, and our own true welfare, that we may not again be our own ruin. Thus will he complete his kindness to us, if it be not our own fault: he who was our surety to save us from perishing under the load of guilt we had contracted, will be our trustee, to save us from falling again under the like load; for he has said, *Sin shall not have dominion over you.*[d] Thus will he perfect all that which concerns us;[e] and if we commit ourselves and our all to him, we shall find he is able to keep what we have committed unto him against that day, and he will be found a faithful trustee.

(3.) We must *give to Christ the honour* of our pardon, by relying entirely on his righteousness as our plea for it; acknowledging that other foundation of hope can no man lay,[f] and other fountain of joy can no man open. We must for ever disclaim all dependence upon our own sufficiency, and with the highest satisfaction rest upon Christ only as a complete and all-sufficient Saviour. The great concerns of our immortal souls; our reconciliation to God, and our felicity in him: we must lodge in his hands, by a submission not only to his government, as the *Lord our Ruler*, but to his grace, as *The Lord our Righteousness*, made of God to us *righteousness*,[g] that we might be *made the righteousness of God in him.*[h] For, thus, boasting is for ever excluded, and he that glories must glory in the Lord.

(4.) We must *study what we shall render to him who has loved us, who has so loved us.* Let us mention it to his praise, take all occasions to speak of that great love, wherewith he loved us, in purchasing for us the remission of that great debt. We cannot expect an interest in Christ and his righteousness, unless we be willing to own our obligations to him, as those who are sensible, the bonds he has loosed us from[i] bind us closely and constantly to him.

(5.) We must *engage ourselves for the future*;—that we will render to God the things that are his, and be

[a] Job 33. 24. [b] Prov. 28. 13. [c] Job 33. 27. [d] Ps. 51. 4. [e] Josh. 7. 20.

[a] 2 Cor. 8. 5. [b] Luke 1. 74, 75. [c] Titus 2. 14. [d] Ps. 138. 8. [e] 2 Tim. 1. 12. [f] 1 Cor. 3. 11. [g] 1 Cor. 1. 30. [h] 2 Cor. 5. 21. [i] Ps. 116. 16.

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careful not to run in debt again. If we would find mercy, we must not only confess our sins, but forsake them, and keep close to the way of our duty. Ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, are the commanded fruits of repentance, and without those we cannot expect the promised fruits of it. Has God graciously remitted us our arrears, let us pay our rent more punctually for time to come. Every day is a rent-day with us, and we must be careful, by filling up time with duty, and doing the work of every day in its day, to pay our rent duly; and wherein we come short, balance our accounts with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin,[a] by a renewed application of the virtue of that to our souls; and thus keep touch* with him who is, and ever will be faithful to us. Have we wasted our talents,[b] and so contracted debt, and yet are we still intrusted with them? Let us henceforth be more diligent in the improvement of them, that by the blessing and grace of our Master, our five talents may be made other five, and we may have our Master's approbation, and enter at length into his joy. And let us always remember, that God speaks peace to his people, and to his saints, on this condition, that they do not return again to folly.[c]

(6.) Our forgiving others is made the indispensible condition of our being forgiven of God. Nothing can be more express than this, *If we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father who is in Heaven forgive us ours.*[d] For God will have his children to be like him, merciful as he is merciful, and good as he is, even to the evil and unthankful. That servant in the parable, who was rigorous in exacting a small debt from his fellow-servant, by that instance of the hardness of his heart made it to appear, that he was never truly humbled for his own debt to his Lord, that great debt, nor ever truly sensible of his Lord's kindness to him in forgiving it; and therefore his repentance being counterfeit, his pardon was never ratified, but he was delivered to the tormentors, as a wicked servant.[e]

Let this consideration prevail to pacify the most provoked, and molify the most severe; let it not only suppress every root of bitterness in us, but extirpate it and pluck it up: let us not harbour the least thoughts of malice and revenge against those who have been any way injurious to us, nor render to any evil for evil, nor be extreme to mark what is done amiss against us; for *What then shall we do, when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what shall we answer him?*[f]

And now, (brethren) having very briefly and plainly opened to you this great concern that lies between you and God, I must leave it to you to make the application of what has been said, each of you to yourselves; nay, I hope you have been applying it as we have gone along; for these are things of which none of us can say, They belong not to us. Leave it to you, did I say!—I leave it with God by his Spirit to apply it to all your consciences, that you may be *delivered into the mold* of these great truths. I shall therefore close only with a few words of exhortation upon the whole matter.

1. Do not delay to come to an account with your own consciences, but search diligently and impartially, that you may see how matters stand between you and God. *Consider your ways,*[a] *search and try them.*[b] Commune with your own hearts, saying, *What have I done?* What have I done amiss? Take an account of your debts to God, as all prudent tradesmen do of their debts to those with whom they deal. Think how many the particulars are, how great the sum total is, and what circumstances have enhanced the debt, and run it up to a great height; how exceeding sinful your sins have been, how exceeding hateful to God, and hurtful to yourselves. Put that question to yourselves which the unjust steward put to his Lord's debtors, *How much owest thou unto my Lord?* and tell the truth as they did, for themselves; and do not think to impose upon God, by making the matter better than it is; as the steward did for them, writing fifty for an hundred.[c]

2. Be thoroughly convinced of your misery and danger by reason of sin; see process ready to be taken out against you, and consider what is to be done: it is no time to trifle, when all you have is ready to be seized, and if the present season be slipped, you know not how soon the things that belong to your peace may be for ever hid from your eyes, and you will rue your carelessness when it is too late to retrieve what you have lost by it.

3. Agree with your adversary quickly while you are in the way with him;[d] make your peace with God, and do it with all speed. You need not *send to desire conditions of peace,*[e] they are offered to you, if you will but accept of them; and they are not only easy but very advantageous. Take the advice which Solomon gives to his Son who is ensnared in Suretyship, *Do this, my son,* that thou mayest deliver thyself, go humble thyself, and thereby thou wilt not only pacify an adversary, but make sure a friend: and give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, till thou hast done this.[f]

4. In order to the making of your peace with God, make-sure your interest in Jesus Christ, and make use of him daily for that purpose: retain him of counsel for you in this great cause on which your all depends, and let him be not only your plea but your pleader, for that is his office; *If any man sin,* and so run into debt, *we have an advocate with the Father,*[g] who is ready to appear for us, and attends continually to this very thing. Be advised by him, as the client is by his counsel, and then refer yourselves to him, put your case into his hand and say, *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me,* when I have nothing to say for myself.

5. Renew

* An allusion to an ancient way of keeping accounts, by notching two pieces of wood, of which each of the parties keeps one. By making the *tallies touch*, it is seen whether the accounts correspond; and they are brought in contact, and notched alike at every reckoning and balance. Editor.

[a] 1 John 1. 7. [b] Mat. 25. 20. [c] Ps. 85. 8. [d] Mat. 6. 14, 15. [e] Mat. 18. 32, 34. [f] Job. 31. 14.

[a] Hag. 1. 5. [b] Lam. 3. 40. [c] Luke 16. 5, 6. [d] Mat. 5. 25. [e] Luke 14. 32. [f] Pro. 6. 3, 4. [g] 1 John 2. 1.

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5. Renew your repentance every day for your sins of daily infirmity, and be earnest with God in prayer for the pardon of them. Hereby we give—to God the glory of his never-failing mercy, which abundantly pardons; and to Christ the glory of his inexhaustible merit and grace; and keep ourselves continually easy by leaving no guilt to lie upon the conscience unrepented of. "Even reckonings (we say) make long friends." And the more we are humbled for our daily sins, and the more we see of our obligation to Christ, and his merit, for the pardon of them, the more watchful we shall be against them, and the more careful to abstain from all appearances of evil, and approaches towards it.

Lastly, Let those to whom much is forgiven, love much.[a] We have all of us much forgiven us, it is a very *great debt* from which we have been discharged: Now it may be expected, that we should have our hearts accordingly enlarged in gratitude to him who *first* loved us, who *so* loved us, and gave himself for us, loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. How shall we express our love to him? What box of precious ointment shall we pour upon his head? What song of love shall we sing to his praise? O that the love of Christ may constrain us[a] to love him, and live to him, who loved us and died for us; to be faithful and constant in our love to him, who having loved his own which were in the world, loveth them unto the end,[b] and will love them all at length into the world of everlasting love.

[a] Luke 7. 42, 43.

[a] 2 Cor. 5. 14. [b] John 13. 1.

HOPE AND FEAR BALANCED:

IN A

SERMON,

Preached at the Tuesday-Lecture, at Salters' Hall, July 24, 1711.

PSALM 147. 11.

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

THE dignity and privilege of the righteous, who are God's favourites, here appear bright and blessed; very blessed, very bright; and to an eye of faith, the lustre of them far exceed even that of crowns and coronets; though their honour like their life is hidden,[a] and, therefore, the world knows them not.[b] What can prove them more great, what more happy than this, that the God of heaven *takes pleasure* in them?

That God should be *at peace* with any of the children of men, (that degenerate, guilty, and obnoxious race,) is more than we could have expected, considering his justice and holiness; but that he should *take pleasure* in them, should set them apart for himself,[c] gather them in his arms, carry them in his bosom,[d] value them as his peculiar treasure, and make them up as his jewels;[e] this is that which eternity itself will be little enough, and short enough, to be spent in the thankful admiration of. *Lord, what is man that thou shouldst thus magnify him, and set thine heart upon him!*

God takes pleasure in his saints, that is, in his own image upon them: *He rejoiceth in the work of his own hands.*[a] Not that God is capable of receiving any addition to the infinite complacency he takes in himself, and in his own perfections, from any creature; but thus he is pleased to express the favour he bears to his chosen.[b] He *delights not in the strength of a horse,* (so it is said in the foregoing verse,) he *taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*[c] Princes and great men take delight in these both for their entertainment; they divert themselves with horse races and footraces; and for their service, they make use of horse guards and foot guards, bring into the field squadrons of horse and batallions of foot, and review their troops with a great deal of satisfaction. But does God do so? No, *he takes pleasure in them that fear him:* he *delights to behold the righteous,*[d] delights to converse with them, invites them into fellowship with himself, and with them his secret is. He delights to employ them, and makes them the instruments of his glory: and herein he

[a] Col. 3. 3. [b] 1 John 3. 1. [c] Ps. 4. 3. [d] Isa. 40. 11. [e] Mal. 3. 17.

[a] Ps. 104. 31. [b] Ps. 106. 4, 5. [c] Ps. 147. 10. [d] Ps. 11. 7.

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he magnifies himself, that he has *pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.*[a]

But the CHARACTER here given of God's favourites is THAT for the sake of which I chose this text, and, which I shall speak more largely to. They are such as both *fear God*, and *hope in his mercy*. The fear of God I know is often put for all religion; but it being here distinguished from a hope in his mercy, I chuse rather to understand it in a more limited sense, as signifying a dread of his majesty.

Fear and hope are passions of the mind so contrary the one to the other, that—with regard to the same object—it is strange they should meet in the same laudable character: yet here we see they do so, and it is the praise of the same persons, that they both fear God, and hope in him.

Whence we may gather this doctrine:

That in every concern that lies upon our hearts, we should, still endeavour to keep the balance even, between hope and fear.

We know how much the health of the body depends upon a due temperament of the humours, such as preserves any one from being predominant above the rest; and how much the safety and peace of the nations result from a *due* balance of trade and power, that no one grow too great for its neighbours: and, so, necessary is it to the health and welfare of our souls, that there be a due proportion maintained between their powers and passions, and that the one may always be a check upon the other, to keep it from running into extremes; as in these affections mentioned in the text. A holy fear of God must be a check upon our hope, to keep that from swelling into presumption; and a pious hope in God must be a check upon our fear, to keep that from sinking into despondency.

This balance, must, I say, by a wise and steady hand be kept even in every concern that lies upon our hearts, and that we have thoughts about. I shall enumerate those that are of greatest importance.

We must keep up both hope and fear:

I. As to the concerns of our souls, and our spiritual and eternal state.

II. As to our outward concerns, relating to the body, and the life that now is.

III. As to the public concerns of the church of God, and our own land and nation.

In reference to each of these: we must always study and strive to support that affection, whether it be hope or fear, which the present temper of our minds and circumstances of our case make necessary, to preserve us from an extreme.

I. Nothing certainly does so much *concern* us, and ought to lie so *near our hearts*, as—the *prosperity of our souls*; and their happiness, in the favour of God; and their fitness to serve him here, and enjoy him for ever. This certainly ought to be the chief and continual care of every man in this life,—To approve himself to an eternal God above him, and to prepare himself for an everlasting state before him. This is the concern, of the *better part*; and is of all other the most weighty concern. Now for the due managing of this concern, it is requisite that we *take our work before us*, and give each part of it its place and due proportion, so as that one devout affection may not intrench upon and exclude another. As the beauty of God's Being consists in the harmony of his attributes; so the beauty of his image on our souls consists in the harmony of our graces, and the concurrence of them all to the maintaining of our due subjection to God, and due government of ourselves.

In eternity, there is neither hope nor fear. In heaven, they are both lost in an endless fruition: glorified saints, as they are for ever *quiet from the fear of evil*, and out of the reach of it, so they have nothing more or better to hope for, than what they are already entered into the enjoyment of: *And what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for?*[a] In hell they are both lost in an endless despair: they have nothing to fear there, where they know the worst, and must *feel* to eternity what they would not *fear*; nor have they any thing to hope for, when the door of mercy is shut against them, and a great gulf fixed between them and all blessedness, never to be removed. But in our present state, there is and must be a mixture both of hope and fear; and we must keep up our communion with God, and do our duty to him by the seasonable exercises of both: and thus we must sing both of mercy and judgment, and *sing unto God* of both.[b]

1. We must keep up, both, *a holy dread of God, and a humble delight in him;* both a reverence of his majesty, with a fear of incurring his displeasure; and at the same time a joy in his love and grace, and an intire complacency in his beauty and bounty, and that benignity of his which is better than life.

Our affections toward God must correspond with the discoveries he has made of himself to us. As he has proclaimed his name for our instruction, so we must proclaim it to *his praise*. Now in God there is both every thing that is awful, and every thing that is amiable; and in his manifestations of himself he seems to have taken a delight in putting these together, and setting the one over against the other. When he makes himself known in his greatness, *as riding on the heavens, by his name JAH*,—he adds, in the next words, this instance of his goodness, that he is *a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge for the widows.*[c] Is he the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, and dwells in the holy place?[d] Yet we must know that with *this* man he will dwell, to *this* man he will look,—that is of a contrite and humble spirit.[e] And on the other hand, when he tells us how gracious he is in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,[f] he tells us presently how just he is also, that he will by no means clear the impenitently guilty.

Thus, therefore must we have an eye to him,—both as he is infinitely great, and greatly to be feared; and as he is infinitely good, and greatly to be loved. And as

[a] Ps. 35. 27.

[a] Rom. 8. 24. [b] Ps. 101. 1. [c] Ps. 68. 4, 5. [d] Isa. 57. 15. [e] Isa. 66. 1, 2. [f] Ex. 34. 6, 7.

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no *love* one degree short of *perfect* must *cast out all fear*;[a] so no fear in those who have received the Spirit of adoption must damp the *delight* which, as children, we must have in *our Father*.[b] We must both fear God's name, and love it; both fear the commandment, and love it. We must delight ourselves always in the Lord; and yet we must make him our fear and our dread,[c] and be in the fear of him every day, and all the day long. In the duties of religious worship, we must know our disparity; and in consideration of that we must serve him with reverence and godly fear,[d] because God, even our God, though he be a rejoicing light to those who serve him faithfully, yet he is a consuming fire to those who trifle with him: but we must also know our privilege, and draw near to him in full assurance of faith, and must serve the Lord with gladness.[e]

2. We must keep up, both, a *trembling for sin*, and a *triumphing in Christ*, as the *propitiation for sin*. We must be afraid of the curse, and the terrors of it; and yet must rejoice in the covenant, and the riches and graces of it. With one eye we must look at the fiery serpents, and see what danger we are in by our having been stung by them; but with the other eye we must look up to the brazen serpent[f] lifted up on the pole, and see what a fair way we are in of being helped and healed by looking to it. *Look unto me* (saith Christ) *and be ye saved.*

We must not, so, look upon the comforts of the Gospel,—as to forget the condemnation of the law, and that we are guilty before God, and liable to that condemnation: which we must be ever mindful of, that we may daily reflect with regret upon sin, and may be quickened to flee from the wrath to come, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before us; and that knowing the terrors of the Lord, we may be persuaded to stand in awe and not sin. And yet we must not so look upon the condemnation of the law, as to forget that we are under grace, and not under the law;[g] and that we have a Redeemer to rejoice in, and with an entire confidence to rely upon, who died to save his people from their sins. We must look upon sin, and be humbled, and be afraid of God's wrath; but at the same time we must look upon Christ, and be satisfied, and hope in his mercy.

3. We must keep up, both, *a jealousy of ourselves*, and of our own sincerity; and a *grateful thankful sense of God's grace in us*, and the workings of that grace. It is true, the heart of man is deceitful above all things,[h] and in nothing more so than in its judgment of itself. We are all apt to be partial in our own favours; to say *We are rich and encreased with goods*, when we do not know, or will not own, that we are wretched and miserable.[i] We have therefore reason to fear lest we should be mistaken, lest our graces should prove counterfeit, and we should be rejected as hypocrites at last. And O that those who live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, under the disguise of a religious profession, were awakened to see their mistake before the flames of hell awaken them! O that fearfulness would surprise those who, indeed, are hypocrites; and that the sinners in Zion were afraid; and that their vain hopes, which are built upon the sand, might be taken down before they are thrown down!

But let not those who fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, walk in darkness,—but trust in the name of the Lord, *and* stay themselves upon their God.[a] Let not those who, through grace, are brought to prefer the favour of God before the smiles of the world, and are more in care about the things that relate to the soul and eternity, than about those that have reference only to the body and time; let not their godly jealousy over themselves run into an extreme. Let them not be upon all occasions arraigning their evidences, and questioning, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?* Hearken to this, you that tremble at God's word, and are fearing continually every day.[b] How can you say you do not love God, when you cannot but say that you would not for all the world wilfully offend him, and that there is nothing you desire so much as to be in his favour, and in communion with him? And therefore, though you have no reason to trust in your own merit, yet you have a great deal of reason to hope in that mercy of God, which accepts the willingness of the spirit, and overlooks the weakness of the flesh.[c] Why should you wrong yourselves by bearing false witness against yourselves; as they do who make themselves poor, and yet have great riches?[d] And why should you wrong God, by robbing him of the honour of what he has wrought for you? It is true, we must not be proud of our graces, but we must be thankful for them; we must not pretend to justify ourselves to the covenant of innocency, for we are not innocent; yet we must not therefore reject the advantages of the covenant of grace, nor put from us the comforts that thence flow.

4. We must keep up, both, a *constant caution over our goings*, and a *constant confidence in the grace of God*. When we consider how weak we are; how apt to stumble in the way, and wander out of it, apt to tire, and apt to turn aside; we shall see cause enough to walk humbly with God. And yet when we consider how the promises of divine aids are adapted to our case in all the exigencies of it; how rich, how sure they are; and how certainly made good to all those who depend upon them, and by faith derive strength and wisdom from them; we shall see cause enough to walk boldly with God. He who walks uprightly,[e] walks with a good assurance, and may travel in the greatness of the strength of him who is mighty to save.

We have need to stand always upon our guard; as

[a] 1 John 4. 18. [b] Ps. 37. 4. [c] Isa. 8. 13. [d] Heb. 12. 28. [e] Heb. 10. 22. [f] John 3. 14. [g] Rom. 6. 14. [h] Jer. 17. 9. [i] Rev. 3. 17.

[a] Isa. 50. 10. [b] Isa. 51. 13. [c] Mat. 26. 41. [d] Pro. 13. 7. [e] Pro. 10. 9.

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knowing that our way lies through an enemy's country, where we have reason to expect that ambushes will be laid for us, and all the stratagems of war made use of to do us mischief. We have need to look well to our goings, and never so much as to *feed ourselves without fear,*[a] lest our *table* should *become a snare*;[b] nor walk abroad without trembling, lest under the green grass there should be a snake; lest for want of watchfulness we should be surprised by a sudden temptation; for want of resolution we should be over-powered by a violent temptation. *Happy is the man* who thus *feareth always,*[c] as seeing himself never out of the reach, no nor never out of the way of Satan's temptations, till he comes to heaven.

But still in the midst of this fear we must hope in God's mercy, that he will take our part against our spiritual enemies, will watch over us for good; will preserve our souls from sin, from every evil work, the only thing that can do them any real damage. What Christ said to St. Paul, when he was buffeted by a Messenger of Satan, he has said to all who, like him, fly to the mercy of God, and continue instant in prayer: *My grace is sufficient for thee,*[d] though thou hast no strength of thy own that is so. Infinite Wisdom knows what grace thy case calls for; and thou shalt have enough to secure the life, and happiness, of thy soul, from every thing that aims at its death and ruin. Be strong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his might: go forth, and go on, in his name; as David against Goliah; and be assured that the God of peace, the God of *your* peace, will, in order to that, be the God of *your victory*; he will tread Satan under your feet, will do it shortly, will do it effectually, that he may be to eternity the God of *your triumphs.*

5. We must keep up both a *holy fear lest we come short,* and a *good hope that through grace we shall persevere.* If we rightly understand ourselves, we cannot but be often looking forward, and considering what will be our last end, what will be our future state. And what will it be? Will *our end* be peace; will *our endless* condition be a happy one?

Truly when we look upon the brightness of the crown set before us, and our own meanness and unworthiness; when we look upon the many difficulties that lie in our way, and our own weakness, and utter inability to break through them; we may justly be afraid, lest some time or other we be guilty of a fatal miscarriage, and perish at last. And such a fear as this is recommended to us as a means to keep us from apostasy, that we may not really come short, as the unbelieving Israelites did of Canaan: *Let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short,*[e] should do any thing that looks like, or tends towards a drawing back to Egypt again. We have no reason to be secure; many who thought they stood, stood as high, stood as firm as we, yet have fallen, have fallen fatally and irrecoverably. Let us, therefore, who think we stand, take heed lest we fall,[a] and with a holy fear and trembling[b] let us be continually working out our salvation. *Vigilantibus non dormientibus succurrit Lex—The vigilant not the negligent are favored by the law.*

Yet let not this fear degenerate into amazement, nor take off our chariot wheels, or make us drive heavily. While we fear, lest God should leave us to ourselves, and put us into the hand of our own counsels—as justly he might; and then we are undone; let us hope in his mercy, that having begun a good work in us he will perform it. If it be the work of his own hands he will not forsake it, nay he will perfect it, if it be indeed that which truly concerns us.[c] The same apostle who bids us fear lest we come short, bids us give diligence to a full assurance of hope unto the end;[d] for *faithful is he that has called us, faithful is he that has promised,* who will perform his promise, and perfect his call. To him, therefore, let us commit the keeping of our souls in well-doing, the greatest trust to the best trustee; and then let it be our comfort that we *know whom we have trusted,* even one who *is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day,*[e] when it shall be called for.

Thus you see how in the great concerns of our souls there is occasion both for hope and fear; and each have their work to do; so that the two extremes of presumption and despair, those dangerous rocks, may be avoided. This is the levelling work by which the way of the Lord is to be prepared: by a good hope, every valley shall be exalted, and by a holy fear, every mountain and hill shall be brought low.[f] And thus the glory of the Lord being revealed, all flesh shall see it together.

II. The balance must likewise be kept even between hope and fear, as to our *temporal concerns,* about which we cannot be wholly unconcerned. Many cares we have upon our hearts about our life, health, ease and safety; about our callings and estates, and the prosperity of them; our reputation and interest among men; our relations and families, and our comfort in them: all these we hold between hope and fear, and must take heed, that when things look ever so hopeful we be not rocked asleep in security; and when they look ever so frightful, we do not faint away in despondency.

1. When the world smiles upon us, and our affairs in it prosper,—yet then we must keep up a holy fear, and not be too confident in our pleasing prospects; not flatter ourselves with hopes of the great advancement and long continuance of our peace and prosperity; but balance the hopes which sense suggests, with the fears which reason and religion will suggest. When our bodies are in health, and we are in our full strength, the breasts full of milk, and the bones moistened with marrow;[g] when our relations are all agreeable, and such as we could wish; when our affairs are in a good posture, the trade growing, the

[a] Jude 12. [b] Psa. 69. 22. [c] Prov. 28. 14. [d] 2 Cor. 12. 9. [e] Heb. 4. 1.

[a] 1 Cor. 10. 12. [b] Phil. 2. 12. [c] Psa. 138. 8. [d] Heb. 6. 11. [e] 2 Tim. 1. 12. [f] Isa. 40. 3, 4. [g] Job 21. 24.

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credit firm, and every thing running in our favour; yet even then we must fear God, and the turns of his providence against us, remembering that in such as fear him, he takes pleasure.

Let us not say at such a time, as David said in his prosperity,[a] *I shall never be moved, my mountain stands so strong*, that nothing can stir it, nothing shake a state of health so confirmed, a reputation so established; or as Job said in his prosperity, *I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand*;[b] or as Babylon in the height of her grandeur, *I shall be a lady for ever*,[c] *I sit as a queen and shall see no sorrow*.[d] Let us never promise ourselves, that because this day smiles upon us, to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant;[e] since we know not what shall be on the morrow, nor what one day may bring forth. Let us not put the evil day far from us, which for ought we know may be very near, and at the door. But—to prevent the security we are in danger of falling into at such a time:

(1.) Let us keep up an awful regard to the sovereignty of the Divine Providence, and its disposals of us and ours. We are in its hands, as clay is in the hand of the potter,[f] to be formed; unformed; new formed; as he pleases. That which seemed designed for a vessel of honour, is either marred, or with one turn of the wheel made a despised vessel, in which there is no pleasure: and shall we say, dare we say; *Why hast thou made me thus?* May not God do what he will with his own creature? and shall he not fulfil his own counsel, *whether we refuse, or whether we choose?*[g] for we are sure he is debtor to no man.

Whatever we have, it was God who gave it us; and we said when we had it, *Blessed be the name of the Lord*,[h] who in a way of sovereignty gave that to us, which he denied to others more deserving; and whatever we lose, it is God who takes it away; and when it is gone, we must say, *Blessed be the name of the Lord*, who in a way of sovereignty takes from us that which he had given us, and does us no wrong; for we are but tenants at will of all our enjoyments, even of life itself, and may be turned out at less than an hour's warning, for our times are in God's hands, not in our own.

It is true, that godliness has the promise of the life that now is: but we must take heed of misunderstanding those promises which relate to temporal good things, which are all made with this implicit proviso, *As far as is for God's glory and our good;* and further than those, if we love either God or ourselves, we shall not desire them. It is promised, that it shall be well with them that fear God; but it is not promised that they shall be always rich and great in the world, always in health, and at ease. It is promised, that no evil shall befal them, nothing that shall do them any real hurt: but it is not promised that no affliction shall befal them; for there may be need, that for a season they should be in heaviness, and it shall be for their advantage.

[a] Ps. 30. 6. [b] Job 29. 18. [c] Isa. 47. 7. [d] Rev. 18. 7. [e] Isa. 56. 12. [f] Jer. 18. 4, 6. [g] Job 34. 33. [h] Job 1. 21.

(2.) Let us keep up a full conviction of the vanity of this world, and the uncertainty of all our enjoyments in it. We are very unapt scholars, if we have not learned, even by our own experience and observation, that there are no pleasures here below that are lasting, but they are all dying things; and that often proves least safe that is most dear. They are as flowers which will soon fade, and the sooner for being much smelled to; as snow which will soon melt, and the sooner for being taken up in our hands, and laid in our bosoms. The things we dote so much upon make themselves wings[a] (though we should not by our own improvidence and prodigality make them wings) and flee away as an eagle towards heaven. And shall we then set our eyes and hearts upon things that are not, the fashion of which passeth away, and we with it?

The things we are so fond of, we call good things,—though if we have not grace to use them well, and to do good with them, they are to us good for nothing: But the scripture calls them *deceitful riches*, and the *mammon of unrighteousness*, because they put a cheat upon those who depend upon them, and trust in them; they are not what they seem, perform not what they promise, nor last so long as one would think they should. What God has graciously promised us in them, they do perform, but not what we foolishly promise ourselves from them; so that if we are deceived, we may thank ourselves; it is our own fault for trusting to them. They perish in the using,[b] much more in the abusing. Let those, therefore, who are rich in this world, receive the apostle's charge, not to trust in uncertain riches, because they are uncertain; nor to lay up their treasure in them: because our estates as well as our bodies are subject, both, to diseases, for *moth and rust corrupt* them; and to disasters, for *thieves break through and steal them*. What assurance can we have of, what confidence can we put in those goods, which may be lost in an instant by the firing of a house, or the foundering of a ship at sea, by the unsuspected fraud of those we deal with, or the overpowering force of those we contend with? How can we call that *our own*, which is so much in *others' hands*, or think to hold *that* fast; when even that which is *in our hand* slips through our fingers like dust, especially if we *grasp it hard*.

(3.) Let us keep up an humble sense of our own undeservings and ill-deservings. We shall see a great deal of reason not to be confident of the continuance of our creature-comforts, when we consider that we are not worthy of the least[c] of them, no not of the crumbs that fall from the table of common providence: and if we were not worthy to have them, much less are we worthy to have them long, and to have them secured to us. Nay, we have forfeited them all a thousand times by our abuse of them; and God might justly take the forfeiture. He who is in debt is continually in fear, lest all he has be suddenly seized on: it is our case; we are in debt to the justice of God, and what can we expect, but to be stript of all? We had been so long ago, if God had dealt with us

[a] Pro. 23. 5. [b] Col. 2. 22. [c] Gen. 32. 10.

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according to our sins; so that we have lived all our days upon forfeited favours, which therefore we can have no assurance of the continuance of.

Though we have the testimony of our consciences for us,—that what we have, we have got honestly, and not by fraud and oppression; and that we have used it charitably, and in some measure honoured God with it, which is the likeliest way both to secure it and to increase it,—yet even then we must not be secure, for God has seen that amiss in us, which we have not seen in ourselves; and there is none who can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin.* We have all contracted guilt enough, to justify God in depriving us of all our comforts in this world; and, therefore, have no reason to be confident of the continuance of them, but a great deal of reason, whatever we lose, to say, *The Lord is righteous.*

(4.) Let us keep up a lively expectation of troubles and changes in this changeable troublesome world. It is what we are bid to count upon; and can look, for no other, in a wilderness. *Time and chance happen to all:* why then should they not happen to us? The *race is not,* sure, *to the swift,* nor *the battle to the strong,* no nor so much as *bread to the wise,* much less *riches to men of understanding,* or *favour to men of skill;*[a] Why then should we think them sure to us? Can you and I imagine that the world should be more kind, and more constant to us, than it has been to those who went before us? You have read the story of Job, whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men of the east—but the setting sun left poor, to a proverb. You have in your own time seen those who were once worth thousands, so reduced, that they and theirs have wanted necessary food: and what exemption can we pretend to from the common calamities of human life? we are not better than our fathers, nor better than our predecessors. Shall we think our prosperity more firm than that of others has been? We might as well think that the earth should be forsaken for us, and the rock removed out of its place.

Nay, troubles and changes are good for us, they are necessary for us; the temper, or rather the distemper of our minds make them so, lest we grow proud and secure, and in love with this world. We read of those who have no changes, and therefore they fear not God; who are not in trouble as other men,[b] and therefore pride compasses them about as a chain.[c] Moab has been at ease from his youth,[d] and has not by changes and troubles been emptied from vessel to vessel; and therefore he is *settled on his lees,* is grown secure and sensual, he is unhumbled and unreformed, *his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.* We have therefore reason to expect that God will in love to us exercise us with crosses and afflictions, that he may remind us what we are, and what we have done amiss, may wean us from this world, and draw out our thoughts and affections toward that world, the comforts of which know no changes.

[a] Ecc. 9. 11. [b] Psa. 55. 19. Psa. 73. 5, 6. [d] Jer. 48. 11.

(5.) Let us keep up serious thoughts of death approaching, and of our speedy removal to another world. Though the comforts we enjoy should not be taken from us, though we were ever so sure they should not; yet we know not how soon we may be taken from them, and then how long soever they may last, they are ours no longer. Do we not perceive how frail our nature is? Are we not in deaths often, in deaths always, in death even in the midst of life? Do we not see ourselves, wherever we are, standing upon the brink of eternity, and our souls continually in our hands? And what good then have we to look for in this world, who are hastening apace out of it, and can carry nothing away with us? *What is our strength that we should hope?*[a] If we wait for a larger and finer house, than what we now live in upon earth, —before it falls to us, perhaps the grave may be our house, and we may make our bed in the darkness. And when our days are past, with them our purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of our heart; we and our hope go down together to the bars of the pit, when our rest is in the dust.[b]

Death will put a period to all our hopes in this world, and to all our enjoyments: how loose therefore should we sit to them, when life itself hangs so loose? He who said, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry,* was, by this, proved a fool, that, *that* very night his *soul* was by death *required of him;*[c] and then *whose shall all these things be* which he has *provided,* and promised himself so much from? None of his we may be sure. Let us therefore be so wise as to consider our latter end, and be daily mindful of it, and then we shall not be such fools as to rely upon any thing in this world for a portion and happiness: we see we have here no continuing city, let us therefore seek and look for one that is to come.[d]

Let me now press this caution, upon those whose hopes are most apt to rise high from this world, that in order to the keeping of the balance even, they may maintain a holy fear, and not grow secure:

[1.] You who are young, and setting out in the world, must be reminded not to expect great things in it. You hope you shall do as well as the best: but it may prove otherwise—that you may fare in it as ill as the worst. You are apt to look at the things of the world through that end of the perspective glass that magnifies them, and to count upon having every thing to your mind, as if there were nothing but prizes in the world's lottery; and so lay a foundation for the greater grief in the disappointment, when whatever prizes others may have, you, perhaps, may have nothing but blanks to your share: and then it will be *folly* "to curse you stars" (as some profanely speak) but *justice* to reproach yourselves for building so high on a sandy foundation, and promising yourselves satisfaction of spirit in that which you were many a time told had nothing in it but vanity and vexation of spirit. Think not too well of yourselves,

[a] Job 6. 11. [b] Job 17. 11, 13, 16. [c] Luke 12. 19, 20. [d] Heb. 13. 14.

for

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for then you are apt to prognosticate nothing but good to yourselves; but lay yourselves low, and then you will lay your expectations low.

[2.] You who are rich, and have abundance of the world, do not make that abundance *your strong city*, and a *high wall*;[a] for it is not so really, but only in your own conceit, and you may soon find it as a *bowing wall*, and a *tottering fence*; a broken reed which will not only fail under you, but will run into your hand and pierce it. Keep up such a fear of God and his providence, as may forbid you ever to say unto the gold, *Thou art my hope*;[b] and to the fine gold, *Thou art my confidence*; for *if the Lord do not help you*, much more if he turn to be your enemy, and fight against you, whence can the world help you, *out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press*,[c] out *of the farms*, or out *of the merchandise*?

[3.] You who are cheerful and gay, and cast away care, who walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, and with-hold not yourselves from any joy, let the fear of God be a check to your mirth, and restrain it from growing into an excess. You may perhaps take care that in laughter your hearts shall not be sad,[d] but the end of this mirth may be heaviness before you are aware. When you rejoice in hope of the glory of God, that hope will not make you ashamed: but when you rejoice in hope of the wealth and pomp, and pleasures of this world, you have *now* reason to be ashamed that you place your happiness in such things, and will *at length* be ashamed that you looked for so much from them. You are but *girding on* the harness, and therefore boast not, as though you had *put it off*:[e] *Be not high-minded, but fear*; and look for *that*, every day, which *may* come any day.

2. When the world frowns upon us, and we are crossed, and disappointed, and perplexed in our affairs, then we must keep up a good hope, and not be inordinately cast down—no not in our *melancholy* prospects—about our health, our safety, our name, our relations, and our effects in the world. We must not at any time burthen ourselves with distracting care, what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed;[f] but cast this care upon God, and depend upon him to care for us.[g] We must not in the worst of times torment ourselves with amazing fear, as if every thing that threatens us must needs ruin us; and every fresh gale would be a storm presently; and as if every mole-hill of difficulty in our way, were an insuperable mountain. How black soever things look, and how low soever we are brought, we must not allow ourselves in fearing more than there is cause, nor more than is meet; we must not frighten ourselves with the creatures of our own imagination, nor suffer our fears to disquiet our minds, and deprive us of the government and enjoyment of ourselves, to damp our joy in God, to disturb our communion with him, and discourage our dependence on him.

[a] Pro. 18. 11. [b] Job 31. 24. [c] 2 Kings 6. 27. [d] Pro. 14. 13. [e] 1 Kings 20. 11. [f] Matt. 6. 25. [g] 1 Pet. 5. 7.

But when fear weighs down the balance on that side,—let us endeavour to keep it even, to keep it from sinking into despair, by maintaining a holy confidence in God, even as to our outward affairs: and when we are warned to *get ready for the worst*, we must still *hope the best*: hope that things are not so bad as they seem to be; that they will not be so bad as they are feared to be; and that in due time they will be better than they are. And let this hope keep our head above water, when we are ready to sink into despair; let it enable us to check ourselves for being cast down and disquieted;[a] for as bad as things are, if we *hope in God*, we shall *yet praise him*.

(1.) Hope in God's power: be fully assured of this, that how imminent soever the danger is, he can prevent it; how great soever the straits are, he can extricate us out of them; can find out a way for us in an untracked wilderness, and open springs of water to us in a dry and barren land: for with him *nothing* is *impossible*, nor is his *arm* ever *shortened*, nor his wisdom nonplused. Let us honour God—by a firm belief of his omnipotence; *Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me whole, thou canst make me clean*, thou canst raise me up from a low estate, and raise up friends for me when I am most forlorn: by trusting in him as a God all-sufficient when creatures fail, and whom we may rejoice in as the God of our salvation, though the fig tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine. The murmuring Israelites did not in any thing affront God so much as in saying, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness*?[b] *Can he give bread also*? As if any thing was too hard for the Lord.

(2.) Hope in his providence; and believe not only that he *can* do *any thing*, but that he *does* do *every thing*,—and whatever the event is, God does therein *perform the thing that is appointed for us*;[c] and takes cognizance of us and our affairs, how mean and despicable soever we are. The Great God has all hearts in his hand, their hearts particularly that you have dealings with and dependence on. The ships on board of which your effects are, though they are *afar off upon the sea*, are under God's eye; and he is the confidence of *all the ends of the earth*,[d] the remotest plantations where you concerns lie. And shall not that God who governs the world, be intrusted with the disposal of your concerns?

Hope in the *usual method* of Providence, which sets prosperity and adversity *one over against the other*; and when the ebb is at the lowest, makes the tide to turn, and the day to dawn, when the night is at the darkest. It is the glory of Providence to help the helpless, to raise the poor out of the dust, and bring back even from the gates of death; to breathe upon dry bones, and say unto them, *Live*. Let this encourage us to hope, that when things are at the worst they will mend; and therefore as in the heights of prosperity we must rejoice as though we rejoiced not, so in the depths of adversity we must weep as though we wept not;—*Non si male, nunc & olim, sic erit*—*Not*

[a] Psa. 42. 5. [b] Psa. 78. 19. [c] Job 23. 14. [d] Psa. 65. 5.

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as though, because circumstances have been and are adverse, they are ever to remain so. God generally comforts his people, according to the time that he has afflicted them.[a]

(3.) Hope in his pity and tender compassions; which in the day of your grief and fear, you are to look upon yourselves as the proper objects of. The text directs us particularly to hope in his mercy; we must depend upon the goodness of his nature for that which we have not an express promise for. Let this silence our fear—that the God in whose hand our times are, is gracious and merciful, does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, much less his own children, but when there is cause, and when there is need, and therefore will not always chide, will not contend for ever; but though he cause grief, he will have compassion.[b] We may with a good assurance *fall into the hands of the Lord;* (and whose hands soever we fall into, they are *his* hand;) for we know that his mercies are great, and those who hope in them shall find them so.

(4.) Hope in his promise; that word of his upon which he hath caused us to hope; and which we have all the reason in the world to build upon;[c] for not one *Iota* or tittle of it shall fall to the ground. Though he has not promised to deliver us from that *particular* evil we have a dread of, or to give us that *particular* comfort and success we are desirous of, yet he has promised that nothing shall harm them who are followers of him; nay, that all things shall work together for good to them;[d] and (which is enough to silence all our fears) that though our calamities may separate us from the dearest comfort and comforters we have in this world, yet they shall never be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,[e] from divine comforts, and the divine Comforter.

And, now, who is there here that stands in need of this caution against despondency of spirit under discouraging events, and to whom it is seasonable to recommend a believing hope for the balancing and silencing of their distrustful fears? Let them apply this to themselves, and make use of the hope recommended to them as an anchor of the soul,[f] to keep them steady in a storm.

[1.] You who are beginning the world with fear and trembling; who are humble and honest and diligent, but have little to begin with, have many difficulties to break through, and are very diffident of your own understanding; be not discouraged, but hope in God's mercy. Your friends are few, unable to help you, or unkind and regardless of you: father and mother have perhaps forsaken you.[g] Know then that you are the particular care of Providence, which gathers the outcasts, and provides even for young ravens, when they are deserted. *Trust in the Lord,* therefore, *and do good,* so *shalt thou dwell in the land;* and though thou be not feasted, yet *verily thou shalt be fed.*[h] Though the beginning be small, the latter end may by the blessing of God greatly increase,[a] and a little one may become a thousand.

(2.) You who have concerns that lie at hazard,—in danger at sea, or of being a prey to the enemy; who have debts in bad hands, or dear relations—that you have dependence upon, or delight in,—in peril;—give not way to amazing fear, that fear which has torment, but hope in God's mercy. Give not up any thing for gone, till it is gone; and when it is gone, yet give not up all for gone, as long as you have the good providence of God to trust to. Say not as David in his haste, *I am cast out of thy sight,* or, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul;* but wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, resolved to welcome his holy will, whatever it be. We are sometimes told that the merchants are *in pain* for such a ship, such a fleet: you think at such a time, it is only the news of their safe arrival that will put you out of your pain. And what if that news never come? then you condemn yourselves to a lasting uneasiness. But let me recommend that to you, which will make you easy, whatever the event be: commit your way to God, by a believing prayer, and submit your will to God by a penitent resignation; and then let your thoughts be established.

[3.] You who, by the providence of God, are from fulness reduced to straits, have met with losses which you think can never be repaired, and conclude you shall never see a good day again, but are undone to all intents and purposes; do not give way to these despondding thoughts, but hope in the mercy of God, that mercy which brings low and raises up. As Job's troubles are a warning to those in prosperity not to be secure, so his return to his former splendour is a warning to those in adversity not to despair. You know not what better times you may yet be reserved for, as Job was, whose latter end God blessed more than his beginning.[b]

III. I come now briefly to shew how the balance must be kept even between hope and fear as to public concerns, both those of the Church abroad, and of our own nation. Are not the concerns of the Church abroad our concerns? They ought to be so. I hope we all lay them near our hearts, as members of the great body, and hearty well-wishers to its interests, and to the honour and kingdom of its Great Head. Are we not in care that the Christian religion may get ground among men, and not lose the ground it has; that it may prevail and rule in its power and purity; that the bounds of the Church may be enlarged by the accession both of Jews and Gentiles to it; that the breaches of it may be healed, by the pouring out of a spirit of love and charity upon all who belong to it; that the ordinances of Christ, administered according to the institution of them, may ever be its glory, and upon that glory there may ever be a defence; a cloud created by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, both upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies?[c]

The land of our nativity ought in a particular manner

[a] Pss. 90. 15. [b] Lam. 3. 31, 32. [c] Psa. 119. 49. [d] 1 Pet. 3. 13. [e] Rom. 8. 39. [f] Heb. 6. 19. [g] Psa. 27. 10. [h] Psa. 37. 3.

[a] Job 8. 7. [b] Job 42. 12. [c] Isa. 4. 5.

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to be dear to us; for in the peace or trouble of that, we have peace[a] or trouble. Is it not our concern, that our liberty and property be secured; that the government flourish; that the public peace and tranquillity be continued; that justice be duly administered; that the power and influence of the nation abroad be advanced; that the trade be protected and increased; but, above all, that the Protestant religion be transmitted pure to those who shall come after us; that the bulwarks erected against Popery may be strengthened; that atheism, infidelity, and all iniquity, may be made to stop their mouth; that the form of godliness may ever be the beauty of the nation, and the power of it may ever rule in men's hearts and lives? Is it not our concern, that our eyes should still see our teachers, and that they should not again be removed into corners, nor our religious assemblies broken up and scattered? If it be, we cannot but look forward with concern, and while we enjoy peace and liberty at present, be in care about the continuance of them; and in our prospects there cannot but be a mixture of hope and fear, and we must endeavour so to fear the worst, as not to grow secure, and so to hope the best, as not to despond, or be dispirited.

The truth is, we are very apt at some times, when second causes smile a little, to be very sanguine above what there is reason for, and to conclude, that we shall without fail be in Canaan presently; at other times, when things go not just to our mind, we are apt to be very chagrined, more than there is cause, and to conclude that we shall without remedy be hurried back into Egypt again. This hour we soar, and if the wind turn, next hour we sink; as if when the sun shines we should think it would never rain, and when it rains we should think the sun would never shine out again. And have we not lived long enough in this world to be ashamed both of those hopes and those fears? having often seen ourselves disappointed both in the one and in the other; and in the issue things have proved neither so well as we hoped, nor so ill as we feared; so that we have surely at length learned by experience, that it is our wisdom and interest, as well as our duty, to keep the balance even between hope and fear.

1. We have always reason to keep up a holy fear as to public affairs, and to be apprehensive of trouble before us, even when things look most promising. We have no reason, even when we dwell peaceably, as the Men of Israel in Solomon's time, to dwell carelessly, as the men of Laish.[b] It is true, and we have a great deal of reason to be thankful for it, that we are a happy people; we have long been blessed with peace and plenty at home, and with victory and success abroad: we live under a very good government, which seeks the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed; we have long sitten every one under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree; we have long enjoyed the free exercise of our religion, and great plenty of the means of grace, and there has been none to make us afraid. Our fleece has been wet with the dews of heaven, when that of other nations has been dry; while their's also has been wet with showers of blood, our's has been dry.

Shall England then say, *I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow?* By no means. Happy is the man that still feareth, as David, whose flesh trembled for fear of God;[a] and notwithstanding the many mercies he had received from him, was afraid of his judgments. And we have reason to be so; for,

(1.) We are a provoking people. Atheism and profaneness abound among us, notwithstanding the testimonies borne against them, and the endeavours used to suppress them. Vice is become fashionable and epidemical: all flesh have corrupted their way; *the whole head sick, the whole heart faint.* How is God's name dishonoured, his day profaned, his good creatures abused to luxury and excess; and how does the unclean spirit range through the land! Liberty to sin has been pleaded for as *Christian liberty*, and the societies for reformation branded as *illegal inquisitions*, and their pious endeavours opposed, insulted, and ridiculed. And shall not God visit for these things? *Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*[b] How can a people who hate to be reformed, hope to be saved?

The great decay of serious godliness among those who run not with others to an excess of riot, is likewise a very threatening symptom. If those grow more insolent who are filling the measure of the nation's guilt by their wickedness, and at the same time those grow more cold and remiss, who should empty it by their prayers and tears, things look very ill indeed. How woefully do the professors of this age degenerate from the zeal and strictness of their predecessors! And such is the corruption of the rising generation in many families, that there is reason to fear a further degeneracy. And if thus we grow worse and worse, what will become of us at last? If thus, as Ezra speaks, the holy seed mingle themselves with, and conform themselves to the people of these abominations, what may we expect, but that God should be angry with us till he hath consumed us?[c] For our religion sensibly consumes, and a consumption may be as fatal as a stab. Those may be of any religion, who are of no religion.

(2.) We are a divided people, and our divisions give just cause to fear the worst; for what can be expected, but that a kingdom divided against itself should be brought to desolation? It is our enemies' policy to divide us, and our sin and folly to serve their design by our misunderstandings one of another, and disaffection one to another, when we might countermine and defeat it by our mutual love and charity. For the divisions of our Reuben, there cannot but be great thoughts and searchings of heart among all who are concerned for the public welfare. We are in danger of being burnt up by the heats in our own bosoms, and broken to pieces by the blows we give one another: and who can we think will be our deliverers, if we be thus our own destroyers?

It is not so much the difference of sentiment that is threatening, nor the difference of practice according to

[a] Jer. 29. 7. [b] Judges 18. 7.

[a] Ps. 119. 120. [b] Jer. 9. 9. [c] Ezra 9. 2, 14.

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that sentiment: I never expect to see all wise men of a mind, and good men will not act against their judgment: but that which does us the mischief is the mismanagement of our differences, our uncharitable censures one of another, and reflections one upon another, our heats and animosities, and party-making, to the destruction, not only of Christian charity, but of common friendship and good neighbourhood. The breach seems wide at the sea, which cannot be healed, and what will be in the end hereof? If we thus bite and devour one another, what can be expected, but that we should be consumed one of another?[a] While our enemies triumph in our divisions, it becomes us to tremble because of them.

(3.) God has told us, that in the world we shall have tribulation; all the disciples of Christ must count upon it, and not flatter themselves with hopes of an uninterrupted tranquillity any where on this side heaven. The Church is here militant, its state in this world is a warfare: if it retire sometimes into quarters of refreshment, yet it must expect to be drawn out into the field again next campaign: if it have its intervals of peace, those are intended as breathing times, that it may recruit and gather strength for an encounter with another trouble. Once we read that the land of Israel had rest fourscore years;[b] but we never read afterwards that it had so long a respite. We are in a wilderness, and we must expect to fare no better than the Church in the wilderness did,[c] which though sometimes it pitched where there were twelve wells of water,[d] yet presently was where there was no water[e] to drink: and when it removed from the wilderness of Sin, the cloud that was their guide led them to the wilderness of Paran;[f] but still they were in a desart land, where God, though he led them about, yet instructed them. Let the people of God never expect, till they come to heaven, to be out of the reach of evil, and therefore never expect to be perfectly quiet from the fear of it.

Far be it from me to suggest any thing that may create disquieting jealousies; all that I aim at in mentioning these grounds of fear, is, that hereby we may all be awakened to our duty.

[1.] Let us, in consideration hereof, stir up ourselves to pray, and to wrestle with God in prayer, for the turning away of the judgments, which our own sins, and the malice of those who are the enemies of our public peace, threaten us with. Jacob feared Esau his brother, and then prayed, *Deliver me, I pray thee,* from him.[g] Jehoshaphat feared, and then set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaim a fast.[h] Whatever are the grounds of our fear, we know God can remove them; he can turn away ungodliness from Jacob,[i] and then he comes as a Redeemer to Zion.

Let not our prayers for the Church of God, and for our own nation, degenerate into a formality; nor let us grow customary in them, as if it were only for fashion' sake, that we prayed for the queen and the government, the preservation of the Protestant succession, and the prosperity of the nation and its allies, and (as some vainly drink healths to these) only for a compliment. I fear lest some who join with us in prayer, however in other parts of the service they think themselves somewhat concerned, when we come to that, grow remiss and indifferent, as if that were nothing to them; whereas our Lord Jesus has taught us, before we pray for our daily bread and the pardon of our sins, to pray for the prosperity of his Church, that his name may be sanctified, his kingdom may come, and his will be done. Let us therefore not only join heartily with our ministers in prayer for the Church of God, and for the nation, but let each of us in our families and closets be intercessors with God for public mercies; let us stand in the gap to turn away his wrath, and give him no rest till he establish, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.[a]

[2.] Let us, in consideration hereof, do what we can to prevent the judgments that threaten us, by a personal reformation of heart and life, and by contributing what we can in our places to the reformation of others. When God speaks concerning a nation, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy,[b] its turning from sin is the only way to save it from ruin, and that is a sure way. It is the *island of the innocent* that is *delivered by the pureness of their hands.*[c] Let this charity to the public begin at home. Let every Israelite, as once every Ninevite, turn from his evil way; and then who can tell but God will yet return and repent,[d] and leave a blessing behind him? But let not this charity end there; let us appear on the Lord's side; let us act in defence of injured virtue and despised godliness, and do our utmost in humility and sincerity to put vice and profaneness out of countenance. And if we thus return to God in a way of duty, no doubt he will return to us in a way of mercy, and be better to us than our fears.

[3.] Being warned of a deluge coming, let us provide accordingly: let not the warning make us despond and despair. Noah did not; he knew the deluge should not be a final destruction of mankind, but that there would be another world after that which was to be drowned; he knew also that it should go well with him, and his family. With this hope he encouraged himself; but being warned of God concerning it, he was moved with fear, and made provision for it; he walked with God, and they who do so are sure to be hid in the day of the Lord's anger,[e] to be hid either in heaven, or under heaven. He prepared an ark, and then was himself saved in it. Christ is our ark, God has prepared in him a refuge for all those who flee to him, and take shelter in him when a deluge comes. Preserve the evidences of your interest in Christ clear and unclouded, and your hopes of eternal life firm and unshaken; lay up a treasure of comforts and experiences; make the name of the Lord your strong tower; his attributes, his promises, your sanctuary,—into which you may run and be safe, in which you may rest and be easy; and, then, welcome the will of God, nothing can come amiss.

[a] Gal. 5. 15. [b] Judges 3. 30. [c] Acts 7. 38. [d] Exod. 15. 27. [e] Exod. 17. 3. [f] Num. 10. 12. [g] Gen. 32. 11. [h] 2 Chr. 20. 3. [i] Rom. 11. 26.

[a] Isa. 62. 6, 7. [b] Jer. 18. 7, 8. [c] Job 22. 30. [d] Jonah 3. 10. [e] Zeph. 2. 3.

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2. Whatever cause we may see to fear, yet still we must keep up a good hope, as to public affairs. We hear of the threatening powers and policies of our enemies, the heads and horns of the Dragon,[a] that makes war with the Lamb. We see the Church in many places afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; her adversaries many and mighty, her helpers few and feeble; yet let not our faith and hope fail: it is day, though it be cloudy and dark, and at evening time it shall be light.[b] Let Israel hope in God, and wait for him, as those who wait for the morning; and when the night is long and gloomy, do as Paul's mariners did, cast anchor, and wish for the day.[c] Let us learn to make the best of that which is, and hope the best concerning that which shall be.

Let our hopes always be such a check upon our fears, that they may not prevail to disturb our communion with God, to stop the mouth of prayer, and weaken the hands of honest endeavour. Hearken not to the foolish surmises of danger, nor be put into a fright by evil tidings: *Say not a confederacy, to whom this people shall say a confederacy, neither fear ye your fear, nor be afraid,* but *make God your fear and your dread.*[d] The more we are governed by the fear of God, the less we shall be disturbed by the fear of man. Nehemiah encouraged the builders of the wall with this, when they were surrounded with enemies, who designed to come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. *Be not afraid of them, remember the Lord which is great and terrible,*[e] greater and more terrible to them than they can be to us, and who will shew himself above them in that thing wherein they deal proudly. When you fear continually every day, as if the oppressor in his fury[f] were ready to destroy, you forget the Lord your Maker, and his dominion over all, and the dependence of every creature upon him; which, if you had a due regard to, you would look with contempt upon Sennacherib himself, and would say, *Where is the fury of the oppressor?*

Let me prevail with you at this day to encourage yourselves in the Lord your God as to public affairs. While we fear our own sins, let us hope in God's mercy: for though our iniquities prevail against us, and threaten to stop the current of God's favours, yet as for our transgressions he shall purge them away,[g] and that great obstacle being removed, his favours shall have a free course again. Though the designs of our enemies be laid ever so deep, and their hopes raised ever so high, yet God can make even their wrath to praise him, and restrain the remainder of it;[h] and therefore take heed and be quiet, fear not, neither be faint-hearted,[i] but hope that things will end well at last.

There are three things which may encourage our hope, and keep the balance even against all our fears, as to the concerns both of the Protestant churches abroad, and our own nation.

(1.) The word which God has spoken to us; which (whatever other props our hopes may be supported with) is the great foundation on which they must be built, and then they are fixed. If our hopes be grounded on the promise, and our expectations guided by it, they are as the house built on the rock; and the heart that is supported by them is established and cannot be moved.[a] *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ—Though the earth be removed, yet will we not fear.*[b] But if our hopes be founded on the ability and agency of creatures, they rise or fall as second causes smile or frown; as the ship upon the water, which is higher or lower, as the tide ebbs or flows. The stocks are as the news is, and then every turn of the wheel otherwise than we would have it, shakes our hopes, and robs us of the comfort of them. Be persuaded therefore to hope for what God had promised, according to the true intent, and full extent of the promise, and because he has promised it, and that hope shall be an anchor of the soul sure and stedfast.

Is not this the word which God has spoken, and on which he hath caused us to hope? That the *Kingdoms of the world shall become his kingdoms:* That *Christ shall have the heathen given him for his inheritance, and the ends of the earth shall see his salvation.* Has he not said that the *man of sin shall be consumed,* the mystery of iniquity unravelled, and that the New Testament Babylon shall *sink like a millstone into the mighty waters?* Has he not said, that the day will come when *swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks,* when the *wolf and the lamb shall lie down together,* and there shall be *none to hurt or destroy in all the Holy Mountain?* Has he not said, that *for the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, he will arise, and set them in safety from those that puff at them?* That *the rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the lot of the righteous,* but *the year of the redeemed will come,* and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion?* Has he not said, *that a seed shall serve Christ, which shall be accounted to him for a generation;* that *the name of Christ shall endure for ever,* and that *the Church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it?*

This, and a great deal more to this purpose, he has said; and he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Has he made the promise, and shall he not make it good? In this therefore let us trust, in this let us triumph,—God has spoken in his holiness; he has given me his word for it, and then I will rejoice; I will divide Sechem, Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine:[c] it is all my own as far as the promise goes, which we must not so much as stagger at.

(2.) The work which God has begun among us. We have reason to hope in God's mercy; for the interest that lies so much upon our hearts, even the

[a] Rev. 12. 8. [b] Zec. 14. 7. [c] Acts 27. 29. [d] Isa. 8. 11, 12. [e] Neh. 4. 11, 14. [f] Isa. 51. 13. [g] Ps. 65. 3. [h] Ps. 76. 10. [i] Isa. 7. 4.

[a] Ps. 112. 7, 8. [b] Ps. 46. 2. [c] Ps. 60. 6. 7.

interest

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interest of religion among us, is the interest of God's own kingdom, which he has set up among us, and will therefore keep up: it is the work of his own hands,[a] which he will never forsake.

Things are not so bad, but blessed be God, there are some hopeful favourable symptoms in our case; and none more so, than the national testimonies that are borne against atheism and infidelity, and the threatening growth of deism, socinianism, and scepticism among us: the complaints that are justly made of the profanation of the Lord's-day, and the contempt cast upon the Scripture and divine institutions; of the wretched corruption of manners, and the influence which the profaneness of the stage has upon it:—when these things are represented as the real grievances of the nation, and lamented accordingly; surely now there is hope in Israel, concerning this thing,[b] and we may rejoice in that hope.

I trust God has among us a remnant of praying people, a remnant that hold fast their integrity; and with an eye to them God will continue to save us, and will perfect what he has wrought. We may safely argue as Haman's wife does, for the perfecting of the ruin of our enemies; *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews:* if the cause be God's, as certainly it is, before whom, before which thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not, thou canst not prevail, though thou struggle ever so hard, but shalt surely, shalt irrecoverably fall before him[c] and it. And we may also argue, as Manoah's wife does for the preventing of our own ruin; *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not as at this time have shewed us such things as these.*[d] As for God, his work is perfect: if he *bring to the birth, he will cause to bring forth.*[e]

(3.) The wonders which he has wrought for us. When we are encouraging ourselves with hopes that God will ordain peace for us, because he has wrought our work in us;[f] yet this is discouraging, that there are such difficulties in the way, which we think can never be got over. But let us then consider the former times, remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old;[a] not only those which our fathers have told us of, but which we have seen in our own days, whereby God's work has been begun, carried on in a surprising way, and by events which we looked not for.

When God had begun to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and conduct them to Canaan by miracles, he expected that in their straits they should depend upon him still to work miracles for their relief, and was displeased at their unbelief if they did not. God has begun to save us, though not by miracles, yet by marvels; and thereby has encouraged us to depend upon him that he will still do wonders for us, rather than the work he has done should be undone again. If a mean and worthless people may be saved by a divine prerogative, why may not a weak and helpless people be saved by a divine omnipotence?

Be of good courage therefore, and hope in God, that we shall yet praise him; stay yourselves upon him, strengthen yourselves in him; look upwards with cheerfulness, and then look forward with satisfaction. Let your hopes quicken your prayers, let them keep you in the way of duty, and enlarge your hearts to run in that way; let them quicken your endeavours in your places, to serve the interests of God's kingdom among us to the utmost of your power: and then let them silence your fears, and make you always easy to yourselves and those about you. Comfort yourselves and one another with this, that the same Almighty Hand that has laid the foundations of his Church among us, will build upon those foundations, will in his own way and time, in his own method, and according to the plan of his own eternal counsels, carry on the building, till at length the top-stone be brought forth with shouting, and we shall cry, *Grace, Grace to it.*[b]

[a] Ps. 102. 25. [b] Ezra 10. 2. [c] Esth. 6. 13. [d] Judges 13. 23. [e] Isa. 66. 9. [f] Isa. 26. 12.

[a] Ps. 77. 11. [b] Zec. 4. 7.

A SERMON

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A

SERMON

CONCERNING

THE CATECHISING OF YOUTH:

Preached to Mr. HARRIS's CATECHUMENS, April 7, 1713.

2 TIM. 1. 13.

Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

BLESSED Paul—in this, as in the former epistle, giving wholesome advice and instruction to Timothy; for the enforcing of it, among other things, puts him in mind of his education, and the advantages of it; the good principles which by it had been instilled into him, and the good practices he had been trained up in: and upon trial, now he came to years of understanding, he could not but see that they were good; let him therefore adhere to them, and abide by them; and now build upon the foundation then laid.

He particularly mentions the two great advantages which he was blessed with, in his childhood and youth: that he was bred up, both under the tuition of godly parents, and under the direction and instruction of an able faithful ministry; and both these are requisite to compleat the blessings of a religious education.

1. He had been well taught by his godly parents, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice,[a] whose unfeigned faith the apostle would have him frequently to think of, and thereby be minded to stir up the gift of God that was in him.[b] His father was a Greek, one who had little religion in him, but left it to his mother to bring him up as she thought fit, and she and his grandmother were not wanting to season the vessel betimes with a good savour: so that from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, and was made wise to salvation by them.[c] It is a great opportunity, which *mothers* have, and which prudent pious mothers will improve, to fill the minds of their children, when they are young, with good knowledge; and to form them to a good disposition. If the tree must be bent, it must be done when it is young and tender, and with a very gentle easy hand, for the spirit it not to be broken, but bowed.

2. He had been well taught by St. Paul too. His mother and grandmother had taught him the Scriptures, and made him ready in them, as a child of God; then Paul expounded the Scriptures more fully to him, and by the grace of God made him mighty in them, so that he became a man of God, thoroughly furnished to all good works. The text speaks of the form of sound words, which he had heard of Paul, either in private lectures read to him as his pupil, or in his public teaching and catechising, on which Timothy was constantly and diligently attending.

Now those two methods of instruction—both by parents in their families, and by ministers in more public assemblies—are necessary, and do mutually assist each other; and neither will excuse the want of the other. Let not parents think to leave it wholly to ministers; as if because their children are well taught in public, they need not take any pains with them at home,—no, *there* the foundation must be laid, and there the improvement by public catechising must be examined, and *there* a more particular application must be made according to the children's capacities and dispositions, than it is possible for ministers to make in public. The people of Israel had the Levites dispersed among them, whose office it was to teach them the good knowledge of the Lord; and yet it is required of parents that they not only receive God's words into their own hearts, but that they teach them diligently to their children, and talk of them in their families, and tell those under their charge the meaning of the testimonies and judgments which he had commanded them.[a] If father, or mother, or both do not teach their children first, and teach them last too,—they will not be fit for, nor much the better by public catechising.

And on the other hand, let not ministers think to leave it wholly to parents, as if because the children were well taught at home, they needed not to contribute any help of theirs to their instruction. The Great Shepherd of the sheep has charged them to feed his lambs[b] with food proper for them. Besides the natural authority and affection of parents, it is fit that the spiritual authority and affection of ministers likewise should be improved for the advantage of the rising generation. And it may be presumed, that according to the gift given to them, they have greater abilities for instruction than the parents have. In teaching your children other arts and sciences,—though you may have some insight into them yourselves, yet you make use of those who particularly profess those arts and sciences, and make it their business to teach them: and will you not do so in that which is the one thing needful for them to learn well. You are to feed your kids, but you

[a] 2 Tim. 5. 6. [b] Acts 16. 1. [c] 2 Tim. 3. 15.

[a] Deut. 6. 6, 7, 20. [b] John 21. 15.

must

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must do it beside the shepherd's tents,[a] under the conduct of a gospel ministry.

Now Timothy having had this double advantage, Paul urges him still to proceed in that good way wherein he had so well set out; to hold fast that form of sound words, which he had received.

(1.) This implies that he had a form of sound words delivered to him by Paul; a brief summary of the Christian doctrine, and of all those things which are most surely believed[b] among Christians, as St. Luke expresses it; ὑποτύπωσιν—a *delineation*, a *scheme*, or rough draught of the gospel institutes. It is a metaphor taken from painters; in drawing a face, they first draw the shape and lines of it, and then fill it up with proper colours. Such a model or plan of the truths and laws of Christ Timothy had, as he might afterwards, in his meditation and preaching, enlarge upon. Whether this form of sound words was a creed, or confession of faith, I cannot say: I rather think it was in the way of a catechism, because that method of instruction was used in the early ages of the church: for we find it alluded to in St. Peter's ἐπερώτημα,—*the answer of a good consoience*,[c] or rather the *interrogation*; so that I think if we apply it especially to our catechisms, to the forms of sound words so formed, we shall offer no violence at all in the text.

(2.) Here is a charge to him to *hold it fast*, ἴσχε—*Have it*. Have it by thee, have it with thee, have it in thee, have it always ready for use; do not part with it, nor in any instance depart from it. *Have it*, that is, make it to appear that thou hast it; as to have grace is to have it in action and exercise, and to him who so has, has and uses what he has, shall be given. Or, as we read it, *Hold it fast:* it was delivered to us, to *have* and to *hold;* and we have it in vain, if we do not hold it.

Accordingly we may hence learn two doctrines.

I. That good catechisms, containing the grounds and principles of the Christian religion, are useful forms of sound words; and it is a great mercy to have heard and learned those forms.

II. Those who have heard and learned the good forms of sound words, must hold them fast in faith and love.

I. It is a very great advantage to young people, to hear and learn the Christian forms of sound words in the days of their youth; to have been well taught some good catechism, or confession of faith. Observe here,

1, The words of the gospel are ὑγιαινόντων,—*sound words* or as some render it, *healthful, wholesome, healing* words. Put both together; and it intimates,

(1.) That there is *value and validity* in the words of the gospel; as there is in that which is sound and firm, and in good condition. They are what they seem, and there is no cheat in them. Try them; and you will find you may trust them, as you may that which is sound, and will never be made ashamed of your confidence in them. *Men* speak with flattering lips and with a double heart: but the words of the Lord are pure words,[a] and have no mixture of falsehood in them. The law was written in stone, to intimate its stability and perpetuity; and the gospel is no less firm; every iota and tittle of both shall survive heaven and earth.[b]

Assure yourselves, brethren, the words of the gospel which we preach to you, and which you are trained up in the knowledge of, are unchangeable and inviolable. Holy Job's creed concerning his Redeemer, was graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever;[c] much more is our's so: it is what you may venture your souls and your everlasting welfare upon. That is a sound word; that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;* even the *chief*.[d] And that is a sound word: that *God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*[e] It is sound speech that cannot be condemned; for it has been more than a thousand times tried, and it stands firm as the everlasting mountains. *These are the true sayings of God;*[f] and if we compare the traditions of the elders, or the speculations of the philosophers with them, we shall say, with the prophet, *What is the chaff to the wheat?*[g]

(2.) That there is virtue to be drawn from them for *healing* and *health* to us. They are not only clear from every thing that is hurtful and unwholesome, but there is that, in them, which is medicinal and restorative, not only of health and strength, but of life itself. These waters of the sanctuary,[h] these leaves of the tree of life, are healing to the nations.[i] These words, if duly applied and mixed with faith, restore the soul, and put it in frame, heal its maladies, and reduce to a just temper its distempered and disordered powers. It was said of old concerning those who were sick, that God sent his word and healed them.[k] And when Christ was here upon earth, it was by the power of his word that he healed all who had need of healing, and in a sense of their need applied themselves to him for it. And this was a figure of the efficacy of the word of the gospel for the healing of diseased souls, a divine power going along with it; and in it the Sun of Righteousness arises in the soul, as it did in the world, with healing under his wings.[l]

Let this therefore recommend to you the words we teach you, that they are not only of inestimable value in themselves, but will be of unspeakable advantage to you. They are healing words indeed; for they are regenerating and recreating words whereby you may be saved.[m] Mix faith with them; and you will experience the power of them, setting you to rights, and giving you a new life and vigour. They are therefore not only faithful sayings, but well worthy of all acceptation, of *your* acceptation. Accept them therefore, and receive the benefit of them, that you receive not God's grace in vain: And if they be in vain, and you be not healed by them, the fault is in yourselves.

[a] Cant. 1. 8. [b] Luke 1. 1. [c] 1 Pet. 3. 21.

[a] Ps. 12. 2. [b] Mat. 5. 18. [c] Job 19. 24, 25. [d] 1 Tim. 1. 15. [e] 1 Pet. 5. 11. [f] Rev. 19. 9. [g] Jer. 23. 28. [h] Ez. 47. 8, 9. [i] Rev. 22. 2. [k] Ps. 107. 20. [l] Mal. 4. 2. [m] Acts 11. 14.

2. It

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2. It is good to have forms of these sound words, drawn up for the use of those who are to learn the first principles of the oracles of God;[a] not to be imposed as of equal authority with the Scriptures, but to be proposed in order to the further study of the Scriptures.

Bear us witness,—we set up no other rule of faith and practice, no other oracle, no other touchstone or test of orthodoxy, but the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament: these only are the fountains whence we fetch our knowledge; these only the foundations on which we build our faith and hope; these the *dernier resort* of all our enquiries and appeals in the things of God, for they only are given by divine inspiration. This is the principle we abide by: *To the law and to the testimony,*[b] that is the *Regula Regulans,—the paramount rule,* and far be it from us that we should set up any form of words in competition with it, much lest in contradiction to it; or admit any rival with it in the conduct and guardianship of our souls,—as some do, the traditions of the Church; and others, I know not what light within: every other help we have for our souls we make use of as *Regula reguluta,—a rule controlled,* in subordination and subserviency to the Scripture, and among the rest our catechisms and confessions of faith.

Give me leave to illustrate this by an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe: they know very well that the common law of England lies in the *Year Book,* and *Books of Reports,* in the *Records of immemorial customs,* and in *cases occasionally adjudged*: which are—not an artificial system drawn up by the rules of method, but rather historical collections of what was solemnly discussed, and judiciously delivered, in several reigns, *pro re natâ,—as occasions have arisen,* and always taken for law; and according to which the practice has always been;—(with which, if I may be allowed to compare that which—infinitely more sacred and inviolable—cannot be altered or amended by any wisdom or power on earth;) such are the books of the Scripture,—histories of the several ages of the Church, (as those of the several reigns of the kings,) and of the discoveries of God's mind and will in every age, as there was occasion; and these too built upon ancient principles received and submitted to before these divine annals began to be written.

But though *those* are the fountains and foundations of the law, those gentlemen know that *institutes* and *abridgments, collections of, and references to the cases adjudged in the books,*—are of great use to them, to prepare them for the study of the originals, and to assist them in the application of them, but are not thought to derogate from the authority and honour of them: Such we reckon our forms of sound words to be; if in any thing they mistake the sense of the text, or misapply it, they must be corrected by it; but as far as they agree with it, they are of great use to make it more easy and ready to us.

That which is intended in these forms of sound words, is—not like the council of Trent, to make a new creed, and add it to what we have in the Scripture; but to collect and arrange the truths and laws of God, and to make them familiar.

(1.) By these forms of sound words, the main principles of Christianity, which lie scattered in the Scripture, are collected and brought together. We know that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, and that there is no idle word in God's book, nothing that is unnecessary: but we know that all is not alike profitable, or alike necessary. Every line in a well drawn picture is of use, and answers some end: but every line is not alike serviceable to the main design of the picture, which is to represent the face of the person whose picture it is,—yet we must not say therefore, that it might as well have been spared. The Scripture gives us the things of God in their native purity and plainness, yet not without their proper illustrations. It is *naked* TRUTH, that is, without disguise, and the ambiguity which Apollo's oracles were noted for—but not NAKED *truth,* without dress and ornament.

Now our catechisms and confessions of faith pick up from the several parts of holy writ, those passages, which, though perhaps, occasionally delivered, contain the essentials of religion, the foundations and main pillars upon which Christianity is built; which we are concerned rightly to understand, and firmly to believe, in the first place,—and, then, to go on to perfection, we cannot contain all the Scripture; but there are some more weighty and comprehensive sayings, which (like those which the Jews wrote in their phylactries) we should bind, for a sign, upon our hand, and which should be as frontlets between our eyes.[a] And our forms of sound words furnish us with these.

(2.) By these, the truths of God are arranged and put in order. The several books of Scripture are written in an excellent method, according as the particular nature and intention of them is, and they are put together in an admirable good order: but when out of them the *main principles* of religion are to be gathered, it is necessary that they be put into some method proper to serve the design of representing them at one view, that we may understand them the more distinctly, by observing their mutual references to each other, their connexion with, and dependence upon each other; and thereby they appear in their truer light, and fuller lustre.

These forms of sound words, shew us—the order that is in God's words, as well as in his works; the harmony of divine truths, how one thing tends to another, and all centre in Christ, and the glory of God in Christ: and thus, like the stones in an arch, they mutually support and strengthen, and fix one another. They are as a map of the land of promise, by the help of which we may travel it over with our eye in a little time, and know the true situation of every tribe, though we cannot give a particular description of every part of its inheritance.

[a] Heb. 5. 12. Heb. 6. 1. [b] Isa. 8. 20.

[a] Deut. 6. 8.

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(3.) By these, the truths of God are brought down to the capacity of young ones, and those who are as yet but weak in understanding. Not that God has *spoke in secret, in a dark place of the earth*;[a] no, *The words of Wisdom's mouth are all plain to him that understandeth.*[b] but to those who are yet babes they need to be explained,—to them we must *give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading*;[c] and this is in part done by those forms of sound words, which lead us by the hand as it were into the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Not that we need to seek other words than those which the Holy Ghost teaches, they are the most proper vehicle of the things which are *given us of God to know*;[d] and it is unsafe to depart from them. Many under pretence of refining upon the Scripture, and expressing the things contained in it more philosophically, have but darkened counsel by words without knowledge:[e] the faithful servant will deliver his message as near as he can in his master's own words; *Go* (says God to Ezekiel) *get thee to the house of Israel*; *and* do not only speak my words, but *speak with my words to them.*[f]

But spiritual things must be compared with spiritual; and by the plainer parts of Scripture, those must be explained that are more dark and hard to be understood, and this is done by our *forms of sound words*, which make the principles of religion to be as milk for babes, who as yet cannot bear strong meat.[g] The ten commandments are a divine form of sound words to direct our *practice*: but they are short and exceeding comprehensive; it is therefore necessary that we be taught from other Scriptures, what each commandment requires and forbids. The Lord's Prayer is another divine form of sound words to direct our *petitions*; but that also is short and comprehensive, and it is requisite we should be taught from other Scriptures, what we pray for in each petition. The form of baptism is another divine form of sound words, peculiar to the Christian dispensation: but that also needs to be explained by other Scriptures, as it is excellently well in the ancient creeds; which we receive and embrace, and greatly rejoice in, as standing lasting testimonies to the faith once delivered to the saints,[h] which, by the grace of God, we will not only adhere to, but earnestly contend for, and live and die by. And all these divine forms of sound words you have fully and faithfully set before you, and opened to you in the Assembly's larger and shorter Catechism; as blessed be God, they are in many other, both in our own, and other reformed churches.

3. Those are happy who are well taught, and have well-learned, those forms of sound words when they are young. It is a great privilege, and a very improving one—to be betimes instructed in the principles of religion; and to have the truths of Christ instilled into us in the days of our youth, and to be trained up in an acquaintance and converse with them from the first; by the care of godly parents especially, who have many advantages in dealing with children which ministers cannot have,—To be put betimes upon reading the Scriptures, and getting portions of it by heart; remembering and repeating sermons; to be taught the catechism, and examined in it, and not only made to *say* it, but made, as we are capable, to *understand* it, and taught to *prove* it by Scripture, and give a reason for it,—To be directed to pray, and obliged to do it, and to a strict observation of the Lord's day, in order to all this. And if to all this be added *ministerial catechising*, the more copious and accurate explication of the mysteries of God by the appointed stewards of those mysteries,—it consummates the happiness of a religious education, from which abundant advantages may be reaped, if it be wisely and faithfully improved.

I know I speak to *those* who enjoy this privilege,—on whom the doctrine of Christ not only comes down *in showers*—in the preaching of the word—but on whom *it distils* more slowly and softly, *as the dew, and as the small rain upon the tender herb*[a] in catechising. And I commend your pious zeal in coveting and seeking instruction this way. Go on, and prosper, the Lord is with you while you be with him: and I hope it is a token for good, and will prove so—that God has mercy in store for the next generation,—that there are so many young people among us who are *asking their way to Zion*, and desire to be told it, *with their faces thitherward. Who hath begotten us these?*[b]

I know also there *are* many, and many there *have been*, who were blest with a religious education, when they were young, and were then trained up in the way in which they should go, who have afterwards turned aside from the holy commandment; who though they were not *born of fornication*, but were the *seed of the faithful*, yet have proved an unfaithful seed, and have themselves *gone a whoring from their God*. This should not discourage parents and ministers from doing their duty, in catechising youth—but should direct them to look up to God, for his grace, without which all our care and pains is fruitless, and we do but beat the air; and should engage *you who are catechised* to be jealous over yourselves, with a godly jealousy, that you may not be conceited of yourselves, or confident in yourselves,—may not be *high-minded*, but may always *fear*—least you *seem to come short* of that which is expected from you, or seem to fall off to any evil work or way,—and though now you think you stand, may always take heed least you fall.

But I know that your being thus catechised—if you improve it aright, and be not wanting to yourselves,—will be of unspeakable advantage to you, and I hope to be of use, both to direct you and to encourage you; if I tell you how and which way it may be made so.

(1.) Hereby, *you are, for some time, well employed now you are young*. Childhood and youth, upon this account (among others) are vanity:[c] that so much of the time is then spent to so little purpose, and yet better than—as it is afterwards spent by many—to evil purposes. But your being catechised obliges you to spend

[a] Isa. 45. 19. [b] Pro. 8. 9. [c] Neh. 8. 8. [d] 1 Cor. 2. 13. [e] Job 38 2. [f] Ez. 3. 4. [g] Heb. 5. 12. [h] Jude 3.

[a] Deut. 32. 2. [b] Jer. 50. 5. [c] Ecc. 11. 10.

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at least some part of your time well,—and so as you may afterwards reflect upon it, with comfort and satisfaction above many other, perhaps above any other, of your precious moments. If the time which children and young people would, *otherwise*, spend in sport and recreation, (they call it PAS[S]-TIME, when we have more need of STAY-times than pastimes, for it passes away fast enough of itself,) is thus happily retrieved,—and is spent in good exercises; in conversing with the word of God; (which we should be meditating in day and night; in reviewing and repeating to ourselves the things of God,—we cannot but say that it is a kindness to us, and much greater than it would be—to keep a man from spending an estate wastefully; and put him into a way of getting an estate easily and honourably. Whatever goes with the rest of your time, —here is a portion of it spent so as to turn to a good account, and so as you may meet it again with comfort on the other side death and the grave.

Those who are catechised either by their parents or ministers on the *evening* of the Lord's day, have a particular advantage therein: that those precious minutes (and one minute of Sabbath-time is worth three of any other day) which so many young people idle away in foreign, foolish talk, either in the fields, or at the doors of their houses; (which corrupts the mind and manners, and dispels what they had gained, if they had gained any thing, in and by the duties of the day;) they spend in that which serves such good purposes, and will help to clench the nail that has been driven, that it may be a *nail in a sure place*. I know not how young people can be trained up to a better piece of good husbandry, than to a good husbandry of time, especially Sabbath-time.

(2.) Hereby, you will *become better able to understand the word preached, and more capable of profiting by it*, and so it will be a great advantage to you. I am sure it is the duty of ministers to preach the word, and therein to be constant, to be instant in season and out of season, they have [2 Tim. 4. 1, 2.] received a solemn charge to do so: and if so—either you must hear; or, they must preach to the walls. And I am sure you are concerned to hear, so that your souls may live; and therefore to take heed how you hear; and in order to your profiting to hear with understanding. The *highway* ground in our Saviour's parable, represents those who hear the words of the kingdom, and understand it not;[a] for it is not plowed up and prepared to receive it; they are not instructed in the things that are spoken of, and therefore such as speak to them of those things are *barbarians*. They who are not catechised, not taught the forms of sound words; apprehend not what we mean when we speak of their misery by nature, the sinfulness of sin, the mediation of Christ, the operations of the Spirit, and the great things of the other world,—we had as good talk Greek to them: they are ready to say of us, as the people did of Ezekiel's preaching, *Doth he not speak parables?*[b]

But you who are catechised understand our dialect, are acquainted with Scripture language; for you are accustomed to it, and can say: "This good word is the confirmation, and that the illustration, and the other the application, of what we have many a time heard, and knew before,—but thus are made to know better. And therefore though those who have not been catechised do most *need* instruction, by the preaching of the word; (and for their sakes we must many a time stay to explain things which are most plain, wherein they who are strong ought to bear with us, in compassion to the infirmities of the weak;) yet those who have been well catechised do most *desire* it,—and delight in it, and edify by it, because they understand it. Catechising does to the preaching of the word the same good office that John Baptist did to our Saviour; it prepares its way, and makes its paths strait,—and yet like him does but say the same things: "*Repent with an eye to the kingdom of heaven.*"

(3.) Hereby, *you will have a foundation laid for a good work of grace in your souls*. It is true, that God —in his favours to us, and his operations on us—acts as a God; with an incontestible sovereignty, and an irresistible power: but it is as true that he deals with men as men, as reasonable creatures, in a way suited to their nature, he draws with the cords of a man;[a] he gains possession of the will and affections by opening the understanding, informing the judgment, and rectifying its mistakes. And this is entering into the soul as the good shepherd, whose own the sheep are, enters into the sheepfold by the door;[b] whereas Satan debauches the affections, and so perverts the will, and bribes and blinds the understanding,—which is climbing up another way, for he is a thief and a robber. Christ opens the understanding, and so makes the heart to burn; opens men's eyes, and causes the scales to fall from them; and so turns men from Satan to God.

Now though Christ can give an understanding immediately—as, to Paul: yet ordinarily he enlightens it, in the use of means; and gives a knowledge of divine things, by the instructions of parents and ministers; and afterwards by his Spirit and grace brings them home to the mind and conscience, delivers the soul into the mould of them, and by them works a saving change in it. It was the prerogative of an *apostle* to come to the knowledge of the gospel, not by man, nor to be taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ:[c] *we* must come to the knowledge of it, in the way of instituted ordinances; and none more likely to prepare for the particular applications of divine grace, than this particular application of good instruction by catechising.

(4.) Hereby you will be *armed against the assaults and insinuations of seducers*, and such as lie in wait to deceive, and draw you aside into the paths of error. Satan is a roaring lion, who seeks in this way to devour souls; and none are such an easy prey to him as those who are ignorant and unskilful in the word of righteousness. But those who are well instructed in

[a] Mat. 13. 19. [b] Ez. 20. 49.

[a] Hos. 11. 4. [b] John 10. 1, 2. [c] Gal. 1. 12.

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the forms of sound words, and understand the evidence of divine truths; are aware of the fallacies with which others are beguiled; and know how to detect and escape them, for surely *in vain* is the net spread in the sight of any bird. They who grow in the knowledge of Christ, will not be visibly led away by the error of the wicked, so as to fall from their own stedfastness;[a] those who are thus established when they are children, will not be always *children, tossed about with every wind of doctrine.*[b]

Those who are well catechised, are well fortified against temptations to atheism and infidelity, which, under pretence of FREE-thinking, invite men to FALSE and FOOLISH-thinking; and by *debauching their principles*, corrupt their morals: and which, under pretence of a FREE-*conversation*, allure to VICE and IMMORALITY, enslave the soul to the most brutish lusts; and by *corrupting the morals*, debauch the principles. It will likewise be an excellent antidote against the poison of Popery; a national zeal against which is, then, likely to be an effectual defence of the Protestant religion, when it is a zeal according to knowledge. A right understanding of the *offices* and *ordinances* of Christ,—the former of which are daringly usurped, and the latter wickedly corrupted and prophaned in the church of Rome—will, by the blessing of God, preserve us from going in with those strong delusions, though the temptation should be ever so strong, and prepare us to suffer, rather than to sin, if we should be called out to it.

(5.) Hereby you will be *furnished for doing good to others*, in the places where God has set you. Your being well instructed in the forms of sound words, will qualify you to be useful in your generation, for the glory of God, and the edification of many; which will be your honour and comfort now, and will add to your crown hereafter. Out of a good treasure of Christian knowledge well laid up when you are young, you will be able, like the good housholder, to *bring forth things new and old*,[c] as there is occasion, for the entertainment and benefit of others. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak.* Hereby you will be able to resist and oppose that evil communication which corrupts good manners, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and not only so, but to advance and keep up that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying,[d] which may manifest grace in your hearts, and minister grace to the hearers. These forms of sound words, will teach you that sound spirit which cannot be condemned.[e] And thus your lips will feed many.

It will be likewise of great use to you in prayer; both in secret, and with your families, when God calls you to the charge of families. With what solid judgment, exact method, aptness, and great variety of expression, have I heard private Christians, who have been well instructed in the things of God, and conversant with the Scripture, offer up their prayers and supplications to God, without the help of any other forms, but those forms of sound words; and this with such undissembled indications of pious affection, as has been very proper to kindle and excite to raise and carry on, the devotions of those who joined with them. I believe some who are pleased to be severe, in their reflections upon all *extemporary prayer*, as we call it; would not be so, if they knew *this* so well as I have done.

(6.) Hereby, *those who have a good work of grace begun in them, will be greatly assisted in the progress of it.* Timothy, by the help of these forms of sound words, is nourished up in faith and good doctrine, whereunto he has attained.[a] They who have pure hearts and clean hands, hereby shall become stronger and stronger[b] in judgment, in affection, and in resolution. The more firmly the foundation is laid, the broader and the higher the building may be carried. And the better we understand the road we are to travel, the better we shall get forward in our journey. Affectionate Christians who are weak in knowledge, have but the wings of a dove that flies low: but knowing Christians are carried on as upon eagles' wings, with which they mount up for the prize of the high calling,—they run and are not weary.

And those who have themselves some good measures of knowledge and grace; may be greatly improved in both, by attending upon public catechising; and if young, by bearing a part in it. Apollos was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; and he was instructed in the way of the Lord,[c] κατηχημενος—*he was catechised*, so the word is: and he was fervent in spirit, yet he was still willing to learn, and found advantage by it; for there were those who took him, and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Those who think they understand the way of God pretty well, yet should still be *increasing with the increase of God*, should not think they have already attained, or are already perfect, but should be pressing forward, and covet to understand the way of God more perfectly.

(7.) Hereby, you will *have your memories well stored* for your own use, and will have always good matter ready at hand for pious thoughts and meditations. It is certainly as much the benefit, as it is the duty of Christians, to converse much in their hearts with the things of God. It is the character of the blessed man, and an evidence of his delighting in the law of God after the inner man, that *in that law he meditates day and night.*[d] *O how do I love it!* says David, *it is my meditation all the day*;[e] it is the subject, not only of my frequent, but of my fixed thoughts; not now and then, upon an occasion—but constantly. And if David could find such employment and entertainment for his thoughts from morning till night in the law of God, much more may we find satisfaction in it, and the gospel of Christ too, which so far excels it.

Now one reason why this duty of meditation is so much neglected, is, because people want matter for

[a] 2 Pet. 3. 17. [b] Eph. 4. 14. [c] Mat. 13. 52. [d] Eph. 4. 29. Tit. 2. 8.

[a] 1 Tim. 4. 6. [b] Job 17 9. [c] Acts 18. 24, 25, 26. [d] Ps. 1. 2. [e] 119. 17.

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their thoughts to enlarge and expatiate upon; and the reason of that is, because they were never enriched, as they should have been, in all knowledge;[a] their stock is soon exhausted, and they know not what to think of next. But if you get an abundance of good knowledge, you will never have to seek for something proper and useful to entertain yourselves with. You soon forget the sermons you hear; but if your catechism was well learned, and the *proofs* of it, you can never forget *them;* so that you may at any time take an answer of your catechism, and dwell upon that in your thoughts, till your hearts burn within you.

(8.) Hereby you will be *enabled to transmit, pure and entire, to those who come after you, that good thing which is committed to you.* The truths and ordinances of Christ are a sacred deposit, a trust handed down to us by our believing predecessors, and lodged in our hands —to be carefully kept in our day, and faithfully transferred to the generations to come: but how can we do that, if we be not ourselves both rightly and fully, apprized of it. We are false to this trust—not only if we *betray* it, by the admission of heresy and idolatry; but if we *lose* it, and let it drop, by ignorance and carelesness,—and unacquaintedness with, and indifference to the interests of Christianity.

We of this age cannot *otherwise* repay what we received from those who went before us, than by consigning the value received to those who come after us; nor make any other requital to our parents, for giving us a good education, but by giving the like to our children; which, therefore, with the utmost care and pains we should *qualify* ourselves to do,—and then *make conscience* of doing. And those who have not children of their own, ought to do it for the children of their relations, and the children of the poor; and to promote public catechisings and charity schools; and thus contribute what they can to the raising up of a seed to serve Christ, which shall be accounted to him for a generation,—that thus the name of Christ may endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. What has been told to us of the wonderous works of God, we must tell to our children, that they may tell them to their children, that those who *shall be created* may praise the Lord.[b]

II. Those who have the *privilege* to hear and learn the forms of sound words; with it have a *charge,* To hold them fast in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

This implies that you are in danger of losing them, and being robbed of them, through your own negligence; of having them snatched out of your hands by your spiritual enemies, or drop through your fingers, if you do not hold them fast. Satan is that wicked-one who steals the word of God out of the hearts of the careless hearers and learners; as the fowls of the air do the seed from the highway ground,[c] that it could not have any root in. Many have had the form of sound words, and with it a form of godliness, and a name to live: but have let them go, and lost them; have made shipwreck of the faith, and of their own souls. Let their falls be warnings to us, and let us therefore fear *lest we also come short,* or so much as *seem to come short.*

I know I speak to those who have the form of sound words, who have *hold of it.* In God's name therefore I charge you to *hold it fast,* to keep your hold of it, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1. You must hold it fast, that is, you must retain the remembrance of it; keep it in mind and memory; you have it, see that you always have it, that you have it ready for your use upon all occasions. Great stress is laid upon this: the Gospel is that by which we are saved, if we keep in memory what has been preached unto us:[a]—not as if the bare remembering and being able to recite these sound words, and the forms of them, were sufficient to save us; they do not heal as charms and spells pretend to do, merely by the repeating or writing of them:—a man may be able to say all the Bible over by heart, and yet come short of grace and glory: but the remembering of these things is necessary to our due improvement of them, and to the other duties required of us: if we so remember the covenant, as to be ever mindful of it; if we remember his commandments to do them,[b] we remember them aright.

(1.) It will be of good use to you, to retain the words you now learn and hear; and in order to that, frequently to review them, to catechise yourselves, and repeat them over to yourselves. What you said to your parents perhaps by rote, when you were children, and not yet capable of knowing the intent and extent of; you should now say to yourselves, with understanding, and judgment, and affection. Let not the wisest and best be ashamed to repeat the words of their catechism, as they have occasion to quote them; but let them rather be ashamed who cannot do it; who can remember, all their days, the idle foolish stories and songs they learned when they were young, but forget the forms of those words whereby they must be saved, and must be judged.

(2.) It is of absolute necessity that you retain the remembrance of the *things,* so as to have them ready for use, though it be in your own words. It is necessary that you should be well acquainted with the mystery of the gospel; with your need of a Saviour; with the method in which the salvation was wrought out by the Son of God, and is applied by the Spirit of God; with the breadth of the commandment, and with the strictness and spiritual nature of it; with the tenour of the new covenant, and the precious privileges of it; and with the great truths concerning the upper and future world: in these things you have been instructed; and are concerned to give the more earnest heed to the things you have heard, lest at any time you let them slip.[c] Consider:

[1.] They are things worth remembering; of inestimable value in themselves, and of vast importance and concern to us; in comparison with which,

[a] 1 Cor. 1. 5. [b] Ps. 78. 5, 6. [c] Mat. 13. 19.

[a] 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2. [b] 1 Chr. 16. 15.

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abundance of other things which we fill our memories with, are but toys and trash. How many things do we retain the remembrance of, which tend to defile our minds, or to disquiet them; which we would *willingly forget* if we could. And how many more are we *industrious to keep in memory* which serve only to the carrying on of our business in the world: whilst THAT is seldom or never seriously thought of, and so comes by degrees to be in a manner forgotten, WHICH BELONGS TO OUR PEACE, our everlasting peace; and justly may that be hid from our eyes,[a] which we thus hide our eyes from. The reason Moses gives to Israel, why they should set their hearts to all the words he testified to them,—will hold more strongly, why we should treasure up Christ's word in our heart, and let it dwell in us richly,—that *It is not a vain thing for us, but it is our life:*[b] and the lives of our souls depend upon it.

[2.] The remembrance of them will be of very great, and good, use to us daily: both to *fortify us against every evil word and work,* by suggesting to us the most powerful arguments against sin, and the most pertinent answers to the temptations of Satan; and to *furnish us for every good word and work,* by suggesting to us the wisest directions, and the sweetest encouragements, in doing our duty. If we hold fast these forms of sound words as we ought,—our mouth, like that of the righteous, *shall speak wisdom,* and our tongue shall be able to *talk of judgment.* And if thus the law of our God be in our heart, none of our steps shall slide. Solomon for this reason writes to us excellent things in counsel and knowledge: *that we may answer the words of truth to those that send to us;*[c] or, as the margin reads it, *to those that send us,* to God who sent us into the world to do all the good we can in it.

[3.] It was for this end that we have heard and learned them: *that we might lay them up in our hearts, in order to their being of use to us hereafter;* so that we receive the grace of God therein in vain, if we do not retain them. They are not intended merely for your present exercise and entertainment; as a task upon you to keep you employed, much less as an amusement to keep up in you a reverence for your parents and teachers; but they were intended to fit you for the service of God in this world, and the vision and fruition of him in a better world. Your learn your catechism—not as you who were designed for tradesmen learned Latin and Greek, when you went to school, it may be; with design to forget it, because you had a notion you should never have occasion for it in your business; but as you learned to write and cast accompts, with design to retain it, because you were told you would have use for it daily in carrying on your trade. You are taught now, that you may—as long as you live, live according to what you are taught.

[4.] You will be called to an account shortly for these, as well as other your advantages; and therefore are concerned to improve them, so that you may give up your account with joy, such joy as shall be an earnest of that *joy of our Lord,* into which *good and faithful servants,* who have diligently and faithfully improved their talents, shall *enter,* and in which they shall be for ever happy. For your having heard and learned these things, will but aggravate your condemnation if you do not hold them fast. You know what was Chorazin's doom, and Bethsaida's, and Capernaum's; tremble lest it should be your's. It is an awful thought which I have somewhere met with: "That the professors of this age, in which there is such plenty of the means of knowledge and grace—whether they go to heaven, or hell—will be the greatest debtors in either of these places: if to heaven, the greatest debtors to divine mercy and grace for those improved means that helped to bring them thither; if to hell, the greatest debtors to divine justice for those abused means that would have helped to keep them thence."

Let not what I have said of the necessity of remembering the sound words we hear, be a discouragement to any serious conscientious Christians, who have honest and good hearts, but weak and treacherous memories; nor make the righteous sad, who ought not to be made sad. You who tremble at God's word, do really get good by it, though you cannot recollect the method and language in which it is delivered you. If you live in the fear of God, and in a course of holy watchfulness against sin, and diligence in duty, you retain the impressions of the word, though you cannot retain the expressions of it. I have been told of a good man, who was much affected with a sermon he heard concerning, as it would appear, the vanity of the world; and commending it afterwards to a friend, was desired to give some account of the sermon: "Truly," says he, "I cannot remember any thing of it, but I am resolved, by the grace of God, I will never set my heart so much upon this world, as I have done;" "Why then," (says his friend) "Thou rememberest all." David will never forget God's precepts, for (says he) *By them thou hast quickened me.*[a] If we find our hearts *quickened* by the word, we *do not* forget it; and it is to be hoped we *will not,* we *shall not* forget it. Put a sieve that is dirty into the water, and though when you take it out it carries away little or nothing of the water with it, yet it is washed and made clean. Though we cannot repeat the good sermons we have heard; yet if, through grace, our hearts and ways are purified by them, they are not lost.

But let what I have said engage you who hear and learn the forms of sound words, to hold them fast, to imprint them in your minds and memories, that you may have them ready to you at all times, as occasion requires. In order to this, labour to understand them; and let your knowledge be clear and distinct, and then you will be likely to retain it; set every truth in its proper place, and then you will know where to find it; set it in its true light, and then you will know what use to make of

[a] Luke 19. 41. [b] Deut. 32. 46, 47. [c] Pro. 22. 20. 21.

[a] Ps. 119. 93.

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it. Get your hearts duly affected with divine things, and abide and act under the power and influence of them; and then you will remember them. Be often repeating them to yourselves: the Virgin Mary kept the sayings of Christ, by *pondering them in her heart.*[a]

2. You must hold it fast in faith. It is not enough to *remember* the good truths that are taught you; but you must *mix them with faith,*[b] or they will not profit you. You let them go, though you remember them ever so well; if you let go the *belief* of them, and the *profession of your faith* concerning them: it is by a hand of faith that you *take hold* of them, and *keep hold.*

You must hold them fast in faith, that is,

(1.) You must give a firm assent to them as faithful sayings; must set to your seal that God is true. And every word of his is so, even that which you cannot *comprehend the mystery of,*—as the eternity of God, the immensity of all his perfections, the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the operations of the Spirit upon the soul of man, and the like; yet *because they are things which God has revealed,* you must subscribe to the truth of: if you do not, you make God a liar; and do in effect make yourselves wiser than God, when you say, *How can this be?* Whereas you should say, *Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

(2.) You must grow up to a full assurance of the undeniable truth, and incontestable evidence, of these sound words. Pass on toward perfection; acquaint yourselves with the *Confirming Catechism;* know not only *what* it is we believe, but *why* we believe it; and be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in you.[c] Solomon had this view in instructing his son; *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth;*[d] that thou mayest be convinced that they are words of truth, and receive them accordingly. And Luke the Evangelist had the same design in writing his gospel, and inscribing it to his friend Theophilus, who, probably, had been his pupil; *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed;*[e] this is holding it fast in faith.

(3.) You must make a faithful application of these sound and healing words to yourselves; else they will not answer the end, or be healing to you, any more than food not eaten, physic not taken, or a plaister not applied. Of the word of Christ you must say,—not only "This is true," but, "This is true concerning *me:*" *He loved me, and gave himself for me;* to save me, not *in* my sins, but *from* them; and to purify me to himself, and make me zealous of good works. Hear it, and know it, for thy good,[f] says Eliphaz to Job, *for thyself,* so it is in the margin. Then only we know it for our good, when we know it for *ourselves.*

3. You must hold it fast in love: that is the other arm with which these forms of sound words must be embraced, and held, that we may not let them go.

(1.) You must take delight in them, and in the knowledge of them: that which we love we will hold fast, and not easily part with. It is not enough for us to know the truth, but we must love it; not enough that we receive it as a faithful saying, but also as well worthy of all acceptation; we must not only give it credit as true news, but bid it welcome as good news, and rejoice in it; and when Christ says, *Surely, I come quickly,* we must not only say, "*Even so,* so IT IS, *he* WILL *come,*" but *Amen, so* BE IT; COME *Lord Jesus.*[a] This wisdom, this knowledge must so enter into thy heart, as to become pleasant to thy soul.[b] They say it was a ceremony used of old by the Jews, when they sent their children to school, they gave them a piece of a honeycomb to eat, repeating those words of Solomon, *My son, eat thou honey because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul, when thou hast found it.*[c] And that which is not thus delighted in, will not be long held fast.

(2.) You must be affected with them, and lay them to heart, as things that concern you to the last degree. Love is the leading affection and rules the rest: as that goes, all the rest move. Be affected with love to the good word of God; and then you will conceive a high value and veneration for Christ, and a rooted antipathy to sin; a holy contempt of the world, a deep concern for your own souls, and a care about your everlasting state; and all other good affections, that will be the principles of a steady and regular motion of the soul heaven-wards. And then you will hold fast this form of sound words, when it makes such impressions as those upon you, and (as Christ's sayings ought to do) sinks down into your hearts,[d] and impresses a weight and stamp upon them.

3. You must be influenced by them, and act under the commanding power of them. That *love* in which the sound words must be held fast; is here put for all that *evangelical obedience* which holy love is the principle of,—for, as faith works by love; so, love works by keeping the commandments of God;[e] for *This is the love of God,* that we *keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.* We then hold fast the sayings of Christ; when we hold to them, in the constant temper of our minds, and tenor of our lives,—and govern ourselves by them in all we say or do,—that we may *thus* adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

4. There is one word more in the text to be touched upon; and it is the centre and crown of all. This faith and love, must be in Christ Jesus. Blessed Paul, full of Blessed Jesus, breathes nothing so much as Christ; he is his Alpha and Omega, and must be our's; it is the token in every epistle. We must hold fast the sound words of the gospel, in that faith and love which has Christ for its author, its object, and its end—

(1.) Which has Christ for its *author;* that faith and love which is wrought in us, not by the strength of any natural reasonings or resolutions of our own,—but by the Spirit and grace of Christ, darting rays of divine light into the understanding, and striking sparks of divine fire into the affections, for these are *not of ourselves,*

[a] Luke 2. 19. [b] Heb. 4. 2. [c] 1 Pet. 3. 15. [d] Pro. 22. 21. [e] Luke 1. 4. [f] Job 5. 27.

[a] Rev. 22. 20. [b] Pro. 2. 10. [c] Pro. 24. 13, 14. [d] Luke 9. 44. [e] 1 John 5. 3.

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they are the *gift of God.* Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;[a] for on him is our help laid, and in him only is our help found. Depend not upon any ability of your own; lean not to your own understanding: but go forth and go on, take hold and keep hold, in Christ's strength.

(2.) Which has Christ for its *object:* that faith and love in which the truths of the gospel must be held fast; as it must flow from Christ, so it must fasten on him. It is Christ in the gospel that we must embrace, and hold fast; who is the true treasure hid in that field, which, we must think it worth while to part with all we have for the purchase of. It is by faith in Christ, and love to Christ, that we must hold fast what we have received. For this reason, we must embrace these sound words; because we find so much of Christ in them. He is that golden thread that runs through the web of the whole gospel. St. Austin somewhere says of himself, that before his conversion, he took great delight in reading the writings of Tully, the Roman Orator, but now (says he) "I cannot relish them at all, as I used to do, because I find nothing of Christ in them."

(3.) Which has Christ for its *end.* It must be that faith and love *which has an eye to Christ;* which has this always in view, *to glorify Christ, and to be glorified with Christ:* that *faith* which presses toward its own perfection, in the immediate sight of Christ; and that *love* which presses toward its own perfection, in the everlasting enjoyment of him.

Application.

Let me now close with a few words of exhortation, in reference to the form of sound words.

1. Let us bless God, That our lot is cast in a land of light; that he who determines the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, has determined our's so well, and so much to our advantage; that those statutes and judgments, which the heathen have not known, are revealed to us. We can never be enough thankful to God for this distinguishing favour, his manifesting himself to us, so as not unto the world. *Blessed are our eyes, for they see* the joyful light —and *our ears, for they hear* the joyful sound—which many prophets and kings desired to see, desired to hear; and might not.[b] We can never be enough thankful to God for it, That living in a *Christian nation* we have Bibles; in a *Protestant nation,* we have them in a language we understand; that to us are committed the Oracles of God,[c] *the lively oracles,* with more advantage than to the Jews of old; that with us are the priests, the Lord's ministers, sounding with his trumpets.[d] So many and so great are our privileges, above most other nations, that it may justly be expected, I wish it could be as justly said, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*[e]

2. Let us particularly be thankful to God, for the forms of sound words, both ancient and modern, which we have among us; for our catechisms and confessions of faith; That we have plenty of them; and variety of them,—not clashing and contradicting each other, but rather confirming and illustrating each other; for to Christ they all with one consent bear witness,—and to the law and to the testimony they all appeal; though the methods be different, they meet in the same centre; and tend to direct those of different tastes and capacities to it likewise.

3. Let parents and governors of families make conscience of instructing their children, and servants, in the forms of sound words. Here this work must begin, for it must begin betimes; *Whom shall he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine?* The prophet there answers, *Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts;*[a] when they are very young, under the immediate care of their mothers or grandmothers, as Timothy was: they are the teachers of babes.[b] When Solomon was tender, and only beloved in the sight of his mother,[c] she taught him.[d] The history of the Scripture is most proper to acquaint your children with in the first place; we see how soon they apprehend, and are affected with other stories; and why may not impressions be made upon them as soon by the Scripture stories. Pleasant and profitable instructions may also be given to children by the psalms for singing, and by divine poems and verses suited to their capacity.

It will be of great use likewise to your children, to be told betimes, what it is supposed natural for them to ask, *What we mean by this and the other religious service.*[e] Tell them why you read the Bible with so much veneration: because it is the book of God, and holy men wrote the several parts of it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Tell them why you make conscience of praying to God so solemnly every day: because you have a necessary and constant dependance upon God, and upon his providence and grace, that you are daily receiving mercy from him, and daily need his favour. Tell them why you observe the Lord's Day, and make such a difference between that and other days: that it is in remembrance of the creation of the world, the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit. Especially tell them of their baptism; take all opportunities to let them see children baptized, (in order to which it is very good to have it done publicly,) and tell them, thus they were baptized in their infancy, and by that solemnity *dedicated and devoted to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;* and what was done for them then, they must now do for themselves. Tell them of the corruption of their nature, which needed cleansing; and of the grace of God in Christ, in which there is a cleansing virtue.

Set them to learn their catechism: let them commit some portions of Scripture to memory, as you find they are able to do it: and examine them, what they can remember of the sermons they hear. You will meet

[a] 2 Tim. 2. 1. [b] Mat. 13. 16, 17. [c] Rom. 3. 2. [d] 2 Chr. 13. 12. [e] Deut. 4. 6.

[a] Isa. 28. 9. [b] Rom. 2. 20. [c] Pro. 4. 3. [d] Pro. 31. 1. [e] Exod. 12. 25.

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with some difficulty herein from the corruption of their nature, which you must endeavour to get over as much as may be by a gentle hand; give them instruction with all possible freedom and familiarity, with compassion and condescension to their capacity. *Those* teach these things most diligently to their children—not who are the most dictatorial in doing it, and make the greatest noise, but who talk of them *frequently;* when they sit in the house; and walk by the way; when they lie down; and when they rise up:[a] frequently dropping good instructions among their children: and if but one in ten insensibly slip into their minds, and fasten there, —what good proficients may we hope they will be in time. Contrive how to make this work, as much as may be, a pleasure and delight to your children and servants, and not a task, or a terror, or a drudgery. Teach them as Christ teaches, who is meek and lowly in heart.

4. Let the ministers of Christ look upon themselves as under a charge to feed the lambs of Christ's flock. All the reformed churches make this a part of their work; to be done either publicly or privately; either in their solemn religious assemblies, or in meetings on purpose for this work; or in visiting their families, either by themselves, or, as in some churches abroad, by some other proper persons qualified for, and deputed to, this service particularly. Private catechizing has the advantage of a more particular application to the persons catechized: public catechizing has the advantage of a more general edification; and therefore both should be used in their season,—or, that which, all circumstances considered, may turn to the best account.

O that we who are ministers, were filled with a zeal for the spiritual welfare and eternal salvation of young people, and a concern, for the rising generation; and were to do our utmost as our ability and opportunity is, to fill the minds of young-ones, in their early days, with the knowledge of Christ; and to fix them for Christ; that the next generation may be better than this. And O that those who are employed in public catechizing, may see of the travail of their souls to their satisfaction, and not labour in vain!

5. Let us look with pity upon the great numbers of children, even in our own land, who are not taught these forms of sound words, but are bred up in ignorance and profaneness; strangers and enemies to Christ and true Christianity: *They are poor, they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.*[b] They sit in darkness—in a land of light; and walk on in darkness; and if infinite mercy do not interpose to prevent, they are hastening into utter darkness. If you can do any thing, sirs, have compassion upon them and help them; pick up some of those neglected abandoned young ones, you who have ability; and rescue them from ruin, by putting them into a way of receiving instruction. We have charity schools set up in the city and country; which, if managed by the rules of catholic Christianity, have a direct tendency to the bettering of the world, and the reforming of the next age, if the reforming of this should be despaired of. What is given to the support and encouragement of them, is charity, both to soul and body, and will be fruit abounding to your account.

6. Let those who have heard and learned the forms of sound words long ago, retain them still; and improve, more and more. I have reason to think I speak to many who were blessed with a good education, were trained up in the way wherein they should go: I beseech you examine yourselves, not only whether you have not departed from it, I hope you have not quite deserted it, but what progress have you made in it? What have you built upon that foundation? Has it been wood, hay, and stubble;[a] airy notions, nice speculations, perverse disputings, and strifes of words: or has it been gold, silver, and precious stones; advances in serious godliness, in holiness, and heavenly mindedness, and the power of that kingdom of God, which is not meat or drink, but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?*[b] Go on and prosper, for the Lord is with you. But if you have in any degree let go that good thing which was committed to your trust, I beseech you bethink yourselves whence you have fallen, and remember again what you have received, and heard, and hold fast, and repent. *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*[c]

7. I must not part without a word to You, whose request brought me to this service here to-day, you who are catechized in the principles of religion,—that you may grow yet more and more in the knowledge of Christ and Christianity.

(1.) Carefully attend to the instructions that are given you; and treasure them up, with sincerity, and all the marks of reverence and seriousness. Give attendance on, and attention to what is taught you, and set your heart to it. You must take pains, else you cannot expect to reap advantage; for it is in labour that there is profit. Be careful to mark what is said, not critical to make remarks upon it; and give account of it with affection, but without affectation; and attend here, not for ostentation, because you think yourselves better than others, but for your edification, because you would be better than you are.

(2.) Pray over what is taught you, and beg of God to bless it to you. Man can but teach the outward ear, it is God only that can bring it to the heart, and in that respect none teach like him. It is he who teaches with a strong hand,[d] and then the teaching is effectual; who seals the instruction,[e] and then it is abiding; who gives the understanding, and opens the heart. Look up to him therefore by faithful and fervent prayer, for that grace of his which is necessary to your profiting by the means of grace. You crave his blessing upon the food for your body, that it may be nourishing to you; and can you expect your spiritual food should nourish you without that blessing,—or that you should have that blessing, if you do not pray for it? That good thing which is by the word committed to you to keep for God; do you by prayer commit to God to keep

[a] Deut. 6. 7. [b] Jer. 5. 4.

[a] 1 Cor. 3. 12. [b] Rom. 14. 17. [c] Rev. 3. 2, 3. [d] Isa. 8. 11. Job 33. 16.

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for you, and bring it to your minds when you should use it.

(3.) Live as those who by attendance on such an exercise as this, make a profession of religion above many others. Hereby you seem to be more solicitous about your souls, and more inquisitive concerning the way to heaven, than your neighbours: but what will it avail you that you seem to be so, unless you be really so? The tree will be known by its fruits. Evidence that you receive not so much instruction in vain, by the exemplary purity and piety, seriousness and strictness of your whole conversation. By your justice and charity, and unshaken veracity and fidelity; your sobriety and temperance; your humility and meekness; your conscientious obedience to your parents and masters, and a steady course of godliness and honesty; you ought to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. I remember Epictetus—pressing his pupil to shew by his practice of virtue, his profiting by the instructions given him—illustrates it by this similitude: "The sheep," says he, "do not come to their shepherd, and shew him how much meat they have eaten, but they make it to appear by their growing fatter and fitter for use." *Thus*, therefore, do you make it appear, that you improve in Christian knowledge; *by the agreeableness and evenness of your Christian practice, and your perseverance in it to the end*, that you and we may rejoice, in the day of the Lord, that we have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.

A MEMORIAL OF THE FIRE OF THE LORD,

IN A

SERMON,

Preached September 2, 1713, being the Day of the Commemoration of the BURNING of LONDON, in 1666.

At Mr. Reynolds's Meeting-House, near the Monument.

NUMB. 11. 3.

And he called the name of the place, Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burnt among them.

WE have here an account of the prudent and pious care which Moses took, to preserve the memorial of a fire which happened in the camp of Israel, by giving a new name of suitable signification to the place where it happened; which being left upon record here, in the book of God, is a monument of the fire, further visible and more durable than this pillar of stone, the monument hard by, and will outlast even a pillar of salt; for, wherever in any age, the books of Moses are read, and they shall be read in every age to the end of time, there shall this be told for a memorial; that the fire of the Lord burnt among the Israelites, and in remembrance of it, Moses called the place *Taberah*.

And thus it suits the occasion of our meeting here, to day, in communion with many religious assemblies in this city, to put ourselves and one another in mind of that *fire of the Lord*, which, in the memory of many of you, burnt among you, to that degree, as to make of this city a heap, this flourishing city a ruin; a judgment which it was then thought fit, by the annual observation of this day, to transmit the remembrance of to posterity.

Now observe in the text,

1. What the judgment of God upon the camp of Israel was. *The Fire of the Lord burnt among them.* It is called *the fire of the Lord*, because it fell from heaven, it came immediately from the hand of God: as that fire did, which sometimes consumed the sacrifices, in token of God's acceptance of them, when justly it might have consumed the sinners, and taken vengeance on them. Here it did consume the sinners, to signify, that their iniquity was such, as should not be purged with sacrifice or offering for ever;[a] as another time it consumed the sacrificers, when they offered strange fires.[b]

Lightning is the *fire of the Lord*, as thunder is the *voice of the Lord*; with that fire Job's sheep, and the servants that attended them, were burnt up;[c] it is heaven's fire-arms, with which sometimes dreadful execution has been done. "Fire and water," we say, "are good servants, but bad masters;" the old world was mastered and destroyed by water, and this is re-

[a] 1 Sam. 3. 14. [b] Lev. 10. 1, 2. [c] Job 1. 16.

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served unto fire;[a] God has treasures of both in his magazines, which he has laid up against the *time of trouble, the day of battle and war.*[b]

This fire of the Lord burnt among them, among that people whom God peculiarly favoured, when by sin they displeased him, and his anger was kindled against them.[c] Though the pillar of cloud and fire was over them to protect them, while they kept themselves in the love of God, that should be no security to them, when they rebelled against him.—It burnt the bodies of many of them to death, they were killed with lightning; or, perhaps, it burnt their tents and goods; *It consumed* (so the original is, v. 1.) *in the uttermost parts of the camp,* not saying whether persons or dwellings; our translation determines it to persons, *them that dwell there;* but the *quenching of the fire,* (v. 2.) seems rather to intimate that it was the *tents* that were burnt. It kindled in the *utmost parts of the camp,* where the inferior sort were, the mixt multitude, who were generally the ringleaders in every mutiny; the judgment began where the sin began. Or, it intimates that God came upon them by degrees, seizing those first who were of lower rank, that others might take warning. Or, this fire began in the utmost parts of the camp, as if it would take all before it.

Now this, among other things, happened to them for example,[d] and was intended to be a warning to us, that we sin not after the similitude of their transgression. The people complained; that was it that provoked God to kindle this fire among them. Let those who are of a fretful, discontented spirit, who are always complaining of their lot, complaining of every event, quarrelling with God and his providence, diminishing every mercy, and doubling every cross, see in this instance, what an exceeding sinful sin this is, and how provoking to God. Those who are always complaining for trifles, must expect to have something given them to complain of. As on the one hand nothing is more acceptable to God, than our humble acceptance of all he says and does. *(Quis Deo placuit? Cui Deus placuerit—Who pleases God? The man whom God pleases,* Aug.) so on the other hand, nothing is more displeasing to God, than our being displeased at his disposals.

2. The memorial of this judgment, to transmit a traditional knowledge of it to posterity, Moses called that place, *Taberah, Incendium, Combustio—a Burning.* The Seventy translate the Hebrew name Εμπυρισμος. Moses knew too well how apt the people were, soon to forget the works of God, both his mercies and his judgments, and therefore was very industrious to fix in their minds the remembrance of them, and contrived means to revive the remembrance of them, when it should begin to dwindle and die. This fire of the Lord, though it burned but in the uttermost part of the camp, and was soon quenched, yet must not be forgotten; he therefore calls the place *Taberah.* Here the burning was. And if posterity ask, What burning? It will be answered, the burning of a part of the camp of the Israelites, with the fire of the Lord, for their discontent and murmuring. And we find Moses himself, near forty years after, putting the next generation in mind of this very thing, purely by the mention of this name, as he did of other the like sins and judgments, by the names he had given to other places for the same purpose, *And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah, ye provoked the Lord to wrath.*[a]

But by recording those things in his sacred writings, he has more effectually preserved the memorial of them, and transmitted it even to us, whose lot is cast in the ends of the earth, and upon whom the ends of the world are come.[b] And this is one of those passages of story, which the Psalmist would have the fathers to make known to their children, that they may tell them to their's; that God heard their murmurings and was wroth, *So a fire was kindled against Jacob.*[c]

So that hence we may gather this lesson:

That a lasting memorial ought to be kept of the fire of the Lord, when it has at any time burned among a people.

As the mercies of God ought to have their memorials, and used to have in the Church of God, *names* of remembrance, *stones* of remembrance, *songs* of remembrance, *days* of remembrance, of which it were easy to give numerous instances in Scripture; so the judgments of God too should be remembered, for they are improveable as well as his mercies, improveable not only by the sufferers themselves, and by their neighbours at the same time, but by their successors afterwards, as Shilo's ruins were Jerusalem's instructions,[d] many ages afterwards. Care must therefore be taken, not only to preserve the remembrance of them in our own bosoms, but to transmit it to the generations to come, for their benefit.

For it is not enough to remember these works of God, but we must consider them,[e] must wisely consider[f] them; so as to understand them, and make a good use of our remembrance of them. As we must remember God's commandments to do them,[g] else we remember them to no purpose; so we must remember God's providences, not merely as matter of discourse among ourselves, or information to our children, but with suitable affections working *in* our spirits, and suitable impressions made *upon* them. *Lo this, we have searched it,* (says Eliphaz) *so it is, Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*[h]

(1.) We must often call to mind the personal and private rebukes of Providence, which we ourselves and our families have been under. The history of a man's own life is as useful a piece of history, as any he can study; and here a man must be his own historian, and his own reader; and therefore under both characters it is to be hoped he will be careful, and faithful *to* himself. God's counsel to Israel, is good counsel to every Israelite, *Thou shalt remember all the way, in which*

[a] 2 Pet. 3. 6, 7. [b] Job 38. 23. [c] Num. 11. 1. [d] 1 Cor. 10. 6.

[a] Deut. 9. 22. [b] 1 Cor. 10. 11. [c] Ps. 78. 6, 21. [d] Jer. 7 12. [e] Ecc. 7. 13. [f] Ps. 64. 9. [g] Ps. 103 18 [h] Job 5. 6.

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the Lord thy God has led thee in this wilderness, how *he humbled thee,* and *suffered thee to hunger,* and *chastened thee, as a man chasteneth his son.*[a]

We should remember what God has spoken to us, not only by his word, giving earnest heed, lest at any time we let it slip,[b] but by his rod, for that also has a voice, an articulate, intelligible voice, and is sent to us on an errand, and waits for an answer; and the voice of both we should now both hear for the time to come, and hear from the time past; and the repeating of the lessons we have been taught by both, is confessedly necessary, to our learning of them perfectly.

Apt enough we are to complain of our former afflictions, too apt to remember them, with peevish reflections upon the Divine Providence, and the instruments of it, and vain boasting of what hardships we have gone through. But we should remember them, to renew our repentance for the sins that procured them, our thankfulness for the mercy that supported us under them, our patient submissions to the will of God in them, our improvements in knowledge and grace by them, and the good resolutions of better obedience we made under them; it is for this end that we are to preserve memorials of our troubles: as the lamenting Church remembered the affliction and the misery, the wormwood and the gall, *My soul* (says she) *hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.*[c] And as David penned many of his psalms, to keep in remembrance, and to bring to remembrance the distresses he was in, that at the same time he might recollect, for his present benefit, the frame of his spirit, and the workings of his heart under them.

You have all found your days upon earth to be full of trouble, though not all alike so; review the troubles of your life, that what was ill done by you in the day of your affliction, may be undone by repentance; and what was well done, may be done again, may be better done, and kept always in the imagination of the thought of your heart. Let not your sicknesses and pains be forgotten; Hezekiah took care that his should not, but should be kept in remembrance by his writing, when he had been sick and was recovered.[d] Let not your losses in your estate, your crosses and disappointments in your affairs, be forgotten. Let not the death of your dear relations, and the breaches thereby made upon your comforts be forgotten. Naomi took care that her complicated griefs of both those kinds should not be, when she changed her own name, *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.*[e] David took care that his should not, when he penned the 39th Psalm (it should seem) upon occasion of the death of some friend who was dear to him, and left upon record his prayer under the affliction, *Lord make me to know my end,* and his promise, *I will take heed to my ways.*[f]

By remembering your afflictions in this good manner, and for these good purposes, you may not only regain the benefit you formerly got by them, but may gain more; as having now your thoughts more cool and sedate, and under command, than they were in the hurry of the affliction. The chastening for the present is grievous, and perhaps we are under it, as Job was, *full of confusion*; but it is afterwards, when it comes to be reflected upon and reviewed, that it yields the *peaceable fruit of righteousness,*[a] fruit that remains.

By a due remembrance of former convictions, if we received them aright, like the tender and tractable child, we shall be kept from returning to folly, and so prevent another correction; and like the burnt child, dread the fire.

(2.) We must often call to mind public judgments, judgments upon the communities we are members of; upon the land and nation, God's controversies with them; upon the city, his voice that has cried to it; for as in the peace thereof we have peace, so in the trouble thereof we have trouble, and must feel it. Those are unworthy the honour of Zion's sons, who think not themselves concerned in Zion's sorrows, her past as well as present sorrows.

Though God by subsequent providences in favour of a returning people, may have superseded *the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, the fast of the tenth,* so as to *turn them into joy and gladness, and chearful feasts:*[b] and by the abundance of our comforts, may make us to *forget our miseries,* and *to remember them as waters that pass away;*[c] *to forget all our toil,*[d] as Joseph did; yet we must still remember to make a pious improvement of it; must still be sowing, sowing in the spirit, though the tears in which we sowed, be in some measure wiped away; and to assist you herein, as God enables me, is my desire and endeavour at this time, that our coming together may not be in vain.

God has many ways contended with us of this nation, with you of this city; as we have been like Israel of old, favoured with many privileges and advantages above our neighbours, both for life and godliness, whence it might justly, and with good reason, have been inferred, as it was concerning them, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;*[e] so being found like them, notwithstanding this, *a foolish people and unwise,* nay, a *rebellious* and *gain-saying people,* we have like them fallen under severe judgments: for the more rich a people's privileges are, the more provoking their sins are, and consequently the heavier are their punishments; for even in this life, especially in dealing with communities (which as such can be dealt with in this life only) God sometimes observes a proportion between the sins and the plagues.

Some have observed, that God's judgments upon us in this last age, have been the sorest in their kind of any other; like that concerning which the prophet appeals to the old men, and to all the inhabitants of the land, whether there had ever been the like in their days, or in the days of their fathers.[f] Never was

[a] Deut. 8. 2, 3, 5. [b] Heb. 2. 1. [c] Lam. 3. 19, 20. [d] Isa. 38. 9. [e] Ruth 1. 20. [f] Psa. 39. 4.

[a] Heb. 12. 11. [b] Zec. 8. 19. [c] Job. 11. 16. [d] Gen. 41. 51. [e] Deut. 4. 6. [f] Joel 1. 2.

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there such a plague in this nation, as that in London in 1665, never such a fire as that the year after, never such a dreadful storm as that about ten years ago, as if God were heating the furnace *seven times hotter*; for he will bring greater judgments on those who are not wrought upon by lesser; and when he judgeth he will overcome.

That which I am now to confine myself to, is, the fire of the Lord which was kindled in this city, this day 47 years, which in four days time laid in ashes, the richest, the oldest, and the most considerable part of this city, I mean within the walls; and I observe upon the calculation then made, that there was almost as much consumed without the walls, as was left standing within. For thus the survey stood; "373 acres burnt within the walls, and 75 left standing; but there were 63 acres burnt without the walls." You had 89 parish churches burnt, besides chapels; you had your Exchange, your Guildhall, and the halls of your companies laid in ashes; and above thirteen thousand dwellings levelled with the ground.

Some of you can remember it, perhaps by a good token, a sad token, you were burnt out of your houses it may be, and forced to lodge in the fields; it may be some of you were great losers by it, when you were young, and setting out in the world, and it was a great while before you recovered it; it broke the measures you had laid, ruffled your affairs, and put you upon new counsels; or perhaps brought you so much to a loss, that you were at your wit's ends, and at that time knew not what to do; but have since found to your comfort, that God knew what to do for you, and has graciously helped you.

Or though you were not then so far grown up, or so far engaged in the world, as to be sufferers by it, yet you were eye-witnesses of it. You saw it rage, you saw what desolations it made, and now you are old, will say it was the most dreadful sight you ever saw; the piteous case of so many ruined families, and their doleful lamentations, could not but be yet more affecting, yet more afflicting; and make you ready to cry with the prophet in a like case, *my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul*, the alarm of fire! Fire! no less terrible than the alarm of war; *Destruction upon destruction is cried.*[a] The destruction of the fire, upon that of the pestilence the year before. Many a melancholy story perhaps some of you have told, upon the occurrences of that time, and the impressions they made upon you.—*Quæque ipse miserrima vidi.—Disastrous things have I seen.*

But there is another thing which you must give me leave me to enquire, What you remember of it? The faithful ministers of Christ at that time, no doubt, laid out themselves in their preaching, to improve that providence, in dealing with you about your souls. Something came from the press upon that occasion, by Mr. Vincent, Mr. Doolittle, and others; and much more we may well conclude by word of mouth; now what do you remember of that! What account can you give of the sermons you heard upon that occasion, and of the good impressions they made upon you when you were young, and your hearts tender? Can you say through grace that your consciences were then convinced and awakened, and that when you were chastened, you were taught out of the law, and the gospel.[a] Happy the day, and happy you, if what you then lost by the rod of God, was made up, and more than made up to you, in what you gained by the word of God.

But the most of you were not then born, or were so young as to remember nothing of it; yet you have been told of it, perhaps you have read of it, and cannot be altogether ignorant of that event. Blessed be God, there is no occasion for such different sentiments and resentments between the old people and the young, as there were when the foundations of the Second Temple were laid, when the young people rejoiced to see a temple begun, but the aged wept, because it was so far inferior to the old one; no, if the young will join with you who are old, in bewailing the fall of the former city, you will join with them in celebrating the beauty of the latter;[b] and let both join in endeavouring to improve the remembrance of that fire of the Lord.

Nine lessons I shall recommend to you, to be learned from that fire which we are this day observing the memorial of.

I. See how terrible God is in his judgments, and fear before him. It was the fire of the Lord that burnt among you; whatever hand of man might be in it, it is certain this evil in the city was the Lord's doing; it was a consumption determined by the Lord of Hosts,[c] and the breath of the Almighty that kindled the fire, and directed all the motions of it. It was the light of Israel, who is and will be a rejoicing light to his people, that was then as a fire,—a *consuming fire*;[d] for so our God is and will be, to those who rebel against him; and the Holy One of Israel, who was then as a flame, that devoured so many churches and houses, as if they had been briars and thorns, in one day.

See how terrible God's Majesty is; when he came down upon an errand of mercy, to deliver Israel out of Egypt, he appeared in a flame of fire in the bush;[e] and at Mount Sinai, the sight of the glory of the God of Israel, was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel:[f] but much more terrible is his justice to them that provoke him. If the glory of his greatness be like fire, to a people who are entering into covenant with him, much more will the terror of his wrath be so, to a people who have broken covenant with him.

Come, behold what desolations God has made, and say with Moses the man of God, upon the review of the judgments of God inflicted on Israel in the Wilderness, and this at *Taberah*, among the rest, *Who*

[a] Jer. 4. 19, 20.

[a] Psa. 94. 12. [b] Ezra 3. 11. [c] Isa. 28. 22. [d] Isa. 10. 17, 16. [e] Ex. 3. 2. [f] Ex. 24. 17.

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knows the power of thine anger?[a] Say as the men of Bethshemesh said, when there was such a slaughter made among them who looked into the ark, *Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God?*[b] Say as the sinners in Zion are forced at length to say, and the hypocrites when fearfulness surpriseth them, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring flames,*[c] (by which some understand God himself) *with the everlasting burning?* Say as David, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments:*[d] and conclude with the Apostle, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*[e]

God has all creatures at his command, and all the powers they have are derived from him, and by them he designs to keep the world in awe. The power which the fire has to consume and destroy is from him; when he pleases he can countermand it, as in the case of the three children; and when he pleases he can commission it, and enforce its operations, and direct its motions. *The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire,*[f] sends one flame one way, and another flame another way, and each on its respective errand.

Let the thoughts of the fire of London fill us with a holy awe of God, and a filial fear of his wrath; that fire of the Lord, which when it is kindled but a little, much more when it is kindled to such a degree, we shall see cause to say, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*[g] *Fear ye not* me, *saith the Lord,*[h] that with a touch, with a frown, with a look, can make the *mountains smoke?* that with one spark of fire can lay *heaps upon heaps?* Let the earth tremble at his presence, much more at his absence, and his departure in anger.

See what fools they are, who make this God their enemy by sin, and engage his power against them, and yet when they have done so, bid defiance to his justice, challenge him to do his worst, saying, *Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it.*[i] Is this a God to be jested with? *Be not deceived, he is not mocked.* Presumptuous sinners who play with this fire, who *stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty,* who *run upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler,*[k] will find to their cost, that none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. God has access with his flames to men's hearts, as well as to their houses, can kindle a fire in their bones, a fire in their consciences, that shall secretly waste and exhaust their spirits, a fire not blown, not seen, that shall consume them, a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, and never be quenched.

Give all diligence therefore, to make your peace with this terrible God: it may be done, it shall be done, if it be not your own fault. *Fury is not in him,* and yet it is to no purpose to think of contending with him; to make opposition, is but like putting briars and thorns before a consuming fire, which, instead of stopping its progress, does but make it burn the more furiously. Let him therefore take hold on his strength, that he may make peace, *and he shall make peace.*[a]

And having made your peace with God, keep yourselves always in his love, and take heed of turning yourselves out of it; and while you do so, solace yourselves in his love, and believe that this God of power will be your protector, and a wall of fire round about you.

II. See what a mischievous thing sin is, which provokes God thus to be our enemy, and to fight against us. If it was God's justice that burnt London, it was man's injustice that brought fuel to the fire; for a fruitful land is never turned into barrenness, nor a flourishing city into ruins, but it is for the iniquity of them that dwell therein.[b] God never contends with a people, but it is sin, it is sin that is the cause of the controversy. National sins bring national judgments. The sins of a city bring misery upon it, *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.*[c] When the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, it was not long ere he rained hell from heaven upon them; and when all flesh had corrupted their way, presently they were cut down out of time, and their foundation overthrown with a flood. It was the wickedness of the city, that made it combustible matter for the fire of God's wrath to fasten upon, *Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.—Sin reigned within and without the walls.* When sin abounds both within the walls and without, no wonder if the fire prevails in both.

London was then told by the watchmen upon her walls, what the sins were that provoked God to lay it waste; they had then a loud call to shew this Jerusalem her abominations, which might be read in her desolations. It was then justly observed, that for some time before the fire, the power of vice and profaneness was grown more exorbitant than ever, more daring, more threatening, that it insulted and triumphed over the restraints and checks which, for some years before, it had lain under, and now set them at defiance: it was observed, remember not long since, by a venerable body, "That at that time, to avoid hypocrisy, men ran into open impiety:" and I have heard it complained of, by those who lived at that time, "that debauchery was made by many a test of loyalty; and a man was suspected to be disaffected to his prince, if he did not profane the name of his God." Was this the character of the times immediately preceding that desolation?—And could any other be expected, but that God should visit for these things, and that his soul should be avenged on such a city,—such *a nation as this?*[d]

Sabbath-breaking is a sin for which God has particularly threatened to contend by fire. *If ye will not hearken to me, to hallow the Sabbath-Day, I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem;*[e] how sabbaths had

[a] Psa. 90. 11. [b] 1 Sam. 6. 20. [c] Isa. 33. 14. [d] Psa. 119. 120. [e] Heb. 10. 31. [f] Psa. 29. 7. [g] Psa. 2. 12. [h] Jer. 5. 22. [i] Isa. 5. 19. [k] Job 15, 25, 26.

[a] Isa. 27. 4, 5. [b] Psa. 107. 34. [c] Lam. 1. 8. [d] Jer. 5. 9. [e] Jer. 17. 27.

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been profaned in those times of licentiousness, is easy to conjecture; and if we may make remarks upon the circumstances of a judgment, in order to the improving of it, it must be taken notice of, that the fire began between one and two of the clock on a Lord's-Day morning, as if God would thereby intimate, that it was kindled to avenge the quarrel of his sabbath.

How should this increase our hatred of sin, that evil and bitter thing, by which we have procured such things as these to ourselves, which has been the destruction of souls, bodies, families, cities, churches, nations, worlds; which is not only the reproach, but the ruin of any people. What a dread should we conceive of the fatal consequences of national sins, which would fix us among those holy mourners, who sigh and cry for the abominations that are committed amongst us.[a] Methinks this should put life into the despised and almost deserted cause, of the reformation of manners among us, that in the prosecution of it, we not only consult the glory of God, the honour of our holy religion, and the good of precious souls, but the peace, safety, and prosperity of the communities we are members of. The surest way to prevent another fire, is, to discountenance and suppress that immorality and profaneness, for which the fire of the Lord has burnt among you.

Not that this was the only ground of God's controversy with the city; even the professors of religion, who run not with others to an excess of riot, contributed to the guilt which kindled those flames, by their lukewarmness and indifference in religion, their pride, and vanity, and worldliness, and neglect of family worship, as they were then often told by their faithful reprovers. Under such public calamities, our business is not to judge and censure others, but each of us to take blame and shame to ourselves, and seriously to ask, *What have I done?*

And yet we must be very regardless of the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hand, if we do not observe, that London's plague and fire came but three or four years after the casting out and silencing of a great number of able, faithful ministers of Christ there, and all the nation over, because they would not sin against their consciences. Jerusalem was burnt the first time, for misusing the messengers of the Lord;[b] and the second time, for laying hands on the disciples of Christ, and persecuting them;[c] for Christ resented what was done against them, as done against himself.

At least we must be allowed to observe, that the fire happened not six months after the commencing of the *Five Mile Act*, by which, they who, but a little before, were turned out of their churches, were barbarously turned out of their houses, and not suffered to live within five miles of any corporation, or of the places where they had been ministers. It was the observation of a wise and good man at that time, "that as it was in mercy to many of the ministers, that they were removed out of the city, before that desolating judgment came; so it spoke aloud to the government, *Let my people go, that they may serve me; and if ye will not, Behold thus and thus will I do unto you.*" This he thought was the Lord's voice, then crying in the city.

III. See what an uncertain thing this world is, and all our possessions and employments in it. If men would but believe the preacher's text and doctrine, which is delivered to us, not only as the word of the Eternal God, which therefore we may venture to believe, nay are bound to believe; but in compassion to our infirmity, is confirmed to us by the observation and experience of the wisest of men, *All is vanity—vanity of vanities*, and *vexation of spirit*; and would live up to their belief of it, it would save them a great deal of trouble: for, how many sore crosses and afflictions does the worldliness of our hearts need and call for, to give us a sensible demonstration, that we may come under the needful conviction of the vanity of this world, and its insufficiency to make us happy.

How plainly may we read this, by the light of London's flames; how many well-furnished houses and shops were then consumed in a little time? It is part of the lamentation of the ruin of Babylon, that *in one hour so great riches is come to nought.*[a] How many who were worth thousands over-night, were so impoverished by the fire, that they were worth nothing, or next to nothing, by the next morning? Like Job, whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men of the east, and the setting sun left poor to a proverb. Our Saviour speaks of the danger we are in, of losing our treasures upon earth, by the moth that corrupts, or thieves that break through and steal.[b] But this loss of it by fire, is worse than either; what the moth has been in, may yet be good for something, and what the thief has stolen, may perhaps be recovered. But, what the fire has consumed, is quite lost, and past retrieve.

How sudden and surprizing was this desolation, how little thought of and expected by the sufferers, who hoped they had goods laid up for many years, and houses that should endure to many generations, when the fire comes with a warrant to seize them this night, and to strip them of all; and thereby to teach you and me not to boast ourselves of to-morrow, since we know not what a day, what a night, what an hour may bring forth.[c] And in how little time was the desolation accomplished? three or four days reduced to ashes, buildings that had been long in rearing, and treasures that had been long in gathering.

This is a good reason why the rich man should not glory in his riches, for as the flower of the grass, which is scorched by the sun, they pass away[d] and are gone, and their place knows them no more; a good reason why we should not be secure in the enjoyment of our worldly possessions, nor flatter ourselves with the thought, that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant; that we shall die in our nest, and that our mountain stands so strong, that

[a] Ezek. 9. 4. [b] Jer. 36. 16. [c] Luke 21. 12.

[a] Rev. 18. 17. [b] Mat. 6. 19 [c] Prov. 27. 1. [d] James 1. 10.

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it cannot be moved, when we know not what a great change a very little time may produce.

It is a good reason why we should not make these perishing things our portion, nor lay up our treasure in them; and why we should sit loose to them, and take our affections off from them; for shall we set our eyes and hearts upon these things that are not, that make themselves wings and flee away;[a] that are liable to a thousand destructive casualties, and are therefore unworthy of our esteem and regard, especially, when they stand in competition with the true and everlasting riches? It is therefore our wisdom to be dead to these things, because if we be, we shall the better bear the disappointment, if they should be thus taken from us, and we shall easily say, it was what we looked for. Your houses, and shops, and goods are combustible things, call them so, and put a value upon them accordingly, as you do upon paper-buildings, and give all diligence to make that sure, which will be made sure. When Jerusalem's desolation was hastening on, the inhabitants had this needful admonition given them, *Arise ye and depart, this is not your rest,* for *it is polluted:*[b] it is true of all things here below, they are polluted with sin, and are hastening towards their ruin, and therefore cannot be the repose of our souls. What then should we do, but arise and depart from them!

Neighbourhood, which is the pleasure of cities, where houses join so close, may prove of ill consequence, and serve but to spread and propagate the flames, of that therefore, no more than of other present comforts, let us not be over-fond.

IV. See how malicious the enemies of our peace, and our holy religion are, and what need we have to stand upon our guard against them.—There is a day that will bring to light the hidden works of darkness, and bring into judgment every secret thing, and to that day must be referred the full discovery of the cause of the fire of London. There was as full a demonstration given as could be, by the master of the house where the fire began, that it could not possibly be by accident, which gave abundant cause to think that it was designedly set on fire by Romish Incendiaries, for the weakening of the protestant interest, which they have all along been, and still are aiming at the destruction of.

The parliament met soon after the fire, and presently, even that House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the causes of the late fire; before whom abundance of information, were given in and proved, which were afterwards printed; but the parliament was prorogued before any judgment was given upon them; but it seems very evident upon the concurring testimonies then given in, to which I refer you, that it was the execution of a popish design. One Robert Hubert, a French papist, being taken up upon suspicion, confessed that he was one of those who fired the baker's house, that was first set on fire, with a fire-ball; and he was executed for it. Many others were taken throwing fire-balls, but by some means or other made their escape, as appears by the report of that committee.

I would not be found insinuating any causeless, groundless jealousies, nor incensing men with enmities against the persons of any, our religion teaches us to forgive our enemies, and to pray to God to forgive them; we may not call for fire from heaven upon those who are set on fire of hell against us.[c]

But if this be true, as we have reason to think it is, surely it cannot but confirm and increase our detestation of popery, and fill us with a holy, heavenly zeal against that strong delusion. Can that be the religion of the meek and humble Jesus, which needs and prescribes, and uses such methods for its own propagation, as, not only Christianity abhors, but, even humanity startles at, and is shocked by? Our Lord Jesus would not force his way, no not to Jerusalem, by destroying a poor village, and that of Samaritans too, that opposed him, and gave this reason for it, that the Son of Man *came not to destroy men's lives* and dwellings, but to *save them?*[b] How far then are they from, nay how contrary to the spirit of Christ and his holy religion, who make no difficulty of destroying a great city, and that of Christians too, for the compassing of their design to reduce a people under the heavy yoke of their tyranny, that had happily escaped from under it. But no wonder they stumble not at heaps of ruins, when they startle not at seas of blood, but to gain their point, can wade through them without horror. How many treasons, murders, and massacres, have not only been justified but consecrated, when they have been for the advancement of the pretended catholic cause? Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation, as in that of Simeon and Levi; *O my soul, come not thou into their secret.*[c]

And as it should increase our hatred of the Romish religion, so it should increase our dread of the Romish designs against us, and all that is dear to us. The extirpating of that which they call the Northern Heresy, is what they have been aiming at ever since the reformation; and we have no reason to think they have dropped the design, when not many years ago, it was carried so far, that it was next door to an accomplishment, and no less than a miracle of mercy saved our darling Isaac from being sacrificed to popish tyranny, when it lay bound upon the altar. Or, have we any reason to think that popery has altered its character? I wish we had: but the methods lately taken to root out the protestant religion in France, besides the persecution we hear of in Poland at this time, and other instances, are sufficient to convince us, that popery is the same bloody, barbarous, inhuman thing, that ever it was, and therefore its advances towards us, are to be as much dreaded as ever; that we may be quickened in our prayers to God, to fortify our bulwarks against that complication of sins and judgments, and to lift up a standard against that enemy, even when he comes in like a flood. Cry earnestly to God, day and night,

[a] Prov. 23. 5. [b] Mic. 2. 10.

[a] Jam. 3. 6. [b] Luke 9. 56. [c] Gen. 49. 1. 6.

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that he would turn all the counsels of popish Achitophels into foolishness; and I trust he will, as he has done many a time.

V. See how graciously God often remembers mercy in the midst of wrath, and in compassion takes up his controversy, when he might in justice proceed in it.—You have a monument of the judgment, here where the fire began, but in every place where it stopt, the houses that escaped are so many monuments of sparing mercy; you can easily perceive, by the different materials and structure of the houses, just how far the fire proceeded; when you observe this, say, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,*[a] that all was not consumed, that God did not make a full end, but that, when he overthrew some of you, as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, yet others of you were as brands plucked out of the burning.[b] The quenching of the fire at Taberah,[c] is here recorded with the kindling of it, that we might learn to sing of mercy and judgment, and sing unto God of both, for in both his hand is to be seen.

When God had made London as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath, and the flames went on like a mighty army, conquering and to conquer, threatening to leave neither root nor branch: then God repented himself concerning his servants, his soul was grieved, for the misery of London, and he said, *How shall I give thee up? How shall I deliver thee?* How shall I make thee as *Admah*, and set thee as Zeboim? In every place whither the fire had spread, much about the same time, a check was given to it, and God said to the raging fire, as he does to the raging sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, here shall thy proud waves,* thy proud flames, *be staid.*

Let this be remembered with thankfulness to God, and to the praise of that mercy of his, which rejoiceth against judgment, and prevents its making a full end; and let us add to this, our own experience of the like seasonable interpositions of divine mercy for our relief. The earthly house of this tabernacle has perhaps been on fire with a fever, or some other wasting, consuming distemper, ready to reduce it to dust and ashes, yet God has stayed the progress of it, has said unto us Live, has said unto us Live, and the time was a time of love, not to be forgotten.

It ought to be taken notice of as an answer of prayer; we are told here, that when the fire of the Lord burnt in the camp of Israel, Moses, that great intercessor, and as such, a type of Christ, prayed unto the Lord, and then the fire was quenched. And no doubt when London was burning, there were a remnant of praying people standing in the gap, to turn away the wrath of God, who wept and made supplication, and in answer to their prayer, God spared a part of the city. The Prophet Amos tells us that when in his time, the Lord God called to contend by fire, he prayed, *O Lord God cease I beseech thee,* and the Lord repented for this, *It shall not be, saith the Lord God.*[d]

Let this engage us to call upon God, and encourage us to trust in him in all our straits and difficulties, be they ever so great and threatening: he is a present help in time of need, and the necessity, as it engages his mercy, so it magnifies his power. If we can by faith depend upon him to save us, then when we think we perish, it shall be made to appear that even the winds and the seas obey him.

VI. See how wonderfully God can revive what seemed to be ruined. Now we are remembering the burning of this city, we must by no means overlook the re-building of it, and the raising up of another city, Phœnix-like, out of the ashes of the old one. I am apt to think this seemed to them who lived then, almost impracticable, and there were those who were ready to despair of it. How should they find money to rebuild their houses, and to contribute their share to the public buildings too, who had not only lost their goods in the fire, but lost in a manner their trades too, by which they and their families must subsist? and yet the Lord their God being with them, they built and prospered, and in two or three years, there scarce remained any marks or footsteps of the fire. You may easily imagine how great the destruction was, and yet you will hardly imagine it, when you observe how magnificent the repair of it is; for surely *the glory of the latter city, is far greater than the glory of the former:* I wish it were so upon the account, as the glory of the latter temple, so far exceeded that of the former, which was the presence of Christ in it.

When God made of this city a heap, yet he did not make it to be no city, nor say concerning it, that it should never be built again:[a] it was desolate, but not as Babylon—desolate for ever; no, nor as Jerusalem, that had seventy years accomplished in her desolation,[b] but in a little time God had mercy on your dwelling places, as the Prophet speaks, *and the city was built again on her own heap,*[c] and built again with advantage, more strong, more beautiful, and more uniform than it had been before, as if it had past through a refining fire, rather than a consuming one; and had only been melted down to be cast in a better mould. *This was the Lord's doings,* for *except he build the house, they labour in vain that build it,*[d] and it may justly be *marvellous in our eyes.* God has fulfilled to you what he said of Zion and Jerusalem, Though *I was jealous against them with great fury,* yet *I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;* and O that the following promise to Jerusalem, might be made good to London, it shall be called *a City of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the holy mountain!*[e] How well were it, if the hearts of the citizens were as much improved by the fire, as their houses were!

Let this resurrection of the city out of its ashes, be to us an emblem of the state of Christ's church in the world, *it is persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but*

[a] Lam. 3. 22. [b] Amos 4. 11. [c] Numb. 11. 2. [d] Amos 7. 4, 5, 6

[a] Isa. 25. 2. [b] Dan. 9. 2. [c] Jer. 30. 18. [d] Psa. 127. 1. [e] Zec. 8. 2, 3.

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not destroyed;[a] its desolations may sometimes be said to be universal, but they shall not be perpetual. The protestant interest in many places is brought very low, and its ruins trampled on, by the same that triumphed in the ruins of this city of our solemnities, yet we have reason to hope it shall revive, and flourish again, even where it seems rased to the very foundations. It is promised concerning the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, that God will build again the ruins thereof,[b] and will set it up; when the time comes that Babylon must fall (and fall it must sooner or later) that promise shall be fulfilled. Let this quicken our prayers to God, for the re-establishing of the protestant religion, where it is borne down, and trampled on, and let us continue instant in that prayer, and not faint, though we be sadly disappointed in the hands that we thought should have gone forward in the effecting of it; God will do his own work in his own way and time, if not by *might and power*, yet *by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts*, for so Jerusalem was rebuilt, and before that Spirit, the mountains of difficulty that lay in the way became plain.[c] Our care must be to retain a sincere affection for our holy religion, how low soever the profession of it is, or may be brought, and not think the worse of it for its being deserted, and losing ground; it is the character of the servants of God, that when Zion is in ruins, they take pleasure even in its broken scattered stones, and favour the very dust thereof, they love the ground she stood upon, and let such assure themselves, that the *time to favour Zion, yea the set time will come.* And *when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory,* and in doing it, will put this honour upon the wrestling seed of Jacob, that therein he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.[d] Let Daniel's prayer therefore be ours, and his plea, that God would cause his face to shine upon the sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake.[e]

VII. See how dangerous our condition is, who have not been reformed by the various methods God has taken with us. You have long since seen your city rebuilt, and the effects of the fire no more remaining, which may supersede the annual memorial of the judgment: but if the ends of it be not answered, there is still occasion to revive the remembrance of it; may not God justly complain of us, as he did of Israel, you have someitmes been overthrown by signal judgments, and at other times saved by signal mercies, *yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*[f] And we may therefore justly fear, that for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.[g] Is there any less sinning, or any more praying in London than there was formerly. I wish there were. But we have too much reason to fear, that we come under Jerusalem's sad character, when the founder melted in vain.[h] Iniquity still abounds and goes barefaced, vice is as daring and threatening as ever, and what will be in the end thereof? May we not fear, lest God should send greater judgments among us, since lesser have not done their work, nor gained their point.

There are fires of another nature, which we have reason to fear the fatal effects of, both to the city, and to the land, I mean our unhappy divisions and animosities, and violent heats one against another: the sin that is in our divisions, may be justly punished with the ruin that is commonly the effect of them, for a city or kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and becomes an easy prey to the common enemy, who warm their hands at those flames, and doubt not to find their account in setting us at variance one against another.

The removal of the gospel, and the taking away of our candlestick out of its place, would be a much sorer judgment than the burning of the city, and ought to be dreaded and deprecated accordingly. If papal tyranny should again take footing here, if our bibles should be taken from us, and our ministers be banished or put to death, if the idolatrous mass should be set up in our churches, and the consecrated host carried about our streets to be adored, London would look a more melancholy place, than it did when it was in ashes; I hope that God, who has hitherto by miracles of mercy saved our holy religion, will still, and that that blessed light shall not die in our hands, I hope it will never come to that; yet I must say we have no reason to be secure, when we consider the desert of our sins, and the designs of our enemies, and especially when we consider the desolations of divers Protestant churches abroad, that once thought themselves as safe and as likely to continue as we do. *Go see what God did to Shiloh?* What he did to the seven churches of Asia? and let us not be high-minded but fear, for are we better than they?

The cause of truth and godliness shall be victorious at last, but may meet with many a hard struggle in the mean time. What trying times may be before us we cannot tell, but I am sure it is our wisdom to be prepared for the worst, by being more and more established in the truth as it is in Jesus, by sitting loose to the world, and treasuring up such comforts and experiences, as will carry us with courage and cheerfulness through the most mournful time, to a most joyful eternity, and then welcome the will of God.

The gospel is not tied to places, its privileges are moveable things. The kingdom of God may be taken from us, and given to another nation;[a] and what will become of us, if our glory be departed, and all our pleasant things laid waste. The most effectual course we can take to prevent it, is to make a good use of our privileges, and live up to them; as the most threatening step toward it is the corrupting the nation with the vices of its neighbours, which will be as fatal to it as the idols and idolatries of the countries round about were to Israel of old.

I would not amuse people with causeless jealousies,

[a] 2 Cor. 4. 9. [b] Acts 15. 16. [c] Zec. 4. 6, 7. [d] Psa. 102, 13, 14, 16, 17. [e] Dan. 9. 17. [f] Amos 4. 11. [g] Isa. 9. 17. [h] Jer. 6. 29.

[a] Mat. 21. 43.

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but awaken people to a holy fear and diligence in their duty by these suggestions. There is a startling passage in Mr. George Herbert's poem, called the *Church Militant*, written I believe about eighty years ago, which has been much taken notice of; after he had shewed how the Church took rise in the eastern parts of the world, and so moved more and more westerly, he goes on thus:

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand,
When height of malice, and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinnings, witchcrafts and distrusts
(The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup
Unto the brim, and make our measure up;
When Seine shall swallow Tyber, and the Thames,
By letting in them both, pollute her streams;
When Italy of us shall have her will,
And all her calendar of sins fulfil,
Whereby one may foretel what sins next year
Shall both in France and England domineer;
Then shall religion to America flee,
They have their times of gospel ev'n as we.

I remember I heard Dr. Tillotson (afterwards Archbishop) quote these verses of Mr. Herbert's, in a sermon on John 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you*; (it is since printed in the second volume of the folio edition of his posthumous works) and having explained the signs of the times to be this, "When the vices of Italy shall pass into France, and the vices of both shall overspread England, then the gospel will leave these parts of the world."—He makes this remark upon it, "Whether this was only the prudent conjecture and foresight of a wise man, or whether there be not something more prophetical in it, I cannot tell. But we have too much cause to apprehend, that if we do not reform and grow better, God will find some way or other to deprive us of that light, which is so abused and affronted by our wicked lives; and he seems now to say to us, as Christ did to the Jews, *yet a little while is the light with you.*"

VIII. See what a necessary and constant dependance we have upon God and his providence for our safety. You have seen how great a matter a little fire kindles, and in a little time, and cannot but think, how much all you have in the world, lies at the mercy of that merciless element, if God should give it commission. Though you be ever so careful of fire in your own houses, how many careless people are there in the houses about you, which, if set on fire, would soon set your's on fire; so that we can be no night secure, but that we may be either burnt *in* our beds, or burnt *out of them*: there have been frequent fires in and about the city since this great one, to put you in mind of what God has done, and what he could do; and many other accidents we and our families continually lie exposed to; the dreadful wind ten years ago, shewed you that God has more arrows in his quiver, and can bring another judgment without bringing another fire.

Now this should engage us all to have our eye toward the Lord, by faith to dwell in the secret place of the most high, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty;[a] and by prayer every morning and every evening, to put ourselves, our houses and families, under divine protection, and to beg that the city may be the care of God's providence in a particular manner, and the charge of his angels, as Jerusalem of old was. O that this argument might prevail with you, to set up and keep up the worship of God in your families, and to make a business of it, that though I cannot assure you that it will preserve you from your share in common calamities, of this kind, all things come alike to all, yet it is the best course you can take to be safe and easy; with what a holy security may you lie down at night, and go abroad in the morning, when you have first solemnly recommended yourselves and your's to the mercy of God, and taken the way which he has appointed to engage him for you. Such is the comfort of doing this, such the satisfaction of having done it, that we may well call it work that is its own wages. If you make your houses little churches for God, he will make them little sanctuaries to you, and create a defence upon all your glory.[b]

You have your engines, your watchmen, your insurances, but after all, *Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*;[c] it is therefore your great concern to make him your friend, and to keep yourselves in his love; to secure the favour of the Ruler of rulers, from whom every man's judgment proceeds.[d] He has put you into an easy way of doing this, not by costly sacrifices and offerings, but by faithful and fervent prayer, kept up in its life, and not sunk into a formality.

Neither pray ye for yourselves alone, and for your houses, but for the city, and parts adjoining, that in the safety thereof you may be safe. Thus approve yourselves true friends to the city, and seek the welfare of it. You are for conscience sake toward God, rendered incapable of serving the city in any civil offices, serve it so much the more with your prayers, serve it in sacred offices, as intercessors with God for it; and thank God you cannot be hindered from serving it in this way.

Nor is it enough to keep prayer up in your houses, but you must do what you can to keep sin out of your houses, least that spoil the success of your prayers. *If iniquity be in thine hand*, any ill-got gain, or any ill way of getting, *put it far away*, and *let no wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles*, and then thou shalt *take thy rest in safety*, thou shalt *lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.*[e]—And do what you can, in your places, to suppress wickedness in the city, and to promote the reformation of manners, that the city may be called *A City of righteousness, a faithful city*, which God may delight to dwell in.

IX. See what a dreadful day the great day of the Lord will be, when the world shall be on fire, and the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. If the burning of London was so terrible, what then will the burning of the world be,—the

[a] Psa. 91. 1. [b] Isa. 4. 5, 6. [c] Psa. 127. 1. [d] Prov. 25. 26. [e] Job 11. 14, 18, 19.

whole

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whole world? When *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved*, and *the elements shall melt with fervent heat*, and *all these things shall be dissolved.*[a] The volcano's or burning mountains in Naples and Sicily, and many other places, which have been on fire as long as we have any history of those countries extant, are sometimes very terrible, and the eruptions of fire from them, very threatening; surely Providence has wisely ordered those little conflagrations of the earth, to be earnests of the general conflagration, and standing, sensible confirmations of the Scripture tradition of it; nay, some have thought, that they will be in part the means of the burning of this world; so Dr. Tho. Burnet, in that part of his "Theory of the Earth," which treats *De conflagratione mundi—Of the conflagration of the world—externus est & visibilis apparatus ad hoc incendium, in montibus ignivomis—There is evidently a provision in the fiery mountains for this desolation.* And he quotes a remarkable passage of Pliny, (l. ii. c. 106, 107.) when he had reckoned up several burning mountains, &c. he concludes, *Excedit profecto omnia Miracula, ullum Diem fuisse, in quo non cuncta conflagrarent —It is a miracle that the world is not on fire every day;* why should it seem incredible to us then, that it will be on fire shortly? Believe it, sirs, as sure as you see this day, you shall see that day. And where will all the wealth and pride of this world be then? What will become of us, if we have all our portion and happiness in it?

Think of the fire in which the Lord Jesus will be revealed in that day, the flaming fire,[b] the fire that will devour before him;[a] he will come with an innumerable company of angels, and every one of those spirits is *a flame of fire.*[b] What flames then will the Judge be surrounded with? Think how you will look him in the face in that great and terrible day, and how your works will abide that fire. Those who lived and died in sin, will then call in vain to rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sits on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb; but those who lived and died in Christ, will see no terror, no not in that fire, but will then lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh.

Nay, there is a fire yet more dreadful, which you are concerned to think of; the earth, and the works that are therein, will soon be burnt up; but there is a lake of fire and brimstone, which burns eternally, and shall never be quenched, prepared indeed for the devil and his angels, but into which all the wicked and ungodly shall be cast, by the irreversible sentence of the righteous Judge, and in which they shall be tormented world without end. I am here in God's name to give you warning to flee from that wrath to come,[c] by fleeing from sin, by fleeing to Christ; and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, to testify unto you, that you come not to that place of torment; and if you hear not, if you heed not Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his ministers, giving you this warning, neither would you be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.[d]

[a] 2 Pet. 3. 12. [b] 2 Thes. 1. 8.

[a] Ps. 50. 3. [b] Ps. 104. 4. [c] Mat. 3. 7. [d] Luke 16. 28, 31.

A BRIEF INQUIRY INTO THE TRUE NATURE OF SCHISM: OR A PERSUASIVE TO CHRISTIAN LOVE AND CHARITY.

THERE has scarce any one thing that has been discussed in the Christian world with more heat and noise among the several dividing parties, than the charge of Schism. This has involved the disputing part of the church in the most violent engagements above twelve hundred years. Schism is so deformed a brat, that nobody has been willing to own it, a crime so very black, that each party has been studiously industrious to clear itself from the charge. To this indictment all have pleaded *not guilty*; and we find none that have justified it. But here is the misery; such notions of it have been entertained, that it has been almost impossible to deny, without recriminating. And perhaps the most guilty have been most hot in charging others. Athaliah the greatest traitor is most loud in crying, *Treason, Treason.*

We are all agreed that schism is an arch-rebel in Christ's kingdom; but in sending out the hue and cry after it, the difficulty is, how to describe it: several attempts have been made; would it be in vain to try one more? Waving all inquiries into the several definitions and descriptions which have been given of it, let

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let us have recourse to the law, and to the testimony; for whoever speak in the things of God, (as they certainly do who speak of sin and duty,) if they speak not according to that rule, it is because there is no light in them.

Therefore I only premise this one postulatum, that nothing is to be accounted sin, but that which is made so by the word of God: *Tekel* is to be written upon nothing but that which has been carefully weighed in the balances of the sanctuary.

In our inquiry what is sin, let those books be opened which must be opened at the great day. If sinners must be judged by those books shortly, let sin be judged by them now, and let not any man or company of men in the world assume a power to declare that to be sin, which the Sovereign Rector of the world has not declared to be so, lest in so doing they be found stepping into the throne of God who is a jealous God, and will not give this branch of his glory to another.

Let us therefore see what the Scripture says concerning schism, not concerning the evil of it; we are convinced of that; but concerning the nature and *formalis Ratio—due meaning* of it.

The Old Testament will not help us so much in this inquiry as the New; for as to the binding of the Jews to worship only in one place, at Jerusalem, and to offer only upon that altar, was a precept purely ceremonial, and to us Christians is vacated by that gospel rule, which wills us to pray every where, and their synagogues then (not their temple) were the patterns of Christian assemblies.

Only one Scripture occurs in the Old Testament, which, perhaps, will help to rectify some mistakes about schism. It is the instance of Eldad and Medad who prophecied in the camp. The case in short is this: Eldad and Medad were persons upon whom *the Spirit rested*, that is, who were by the extraordinary working of the Spirit endued with gifts equal to the rest of the seventy elders, and were *written*, that is, had a call to the work, but they *went not out unto the tabernacle* as the rest did, though God himself had appointed that they should, Num. 11. 26. And *they prophesied in the camp*, that is, exercised their gifts in private among their neighbours, in some common tent. Upon what inducements they did this, does not appear, but it is evident that it was their weakness and infirmity thus to separate from the rest of their brethren. If any think they prophesied by a necessitating and irresistible impulse, they may remember that *the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.*[a]

Now if some of the shismaticating Doctors that the church had known, had but had the censuring of Eldad and Medad, we should soon have had a judgment given against them, much more severe than would have been awarded to him who gathered sticks on the sabbath-day.

And it is confessed, all the circumstances considered, it looks like a very great irregularity, especially as an infringement of the authority of Moses, which they who prophesied in the tabernacle under his presidency manifestly owned, and submitted to.

Well, an information was presently brought in against them, v. 27. *Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp*, that is, to speak in the invidious language of the times, there is a conventicle at such a place, and Eldad and Medad are holding forth at it.

Joshua, in his zeal for that which he fancied to be the Church's unity, and out of concern for the authority of Moses, brings in a bill to silence them; for as hot as he was, he would not have them fined and laid in the gaol for this disorder, neither; only, my Lord Moses, forbid them, not compel them to come to the tabernacle, if they be not satisfied to come; only, for the future, prohibit their schismatical preaching in the camp. This seems a very good notion.

But hold, *Joshua, thou knowest not what manner of spirit thou art of.* Discerning Moses, sees him actuated by a spirit of envy; and does not only deny, but severely reprove the motion, Num. 11. 29. *Enviest thou for my sake? Would to God that all the Lord's People were prophets*, provided the Lord will but *put his Spirit upon them.* He is so far from looking upon it as schism, that he does not only tolerate, but encourage it. And O that all those who sit in Moses's chair, were but clothed with this spirit of Moses.

This instance is full enough to shew, that all is not schism, which even wise and good men are apt to think is so.

But our special inquiry must be in the New Testament; and forasmuch as words are the signification of things, let us see what the Scripture means by this word schism.

The *critics* observe, that the Greek word Σχίσμα is used eight times in the New Testament.

1. In a literal sense, for a rent in a garment, Σχίσμα, *the rent is made worse.* In the same sense Σχίζω is used. As also of the rending of the vail. The cleaving of the heavens.[a] But this makes little to our purpose.

2. It is used figuratively for a division; and that twofold.[b]

(1.) A division in apprehension; so Σχίσμα is used. In which places it signifies the different thoughts and apprehensions that the people or their rulers had concerning Christ, some thinking well of him, others not. Some accusing him, others excusing him.

In this sense Σχίζω is used, for the different sentiments the people had concerning Paul.[c]

Now this diversity of opinion, judgment or apprehension cannot be called or looked upon in itself as a thing criminal, inasmuch as there are many things which either because they are dark and obscure, and so not capable of demonstration, or because they are trivial and of light moment, and so not worth a demonstration, it is no matter what opinion men are of concerning them.

[a] 1 Cor. 14. 32.

[a] Mat. 9. 16. Mark 2. 21. John 19. 24. Luke 5. 36. Mat. 27. 31. John 21. 11. Mark 1. 10. [b] John 7. 43. John 9. 16. John 10. 19. [c] Acts 23. 7.

Only

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Only where the matter is weighty and touches the fundamentals of Christianity, there an error is criminal, and if stubbornly persisted in, is heresy.

But the evil of it lies not in the diversity, but in the erroneousness and danger of the opinion.

I cannot believe that the greatest worshippers of the *Diana* of their own opinions, will be so sottish as to brand those for schismatics, who, in every punctilio of opinion are not exactly of the same standard with themselves.

If there be any so strangely rigid, *Let not my soul come into their secret,* for I despair to see even all the saints of a mind, in every thing, till they come to heaven.

It does therefore evidence too great a strangeness to the spirit of the gospel, to condemn all those who differ from us only in their apprehensions about little things. John's disciples were greatly displeased because Christ's disciples did not fast so often as they did, and quarrelled with Christ himself about it. And the answer of the meek and holy Jesus is worthy remark, that he gives a good reason why his disciples did not fast, viz. Because *the bridegroom was yet with them;* and yet does not condemn John's disciples that fasted often: which teaches us not to make our own opinions and practices (like Procrustes's bed) the standard by which to measure all others; and that in such cases we are to think it sufficient only to acquit ourselves, first to our own consciences, and then if need be to the world, without condemning others, who think and practise otherwise in such little things, and perhaps have as much reason for their thoughts and practices, as we have for ours.

(2.) A division in affection: and in this sense it is used three times in the first epistle to the Corinthians, and no where else in all the New Testament.

We must particularly examine each place, that thence we may be furnished with a true notion of schism: and in plain terms, the case is whether a diversity (or if you will call it so, a separation) of communion be the *formalis ratio—due meaning* of schism.

I find the word, and with it, no doubt, the thing, *I beseech you brethren—that there be no divisions* (Σχίσματα) no *schisms* among you; so reads the margin of our Bibles.

Now to find out what this schism is, let us inquire, into the exegetical exhortations, that accompany it.

[1] *That ye all speak the same things,* viz. in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; for in little things it can never be made a duty to be of the same opinion, since it is morally impossible, but (as Estius seems to understand it) not to break Christian charity in your disputes about them.

Observe, he does not oblige us to think the same thing, but though your thoughts be divers, yet speak the same thing, that is, in your preaching and conversation, speak of those things only wherein you are agreed; and for those things wherein you differ, do not fall out and fight about them, but love one another notwithstanding.

[2.] That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Which must be understood of a serious endeavour after it; for otherwise a perfect conjunction must be reserved for a world of everlasting perfection.

But the meaning of the exhortation seems to be, that all their little heats and animosities should be swallowed up in an unanimous zeal for the great gospel truths, wherein they were all agreed.

We must inquire also into the Corinthians' miscarriage, which occasioned this caution, which you have 1 Cor. 1. 11, 12. there were contentions among them, v. 11. ἔριδες. So that schisms and contentions are one and the same thing, and it is worth noting, that Clemens Romanus, in that famous epistle of his to the Corinthians still calls schisms ἔριδες,—*contentions.*

Now the contentions was about their ministers; *I am of Paul,* says one: *I am of Apollos,* says another, &c. Now he who was of Apollos was as much a schismatic, as he who was of Paul, because they quarrelled and fell out about so small and indifferent a matter.

Observe, it was not so much being of Paul, and being of Apollos that made the schism; for Paul and Apollos and Cephas were all theirs, (chap. 3. 22.) but saying, *I am Paul,* that is, crying him up as the only man for them, so as to despise others. If one went to hear Paul, and another went to hear Apollos, that did not make a schism, no, nor if one communicate with Paul, and another with Apollos; for why might not each go where he could be most edified? But the schism was, that they sacrificed Christian love and charity to this difference of apprehension. This is evident in that those who said, *I am of Christ,* so as to despise and censure, and quarrel with them that said *I am of Paul, &c.* are reproved equally with the rest.

Now the way of curing this schism was not to silence Apollos and Cephas, that whether they would or no they might all be of Paul, nay, it is well worth the observing that in the same Epistle we find Paul very earnest with Apollos to go to Corinth. (16. 12.) *As touching Apollos I greatly desired him to come to you.* Which he never would have done, if he had not preferred the common interest of souls' salvation before his own credit.

But the way to cure this was to convince them of the folly of the quarrels, how senseless and irrational they were; and to persuade them to lay aside their enmities and heart-burnings, and to love one another, and to walk hand in hand in the same way though they traced different paths, which they might well do when the paths lay so very near together.

By this instance it appears, that narrow-spiritedness which confines religion and the church to our way and party, whatever it is, to the condemning of others who differ from us in little things is the great schismatising principle, which has been so much the bane of the Christian Church; *Hinc illæ Lacrymæ—hence her sorrows.*

We find the word used, *I hear there be* Σχίσματα,—*divisions among you.* 1 Cor. 11. 18.

It

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It is undeniably evident that it cannot be meant of any breach of communion, for it is said expressly (v. 20.) that they *came together in one place*, and that into the church too, that is, the place of meeting.

But the schisms were quarrels and contentions about some little things relating to the circumstances of public worship; and the quarrel seems to have been about the time of beginning their worship, especially when they were to join in the Lord's Supper, or their love-feasts: it seems they did not come exactly at the time, therefore the Apostle bids them *tarry one for another*, v. 33. Those who came early quarrelled with those who came late, for coming no sooner; and those who came late quarrelled with the other, for beginning before they came.

Some quarrels of this kind were the schisms here spoken of.

The word is used *that there be no schism in the body.*[a] The Apostle is there carrying on a metaphor betwixt the natural body, and the Church; and this clause clearly relates to the natural body, for he does not come to the reddition of the comparison till, v. 27.

Now, what he means by the schism in the body, is plain from the antithesis in the following words—*But that the members should have the same care one for another.* So that when the members care not one for another, when the eye says to the hand, I have no need of thee; (v. 21.) when there is not a sympathy and fellow-feeling among Christians, (v. 26.) here is schism.

That is schism which breaks or slackens the bond, by which the members are knit together.

Now, that bond is not an act of uniformity in point of communion, in the same modes and ceremonies; but true love and charity in point of affection. It is charity that is the *bond of perfectness:*[b] it is the unity of the Spirit that is the *bond of peace:*[c] and schism is that which breaks this bond.

Now from all this laid together, I draw out this description of schism, which, according to my present apprehensions, is the true Scripture notion of it..

"Schism is an uncharitable distance, division, or alienation of affection among those who are called Christians, and agree in the fundamentals of religion, occasioned by their different apprehensions about little things."

This is the schism which the Scripture makes to be a sin, and by Scripture rules it must be judged. Schism (as indeed the root of all other sin) we see lies in the heart and affections. The tree is known by its fruits. This bitter root bears gall and wormwood. Let us therefore take a short view of those practices, which, according to this description, are schismatical practices.

1. Judging, censuring, and condemning those who differ from us in little things, is a schismatical practice, as it evidences a great alienation, if not enmity of the affections. *Charity thinketh no evil,* ὁ λογίζεται τὸ κακὸν,—*does not reason evil,* does not study to make sins, but cover them; and if they be made, yet not to make the worst of them; it puts the best construction upon words and actions.

Now to pass a censorious judgment upon others, and to put the worst construction upon what they say and do, is certainly uncharitable, that is, schismatical. It is a practice often condemned in Holy Writ; *Judge not, that ye be not judged;*[a] it is construed a *judging of the law.*[b]

It is especially condemned with reference to the present case, of different apprehensions about little things, in that famous scripture, (Rom. 14. 4, 5.) a scripture, which, if well studied and lived up to, would heal us all. Judging the heart, is, in my estimation, one of the most uncharitable species of judging: censuring the principles and ends of an action, which are secret: charging those who differ from us with hypocrisy, is a heart sin. If the appearance be good, and the outside be justifiable, when we conclude hypocrisy is in the heart, we step into the throne of God.

2. Laying a greater stress upon small matters of difference than they will bear, and widening the breach about them. As on the one hand, to censure all prayers by a form; or by this form in particular, as superstition, will-worship, formality, and the like: on the other hand, to censure all extempore praying as babbling, canting, froth, and noise, as if God had not accepted his own people in the one as well as the other: the fastening of a censure, and passing of a judgment upon a whole party and way, if it be not very clear and well-grounded indeed, will be likely to split us upon the rock of schism and uncharitableness.

3. Concluding hardly as to the spiritual state and condition of those who differ from us, excluding them out of the Church, and from salvation, because they are not just of our mind in every punctilio.

Witness that notion which excludes out of the Church, and consequently out of heaven, all those (how orthodox and serious soever they are otherwise) who are not in prelatical communion; if no diocesan bishops, then no ministers, no sacraments, no church, no salvation; which is certainly the most schismatical notion that ever was broached in the Christian world.

4. Reproaching, reviling, and railing at those who differ from us in little things, is another schismatical practice: fastening such nick-names upon them, and loading them with such reproaches, as carry in them all the odium that malice can infuse into them; dressing them up in bears skins, and then baiting them, doing what we can by calumnies and misrepresentations, to alienate the affections of others from them.

5. Making, consenting to, approving or executing of penal laws against those who differ from us in little things, to punish them for such difference in their persons, estates, or liberties, is another uncharitable or schismatical practice.

This is contention with a witness;—which aims at no less than the ruin of a person contended with, in the dearest of his secular interests; to beat out his brains, because his head is not exactly of our size.

[a] 1 Cor. 12. 25. [b] Col. 3. 14. [c] Eph. 4. 3.

[a] Mat. 7. 1. [b] Jam. 4. 11, 12.

6. Separation

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6. Separation from communion with those that we have joined ourselves to, without cause; give me leave to call it *separation for separation sake*, without any regard had to any thing amiss in the Church we separate from, or any thing better in that we join ourselves to. This is an evidence of an uncharitable alienation of affection, and is consequently schismatical, when we quite cast off communion with our brethren, out of ambition, animosity to their persons, affectation of novelty and singularity, or the like.

This was manifestly the case of the Donatists, the infamous schismatics of the primitive church. Their principles were, that the Church of Christ was to be found no where but in their sect, and all other churches were no churches: that true baptism was not administered but among them; and a great many barbarous outrages they committed in the heat of their separation.

7. An affected strangeness, or distance in communion or conversation from those who thus differ from us, upon the account of such difference, avoiding conversation and familiarity with them, carrying it strangely towards them, only because they do not wear the dividing name of our party.

This evidences an uncharitable alienation of affection prevailing in the heart, and is consequently schismatical.

Many such like practices might easily be mentioned, if it were needful: but they are obvious enough, especially, if we look into the laws of charity; (1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6, 7.) and remember that all transgression of those laws is uncharitableness, and when that is found in the things of religion, it is schism. The corollary from the whole is this, that whoever they be that allow themselves in these and the like practices and affections towards their brethren, who differ from them in little things, whether they be Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, or by what name or title soever they are self-dignified and distinguished, they are so far schismatical, inasmuch as they break the great law of Christian charity.

Let us now try what inference may be drawn from the Scripture notion of schism.

1. If this be schism, then is it not within the line of any human power to make that separation to be schismatical, which was not so in itself. By the description given of schism, it does appear to be a thing, *malum in se—evil in itself*, which was not so before; an attempt of that kind would sink with its own weight. And therefore it is well worthy observation, that when the parliament made a law against conventicles, (which are the great schismatical eye sores,) they called it an act to prevent and suppress *seditious* conventicles, knowing it to be within their line to declare a thing to be sedition, but not schismatical conventicles; for that was a thing in which they could not concern themselves.

2. If this be schism, then the guilt of it is to be looked for in particular persons, and is not to be charged by wholesale upon parties of any denomination whatsoever; as among us at this day in the prelatical party there are some schismatical, and others not: and the same is to be said of the separating party; nay, who is there who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from this sin?" Have we not all need to pray, *From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness*, (which are the ingredients of schism,) *good Lord deliver us*, both from the guilt, and from the power of it? It is not so much our differences themselves, as the mismanagement of our differences, that is the bane of the church, burning up Christian love, with the fire of our contentions.

Whence come these *wars and fightings? Come they not hence, even from our lusts?*[a] And those who say they are perfectly free from these warfaring schismatic lusts, must give me leave to say, I doubt they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.

3. If this be schism, then there may be schism where there is no separation of communion; that is plain from the instance of the Corinthians, who came together into *one* place, and yet are blamed for being schismatical. Bringing people to one place will never cure a schism, till they are brought to be of one accord.

You may bind the leopard, and lay him down by the lamb, and yet the enmity remain as great as ever, except there be an inward change.

A quarrel about little things may likewise be schismatical on one side, and not on the other. Jeremiah was a man of strife and contention,[b] that is, a man striven and contended with, and yet no schismatic; though ordinarily (as it is commonly said of domestic differences) there are faults more or less on both sides.

4. If this be schism, then there may be separation of communion where there is no schism. For thus we all agree, that there may be a difference of apprehension, and yet no schism; provided it do not eat out Christian love, but be managed amicably, as between the Arminians and Calvinists, in the Church of England, and divers the like.

Now if this difference of apprehension relate to worship or communion, and the modes or terms thereof, these cannot but be a strong inclination to separate in whole or in part, according as the difference of apprehension is; for do what we can as long as we are rational creatures, the understanding will have the directing of the will.

Now surely this separation (if we must call it so) or rather, this variety and diversity of worship and communion may be managed without schism, provided Christian love and charity be kept entire notwithstanding.

For can any imagine that a difference of apprehension, in regard of worship and discipline, should be more schismatical than difference of apprehension in doctrine? Since of the two, doctrinal truths seem more essential to Christianity.

But to come a little closer. The meetings of the dissenters (though now, blessed be God, permitted and allowed of by the law of the land, yet) are commonly charged with being schismatical: the great outcry is,

[a] Jam. 4. 1. [b] Jer. 15. 10.

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that we leave the Church; and the unthinking mobile, who are so well taught as to know no other churches but the public places of worship, are easily induced to believe it; as if it were schism to worship God any where else, let the worship there be what it will.

Those who will allow themselves the liberty of an unprejudiced thought, cannot but see the difference so small, that as long as we believe the same Christian faith, and agree in the same Protestant abhorrence of Papal delusions, we may easily be looked upon as one and the same church, as well as two several parish churches may, especially being united under the care and protection of one Protestant king, and members of the same Protestant commonwealth.

(1.) I do from the bottom of my soul detest and abhor all separation from the parish churches to atheism, irreligion, and sensuality, *(who separate themselves sensual,*[a]*)* who forsake the church to go to the alehouse or tavern, or to their secular business, or to their slothfulness and laziness, to *separate unto that shame.*[b] And if this separation had been more animadverted upon than it has been of late, probably the cure of schism would have been sooner effected thereby, than by severities that have been used against conscientious separatists.

(2.) I do likewise abhor all schismatical, that is, uncharitable, proud, censorious, rigid separation; such separation as their's who condemn the parish churches as no parts of the visible church, who rail at ministers as Babylonish and Antichristian: this is a horrid breach of the law of Christian love, and that which every good heart cannot but rise at the thoughts of.

And yet I cannot but say, and am satisfied in it, that there may be a lawful and justifiable separation (though I would rather call it a diversity of communion from the parish churches), which I shall endeavour to clear in three cases.

[1.] If my own conscience be not satisfied in the lawfulness of any terms of communion imposed, as far as I fall under that imposition, I may justify a separation from them, and a joining with other churches, where I may be freed from that imposition, provided that this be not done schismatically, that is, with heat and bitterness, and alienation of Christian affection. And I hope none that have the law of Christ written in their hearts will say, that it is impossible truly to love those with whom I am not satisfied to join in all the ordinances for the sake of some ceremonies, with which, after all my study, prayer, and conversation, I cannot be satisfied.

So, if I be a minister, and as such obliged to preach the gospel, yet kept out from the public exercise of my ministry by such terms and conditions, oaths and subscriptions as I judge sinful; in such a case surely it is lawful for me with Eldad and Medad, to prophecy in the camp, since in my judgment, the door of the tabernacle is made narrower than my master has appointed it to be made. What should hinder but that as a minister of Christ, I may administer all the ordinances, according to Christ's institution, to those who are willing to join with me, and put themselves under my conduct (such as it is) in those administrations? If God has given though but one talent, it must be traded with, or else there will be an uncomfortable reckoning shortly, especially, when we look abroad, and consider how the apparent necessity of precious souls, call for our utmost diligence in our Master's work; and indeed there is work enough for us all, if God would give us hearts to be serious and unanimous in it.

In this also it is always provided, that my agency in a ministerial station be not made schismatical by my heat, passion, and bitterness; but that I live in true love and charity with those whom by reason of the impositions I cannot, *salva conscientia—with a pure conscience*, join with in communion.

2. Though I be satisfied in the lawfulness of the terms of communion required, and so when purer administrations are not to be had, may rather than live in the total want of the ordinances comply with them, yet when I have an opportunity of enjoying those ordinances in a way which I judge more pure and scriptural, or which I think more lively and edifying, and more likely to attain the great end of all ordinances, and that contribute more to my comfort and holiness, and communion with God; in such a case I cannot see but that I may lawfully have recourse to such administrations, though thereby I may seem to separate from another church, wherein before I had joined, and for which I still retain a very charitable opinion and affection. If the magistrate should be so unreasonable as to impose upon me an unskilful physician, to be alone made use of in case of sickness, I might take him rather than none: but if there be another, who, I am sure, has more skill, and will to help me, I think I should be accessary to the ruin of my health, and life, if I should not make use of him, notwithstanding such an inhibition.

And is not the life, and health, and salvation of my immortal soul dearer to me than any other concern? Is not communion with God the sweetest and most precious of all my delights? Is it not the life of my soul, and the crown of all my joys? And are not those administrations most desirable in which I find myself most edified? Must I then be such an enemy to my own comfort and happiness as to throw away all opportunities which I might have of that kind, only in a compliment? *Amicus Socrates, Amicus Plato, sed magis Amica Veritas—Socrates is my friend, Plato is my friend, but Truth is my best friend.* The bishops are my friends, and the ministers my friends, and I have a true love for them, but charity begins at home, especially when my precious soul, more worth than all the world, lies at stake.

This case is somewhat the clearer in those parishes where the public ministers are either ignorant, profane, or malignant.

[3.] Nay, suppose I am so well satisfied in communion with the parish churches in all administrations, as not to desire better, or not to expect better in the dissenters meetings, yet I cannot see what schism, that is, what breach of Christian love and charity, there is in it for me to be present sometimes in the congregations of

[a] Jude 19. [b] Hos. 9. 10.

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the sober dissenters, and to join with them who worship the same God, in the name of the same Mediator, read and preach the same word, and live in hopes of the same inheritance, and differ from me only in some little things which I think not worth contending for, scarce worth the mentioning; hereby to evidence, my universal love and Catholic charity, and that I am not of narrow, schismatical, dividing principles, nor one who will sacrifice Christian love to the petty trifling fancies and interests of a party.

The sober dissenters are such as I have reason to hope have communion with God in what they do, and therefore why should not I now and then have communion with them? *In every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him;* and why should he not be accepted of me? why may not I have fellowship with them who have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.[a] To fancy schism, that is, uncharitable contention and a breach of Christian love in this is very absurd.

Obj. But hereby I encourage a schism, and countenance them in their separation from that which in my estimation is lawful and good, and does not give just cause for such a separation.

Answ. There must be grains of allowance for difference of apprehension, different capacities, constitutions, and inclinations; custom and especially education must be put into the scale; and while I walk according to the light which God has given me, I must charitably believe that others do so too.

Whether the dissenters' meetings be as to the constitution of them (looking upon them only as diversities of communion) schismatical, has been considered already, and found otherwise by Scripture light.

The common outcry, is, that it is the setting up of altar *against* altar; which is not so; for at the most it is but altar *by* altar; and though I have often read of one body, and one spirit, and one hope, and one lord, and one faith, and one baptism, and one God and Father,[b] yet I could never find a word in all the New Testament of one altar,[c] except Jesus Christ, the altar that sanctifies every gift, in whom we all centre. And if there be any of the dissenters who are schismatical, that is, contentious, bitter, and uncharitable in their separation, let them bear their own burthen, but by my presence with them I encourage that in them, no more than I do too much of a like spirit in too many of those who are called the church of England men, by my adherence to them.

To conclude. By all this it is evident that unity of affection is the thing to be laboured after, more than uniformity in modes and ceremonies. We have been long enough trying to root schism out of the Church, *vi & armis—by impositions, fines and penalties,* choaking our brethren, because their throats have not been so wide as ours. And it has been found ineffectual, even in the judgment of our great Sanhedrim, who have declared that "giving ease to scrupulous consciences is the likeliest way to unite their Majesty's Protestant subjects in interest and affection." What if we should now try another method, and turn the stream of our endeavours into another channel. Hitherto we have been as it were striving which should hate one another most; what if we should now strive which should love one another best, and be most ready to do all offices of true charity and kindness, and bury all our little feuds and animosities in that blessed grave of Christian love and charity?

What if we should every one of us, of each party (as we have been too often called,) set ourselves by our preaching to promote and propagate the gospel of *peace,* and by our prayers to prevail with God for a more plentiful pouring out of the Spirit of *peace,* that the dividing names of *Baalim* may be taken out of our mouths, and that however it goes with uniformity of ceremony, we may keep the unity of the Spirit; and then I doubt not but that we should soon see our English Jerusalem established a praise in the midst of the earth.

And yet I am afraid even saints will be men; there will be remainders even of those corruptions which are the seed of schism, in the best, till we all come to the perfect man.

And that is the comfort of my soul, that if we can but once get to heaven, we shall be for ever out of the noise and hurry of this quarrelsome, contentious, dividing world, and the Church triumphant shall be no more militant, but that happy world of everlasting light will be a world of everlasting love.

[a] 1 John 1. 3. [b] Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6. [c] Heb. 13. 10.

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THE LAY-MAN's REASONS FOR HIS JOINING

IN STATED

COMMUNION WITH A CONGREGATION OF MODERATE DISSENTERS.

MY case, in short, is this. I am born in a Christian nation, and baptized into the Christian faith; and I reckon it my unspeakable honour and happiness that I am so, and that I live in the times of reformation. In this nation, wherever I am, I find public assemblies for religious worship, all agreeing to worship the same God, in the name of the same Mediator, under the conduct and influence of the same Spirit, according to the rule of the same Scriptures, holding communion with the universal Church in faith, hope, and love, under the presidency of gospel-ministers, by the same ordinances of the word, sacraments, and prayer, looking for the same blessed hope. All these assemblies concur, in their testimony, not only against Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans abroad, but against Atheists, Infidels, and Profane at home, and likewise in their protestation against the tyranny and idolatry of the church and court of Rome.

But I find there is some difference among these Christian assemblies. Though all good Christians are one in Christ by faith, and one with each other by holy love, yet in outward and lesser things I observe they do not all agree. And it is no surprise to me that they do not; for I know that the best are imperfect in this world. I find some of these assemblies, and, indeed, far the greatest number, established and appointed by an act of parliament at the time of the happy restoration, 14 Car. 2. The ministers presiding in these assemblies, ordained by bishops, usually presented by lay-patrons, and to the great advantage of their ministry dignified, and honourably provided for by the civil government. The ordinances administered in these assemblies, according to the Book of Common Prayer, and the discipline managed by the chancellor of the diocese, and his court.

I find some few of these assemblies permitted and allowed by another act of parliament twenty-seven years after the former, at the time of the late glorious revolution, 1 William & Mary. The ministers presiding in them ordained by presbyters, chosen by the people, and though taken under the protection, yet destitute of the authority and support of the civil powers. The ordinances administered in them not by a set, prescribed, constant form, but by the rule of the Scripture in general, and according to the measure of the gift given to him that ministers. The discipline managed by the minister himself, who presides in other ordinances, with the advice and concurrence of the congregation. Providence has so cast my lot, and appointed the bounds of my habitation, that assemblies of both these kinds are within my reach.

And, through the grace of God, I think I can truly say, this is my character. I am heartily concerned about my soul, and my everlasting condition: it is my care, and desire to please God, and to work out my salvation. All other interests and concerns are nothing to me, in comparison with this. I seriously profess I am afraid of sin, and am solicitous to be found in the way of my duty, and to get all the help I can to forward me toward heaven, and to fit me for it. Hereunto I can add this further protestation, that, through the grace of God, I have a Catholic charity for all good Christians. I cannot monopolize the church; it is narrow enough, I dare not make it narrower: I love a good man, whatever party he belongs to, and him who follows Christ, though he does not follow with me. *He that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of God*, and shall be accepted by me.

My practice is this. I join myself sometimes with the assemblies of the public establishment, if any opportunity offers itself on a week-day; or if I happen on the Lord's-Day to be out of the reach of such assemblies as I chuse statedly to join with, I freely and cheerfully attend the divine service of the church, knowing nothing in the prayers but what I can heartily say Amen to, which I chuse rather to do, than to answer aloud after the minister. And this I do, that I may testify the Catholic charity, and my communion with, and affection to all good Christians, though I be not in every thing of their mind. Hereby, likewise, I endeavour to fulfil all righteousness, and, in my place, I bear my testimony to that which is of God in the public establishment, wherein I do rejoice, —and will rejoice.

But I constantly join in all the ordinances with a congregation of moderate and sober dissenters: with them I hold stated communion; and with them, after many serious and impartial thoughts, have put myself under the ministerial conduct and inspection of a preacher or teacher allowed, though not authorized by the law of the land; but one who is manifested in my conscience to be a true and faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

The reasons why I chuse my settled communion with the dissenters, are these six, which abundantly satisfy my own conscience at present, not judging other men's consciences, nor knowing what further light God may hereafter give me in this matter.

1. I think it is my duty to own and adhere to that ministry which seems to me to be wrongfully and injuriously excluded from the public establishment; and the exclusion of which was professedly intended and designed by the act of uniformity. By making such oaths, declarations, and subscriptions, the indispensable terms of their admission into the ministry, or continuance in it, as they could not comply with, without sinning against their consciences, they were and are effectually shut out from the public establishment.

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ment. This I take to be a wrong both to them who are well worthy of the church's double honours, and to the church which stands in need of, and would be greatly benefited by their useful labours. I therefore think that I ought, in my place, both to bear my testimony against the exclusion of them, (lest I should partake with other men's sins, and should be found to have laid a confederacy with those who put so many burning shining lights under a bushel,) and also to aid, assist, and encourage those who are so excluded, putting my soul into their soul's stead, and then doing as I would be done by. Were I a minister I must be shut out as they are, and should expect to be countenanced in suffering for conscience sake; and therefore cannot but countenance them. And this is that which I verily believe most men will do when it comes to be their own case, whatever they talk when they are uppermost. Those who, at any time, have thought themselves unjustly restrained from the public exercise of their ministry, have ever yet thought themselves obliged to exercise it in private as they could, and their friends obliged to stand by them in it; and so I believe they ever will.

2. I think it is my duty to chuse rather statedly to join in those administrations, which come nearest to the divine institution, than in those which have in them an unnecessary mixture of human invention. How far men may lawfully devise and use ceremonies of their own, under pretence of beautifying God's ordinances, and edifying themselves and others, I pretend not to be a competent judge: but to me it seems very plain, that the ordinances of Christ are purer, and look better without them; and that those who make the scripture only their rule, and admit nothing into their worship but what is warranted by it, are to be preferred much before those who practice many things in their stated public worship, which they do not produce any ground or warrant for in the holy Scripture. To me it seems much better in baptism, only to wash a child with water, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in token that he shall not be ashamed to confess Christ crucified, which is Christ's institution; than besides that, in token of the same thing, to sign him with the sign of the cross; and in the Lord's Supper, to use the gesture Christ's disciples used, rather than another devised by men. Having chosen the scripture for the standing rule of my faith and practice, I chuse to have communion with those, who seem to me to keep most closely to it.

3. I think it is my duty to chuse rather statedly to join with those who assert and maintain the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, than with those who willingly submit to the impositions of men in the things of God, and justify those impositions. I am very well satisfied, that when my Redeemer, in kindness to his church, broke the yoke of that ceremonial law, which was given by Moses, he did not leave it in the power of any man, or company of men, in the world, to make another like yoke, and lay that upon the necks of the disciples. I doubt not but there is a power in the Christian magistrates, or other governors of the church, to restrain and correct natural indecencies in any of the necessary circumstances of public worship; as time, place, habit, or gesture: and that, in any of these, which unavoidably renders the administration of the ordinances either despicable, or inconvenient, or unprofitable to those who attend upon them. But I see nothing in the gospel which warrants any governors, civil or sacred, to impose such habits and gestures as they please (because they think them decent) upon those who think them incongruous; and then, to make the use of them the indispensable condition of their communion. In the religious assemblies of the dissenters I observe, that generally every thing is done with the gravity and decorum that becomes the solemnity there performed: I see no uncouth habits, I hear no noisy responses, but all things are managed decently, and in order, with reverence, and to edification: and yet no ceremonies are imposed, no terms of communion made, which Christ has not made; no days made holy, but that which God has made so; no stress laid upon the holiness of places, which the New Testament gives not the least hint of since the destruction of the temple; and therefore I chuse to join with them; for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. Their ministers are not tied up to any one prescribed form of prayer, but are at liberty to vary and enlarge according to the improvements of their knowledge, and warmth of their devotion, and the case of those whose mouth they are in prayer: And, as I think, every minister ought to have some competent measure of the gift of prayer, as well as preaching; and that otherwise he is not duly qualified; so, I think, having that ability, he ought not to be abridged of his liberty to use it; especially not in the administration of sacraments. *All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any.*[a]

4. I think it is my duty to chuse rather to join with those who refuse to admit into the communion with them, such as are openly vicious and profane, than with those who, being under an unhappy obligation to administer the Lord's-Supper to all in office, and to transfer the trial of all suspensions to the bishop's court, cannot possibly use so strict a discipline. Not that I think I am ever the worse for bad people's joining with me in the Lord's-Supper, but perhaps they are the worse for my joining with them; and I would not be accessary to the hardening of them in their impieties. I do not expect to meet with any society of Christians perfectly pure on this side heaven. There are spots, I know, in our feasts of charity; but I must prefer those who appear to me either to be more pure from the mixture of corrupt members, or at least more solicitous and desirous to be so, and more capable of being so by their own constitution. I have seen, with much satisfaction, many of the church of England zealous against vice and profaneness, and active for the suppressing of it, and have a mighty value and veneration for them upon that account; and wish their constitution would allow them

[a] 1 Cor. 6. 12.

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to do more, by church-censures, in prosecution of that worthy design than I apprehend it will. But for that pious zeal of theirs, I have so often heard them called presbyterians by those who are bigots for episcopacy and the ceremonies, that I confess it has made me love the presbyterians the better, since zeal against profaneness enters so much into their character, even their enemies themselves being judges.

5. I think it is my duty to chuse rather to join with those churches, whose constitution leaves room for a catholic and comprehensive charity, than with those whose avowed principles and sentiments force them to monopolize the church in England to themselves, and forbid them to own the dissenting ministers as true ministers, and their churches as true churches. This, I confess, has a mighty influence on me. The sober dissenting ministers, as I am acquainted with them, are manifest in my conscience to be faithful ministers of Jesus Christ; and in their administrations I cannot but see the institution of ordinances observed, and every thing well-fitted to answer the end of them. I know many who constantly attend in their assemblies, and have observed them to be sound in their principles, sober in their lives, honest in their dealings, constant in their devotions, and in all instances to have given undeniable proof of their being sincere good christians. When, therefore, in the books and sermons that plead for the church of England, I find these ministers censured and condemned as usurpers, impostors, and lay-intruders; all their administrations nulled, their assemblies denied to be parts of the catholic church, all who join with them sentenced as schismatics to the pit of hell, and no hopes of salvation given them, but what God's general mercy allows to moral heathens; and all the reformed churches, that have no bishops, falling so far under the same censure, that their ministers cannot be admitted ministers of the church of England, unless they be re-ordained, while those who have been popish priests may; and all these harsh censures, excused from uncharitableness with this, that they cannot help it, their principles lead them to it; then, think I, the Lord deliver me from such principles, and from that pretended unity, which is destructive of real charity. On the other side, I find the dissenters willingly owning the established churches as true churches, their ministers as true ministers, their principles leading them to do so. I often hear them, in their public assemblies, pray for them, and for their success in their ministry, and profess their communion with them in faith, hope, and love; and in their common conversation, I hear them speak of them with love and respect. My judgment and inclination lead me to the charitable side, as the best and safest; and by all I have read and heard in this controversy, that appears to me to be the side of the dissenters.

6. I think it is my duty to attend on those administrations which I find to be most for my edification in faith, holiness, and comfort, and best (with me) to answer the ends of holy ordinances. Herein I hope I may be allowed to judge for myself. I have often tried both; and if I know my own heart, without prejudice or partiality, I must say, that I have found my heart more affected and enlarged in those confessions, prayers, and thanksgivings, which have been offered up without a stated prescribed form, than ever it was in those that have been invariably tied up to certain words. Far be it from me to make comparison or mens' abilities and performances: I greatly honour and value the gifts and labours of many who are in the public establishment; but, to my capacity, the dissenters' praying and preaching is most adapted, and most profitable; and those I am to reckon the best gifts, and to covet earnestly, which I find by experience best for me. Sabbath-time is precious; and I would willingly improve it so as will be most for my advantage in keeping my communion with God, and preparing for heaven. If it be owing to my own weakness that these administrations are most agreeable to me, yet while I sincerely design God's glory, and my own spiritual benefit therein, I trust, through Christ, that God will not only forgive me, but accept me, and that they also who are strong, will bear with my infirmities.

These are the principles I go upon, and from them I conclude:

(1.) That if the present dictate of my conscience and practical judgment be, that it is my duty to chuse my stated communion with the congregations of dissenters, then it is my sin if I do not do it; for *to him that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

(2.) Then by occasional communion with the church of England, whereby I design to testify my charity and catholic communion, and my approbation of that in it which is good, I do not in the least condemn my stated communion with the dissenters; for though I am not convinced that it is a sin of commission at any time to join with the established church, nor that any thing in itself unlawful is required as the condition of lay-communion, yet, upon the grounds aforesaid, I am fully convinced it would be a sin of omission not to join with the dissenters. I will not condemn any thing that is good, when a better is not in my reach; but when it is, I think I am obliged, in duty to God, and in concern for my own soul, to prefer it. *All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*[a]

(3.) Then, in all this, I am far from judging and censuring those who differ from me. I walk according to my present light, preferring that which I think and find to be best; and I verily believe those good Christians who, I know, constantly join with the public establishment do so too, preferring that which they think and find to be the best; and both they and I (I trust) are accepted of God. To those who condemn me herein, I shall only offer that reasonable demand of St. Paul: *If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.*[a]

[a] 2 Cor. 10. 7.

A PLAIN

A PLAIN
CATECHISM FOR CHILDREN.

INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD not have thought of drawing up, much less of publishing this little CATECHISM, with its *Appendix*, if I had not been solicited to it, by some of my friends, whose judgment and advice I have a great deal of reason to put a value upon.

The children into whose hands it is designed to be put, are supposed to have learned the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten commandments; those first forms of sound words; and then perhaps some time spent in this, may prepare them afterwards to improve by the fulness and accuracy of the *Assemblies' Catechism*, with which this does very little interfere, and which therefore I hope, it will not be suspected of a design to supersede.

Whether such a catechism as this be so needful, as some have said they think it is, I know not: however, I hope it may be useful to some; and therefore I am willing to let it go abroad; and the blessing of heaven go along with it.

It is God's promise, that *all shall know him from the least, even to the greatest.* That that promise may be fulfilled, and all pious endeavours, for the propagating of Christian knowledge, crowned with success, is my heart's desire and prayer.

July 7, 1703. MATTH. HENRY.

PART I.

Of God and the Scriptures.

Q. 1. WHAT must you do in the days of your youth? *A.* I must remember my Creator. Q. 2. Who is your Creator? *A.* The great God who made the world. Q. 3. Who is your preserver? *A.* The same God, who made me, preserves and maintains me; and in him I live, and move, and have my being. Q. 4. What are you made and maintained for? *A.* To glorify God. Q. 5. What do you believe concerning this God? *A.* I believe that he is an infinite and eternal spirit, most wise, and powerful, holy, just, and good. Q. 6. How many Gods are there? *A.* There is but one God. Q. 7. How many persons are there in the godhead? *A.* Three: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these three are one. Q. 8. What is your duty to this God as your Creator? *A.* It is my duty to fear and honour him, to worship and obey him, and in all my ways to trust in him, and to please him. Q. 9. What is the rule of your faith and obedience? *A.* The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which we call the BIBLE. Q. 10. What is the excellency of that book? *A.* It is the word of God. Q. 11. What use will it be of to you? *A.* It is able to make me wise to salvation.

PART II.

Of our Misery by Sin, and our Redemption by Christ.

Q. 12. WHO were your first parents? *A.* Adam and Eve, from whom we are all descended. Q. 13. What condition did God create them in? *A.* Holy and happy. Q. 14. How did they lose their holiness and happiness? *A.* By their disobedience to the command of God, in eating the forbidden fruit. Q. 15. What condition are we all born in? *A.* Sinful and miserable. Q. 16. How do you perceive your condition to be by nature sinful? *A.* Because I find I am naturally prone to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good; and foolishness is bound up in my heart. Q. 17. How do you perceive your condition to be by nature miserable? *A.* Because I find myself liable to many troubles in this life; and the Scripture tells me, I am by nature a child of wrath. Q. 18. What would become of you then without a Saviour? *A.* I should be certainly lost and undone for ever. Q. 19. Who is it that saves us out of this sad condition? *A.* Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and Man. Q. 20. Who was Jesus Christ? *A.* The eternal Son of God. Q. 21. What did he do to redeem and save us? *A.* He took our nature upon him, and became man. Q. 22. What life did he live in that nature? *A.* A life of perfect holiness, leaving us an example. Q. 23. What doctrine did he preach? *A.* A true and excellent doctrine concerning God and himself, and another world. Q. 24. What miracles did he work to confirm his doctrine? *A.* He healed the sick with a word; raised the dead, cast out devils, and many other the like. Q. 25. What death did he die? *A.* The *cursed* death of the cross, to satisfy for our sins, and to reconcile us to God. Q. 26. What became of him after he was dead? *A.* He arose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended up into heaven. Q. 27. Where is he now? *A.* He is at the right hand of God, where he ever lives, making intercession for us, and has all power both in heaven and earth. Q. 28. When will he come again? *A.* He will come again in glory, at the last day, to judge the world.

PART

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PART III.

Concerning Baptism and the Covenant of Grace.

Q. 29. WHAT relation do you stand in to the Lord Jesus? *A.* I am one of his disciples; for I am a baptized Christian. Q. 30. Into whose name were you baptized? *A.* Into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Q. 31. What was the meaning of your being so baptized? *A.* I was thereby given up in a covenant-way, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Q. 32. What was the covenant which was signified and sealed in your baptism? *A.* The covenant of grace made with us in Jesus Christ. Q. 33. What is the sum of that covenant? *A.* That God will be in Christ to us a God, and we must be to him a people. Q. 34. How then must you take the Lord for your God? *A.* I must take God the Father for my chief good, and highest end; God the Son, for my Prince and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, for my sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter. Q. 35. How must you give up yourself to him to be one of his people? *A.* I must deny all ungodliness, and worldly, fleshly lusts, and must resolve to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope. Q. 36. What are the three great blessings promised in this covenant? *A.* The pardon of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life. Q. 37. What are the two great conditions of this covenant? *A.* Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Q. 38. What is it to repent of your sins? *A.* It is to be sorry that I have offended God, in what I have done amiss, and to do so no more. Q. 39. What is it to believe in Jesus Christ? *A.* It is to receive him, and rely upon him as my Prophet, Priest, and King, and to give up myself to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him.

PART IV.

Concerning our Duty to God, Ourselves, and our Neighbour.

Q. 40. HOW must you evidence the sincerity of your faith and repentance? *A.* By a diligent and conscientious obedience to all God's commandments. Q. 41. What is the first and great commandment? *A.* To love God with all my heart. Q. 42. What is the second, which is like unto it? *A.* To love my neighbour as myself, and to shew it, by doing as I would be done by. Q. 43. What is the honour you owe to God's name? *A.* I must never take his name in vain; but must always make mention of it with reverence and seriousness. Q. 44. What is the honour you owe to God's word? *A.* I must read it, and hear it with diligence and attention: I must meditate upon it, believe, and frame my life according to it. Q. 45. What is the honour you owe to God in his providence? *A.* I must receive all his mercies with thankfulness, and I must bear all afflictions with patience, and submission to his holy will. Q. 46. What is the honour you owe to the Lord's Day? *A.* I must keep the sabbath holy to God, by a diligent performance of the religious duties of the day, both public and private, not speaking my own words, nor doing my own works on that day. Q. 47. How must you honour God in prayer? *A.* I must every day, by solemn prayer, seek the favour of God, and give unto him the glory due unto his name. Q. 48. In whose name must you pray? *A.* In the name of Jesus Christ only. Q. 49. What must you pray for? *A.* For mercy to pardon, and grace to help in time of need. Q. 50. What else must you do in your prayers? *A.* I must confess my sins, and give God praise for his goodness to me. Q. 51. What must be your daily care concerning your own soul? *A.* I must take care that my heart be not lifted up with pride, nor disturbed with anger, or any sinful passion. Q. 52. What must be your care concerning your body? *A.* I must take care that it be not defiled by intemperance, uncleanness, or any fleshly lusts. Q. 53. What must be your care concerning your words? *A.* I must never tell a lie, nor mock at any body, nor call nicknames, nor speak any filthy words. Q. 54. What is your duty to your parents and governors? *A.* I must reverence and obey them in the Lord: I must thankfully receive their instructions, and submit to their rebukes, and labour in every thing to be a comfort to them. Q. 55. What is your duty to the poor? *A.* I must pity, help and relieve them, according to my ability. Q. 56. What is your duty to all men? *A.* I must render to all their dues; I must be honest and just in all my dealings; I must be respectful to my friends, and forgive my enemies, and speak evil of no man. Q. 57. How are you able to perform this duty? *A.* Not in any strength of my own, but in the strength of the graces of Jesus Christ, which I must ask of God for his sake. Q. 58. What must you do when you find you come short of this duty? *A.* I must renew my repentance, and pray to God for pardon in the blood of Christ, and be careful to do my duty better for the time to come. Q. 59. What encouragement have you thus to live in the fear of God? *A.* If I do so, I shall certainly be happy both in this world, and in that to come.

PART V.

Concerning the future State.

Q. 60. WHAT will become of you shortly? *A.* I must shortly die, and leave this world. Q. 61. What becomes of the body at death? *A.* It returns to the earth, to be raised to life again at the day of judgment. Q. 62. What becomes of the soul then? *A.* It returns to God who gave it, to be determined to an unchangeable state, according to what was done in the body. Q. 63. What shall be the portion of the wicked and ungodly in the other world? *A.* They shall all go to hell. Q. 64. What is hell? *A.* It is a state of everlasting misery and torment, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Q. 65. What shall be the portion of the godly in the other world? *A.* They shall

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shall all go to heaven. Q. 66. What is heaven? *A.* It is a state of everlasting rest and joy with God and Jesus Christ. Q. 67. What life then will you resolve to live in this world? *A.* God's grace enabling me, I will live a holy godly life, and make it my great care and business to serve God, and save my soul.

A short Catechism *for the Instruction of those who are to be admitted to the* Lord's Supper.

Q. 1. WHAT is the Lord's Supper? *A.* It is a sacrament of the New Testament. Q. 2. Who ordained this sacrament? *A.* Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed. Q. 3. What are the outward signs in this sacrament? *A.* Giving and receiving bread and wine, and eating and drinking of them in a solemn and religious manner. Q. 4. What does the bread broken signify and represent to us? *A.* The broken body of our Lord Jesus, which was crucified for us. Q. 5. What does the wine signify? *A.* The precious blood of Christ, which was shed for us upon the cross. Q. 6. What does the minister's giving the bread and wine signify? *A.* The gracious offer that is made us in the gospel of Christ and all his benefits, upon the terms of faith, and repentance, and new obedience. Q. 7. What does the receiving of the bread and wine signify? *A.* Our hearty acceptance of Christ as he is offered to us in the gospel, and our compliance with the terms of that offer. Q. 8. What does the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine signify? *A.* The satisfaction we take in Christ and his gospel, and the nourishment of our souls thereby through faith. Q. 9. Why did Christ ordain this sacrament? *A.* To be a memorial of his death till he come; for he said, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Q. 10. What more is there in this sacrament? *A.* It is a seal of the covenant of grace, strongly assuring us, that God is willing in Christ to be to us a God, and strongly engaging us to be to him a people. Q. 11. Why would you be admitted to this solemn ordinance? *A.* Because I desire to take the conant of my baptism upon myself, and to make it mine own act and deed, to join myself unto the Lord. Q. 12. What do you think of that covenant which is there sealed? *A.* I think it is well ordered in all things, and sure; and I do heartily consent to it, and venture my soul and my salvation upon it. Q. 13. What do you think of Christ, who is there set before you? *A.* I think he is a gracious and all-sufficient Saviour, and I accept of him as my Lord and my God. Q. 14. What do you think of sin? *A.* I think sin to be the worst of evils; and I do heartily repent of my own sin, and turn from it to God. Q. 15. What do you think of this world? *A.* I think it is vanity and vexation of spirit, and I will never set my heart upon it. Q. 16. What do you think of the other world? *A.* I think the things of another world are real, and great, and very near, and I would therefore give all diligence to prepare for that world. Q. 17. What do you think of a religious life? *A.* I think that a holy heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is the most pleasant and comfortable life a man can live in this world. Q. 18. Will you then live such a life? *A.* By the grace of God, I will, and with purpose of heart, will cleave to the Lord. Q. 19. What communion do you desire to have with the Church of Christ? *A.* By faith, hope, and love, I desire to maintain a spiritual communion with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Q. 20. What must you do in your preparation for the Lord's Supper? *A.* I must examine myself. Q. 21. How must you examine yourself about your spiritual state? *A.* I must seriously inquire whether I do in sincerity consent to the covenant of grace, and whether I be indeed born again. Q. 22. What will be an evidence, that your spiritual state is bad? *A.* If I live a vain and careless life, loving the world more than God, and minding the things of the flesh more than the things of the Spirit, and allowing myself in any known sin, I have reason to conclude, that whatever profession I make, my spiritual state is bad. Q. 23. What will be an evidence that your spiritual state is good? *A.* If I be heartily concerned about my soul and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ; if I strive against sin, make conscience of my words and ways, and have respect to all God's commandments, I have reason to hope, that notwithstanding my daily infirmities, my spiritual state is good. Q. 24. How must you examine your conscience about your particular actions? *A.* I must solemnly reflect upon what I have done amiss in thought, word, and deed, and I must humbly confess it before God, and judge myself for it. Q. 25. What else must you do in your preparation for the Lord's Supper? *A.* I must earnestly pray to God for his Spirit and grace: I must meditate much upon the love of Christ in dying for me; and I must be in charity with all men. Q. 26. After what manner must you receive this sacrament? *A.* With humble reverence and seriousness; with sorrow for sin, and hatred of it; with faith in Christ, and the lively workings of pious and devout affection towards him. Q. 27. What must you do after you have received this sacrament? *A.* I must walk cheerfully with God in all holy conversation, and never return again to folly. Q. 28. Who are they that receive this sacrament unworthily? *A.* They who continue in love and league with sin while they pretend to covenant with God. Q. 29. What is the misery of those who do so? *A.* They eat and drink judgment to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. Q. 30. Who shall be welcome to this ordinance? *A.* They who by faith cordially consent to the covenant of grace, and do honour to their Redeemer, by shewing forth his death. Q. 31. What benefits do they receive by it that duly improve it? *A.* Their faith is hereby strengthened, their resolutions are confirmed, their comforts are increased, and they have an earnest of the everlasting feast.

A SCRIPTURE

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A

SCRIPTURE CATECHISM,

IN THE

METHOD OF THE ASSEMBLIES.

Introduction.

WE are very happy (I know) in catechisms, which, to the inhabitants of this *valley of vision*, will be either the means of knowledge, or the shame of ignorance. The variety of these forms of sound words, while they all speak for substance the same thing, and are all built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, derogates not at all from the honour of the Christian doctrine, but rather (like the setting up of several candles in the same room) help to diffuse the light, and make it stronger. Many very excellent expositions we have both of the *Church catechism* and of the *Assemblies*, and an ancient and profitable one of Mr. Ball's; and yet some encourage me to hope, that this *essay*, which is in a way not hitherto used, that I know of, will be found not altogether useless. Two things I aim at in it: one is, to put the catechism into such a dress, as to make it (if possible) both easy and copious, so as that it may not be an insuperable task to the learner, and yet may furnish him with plenty of useful knowledge. The bulk of it (which somewhat exceeds my first intentions) shews it to be copious; and yet I think it is made very easy, by breaking of it into so many short questions, and those answered by *Yes* or *No*, which the learner may at first content himself with, the teacher, if he pleases, reading the proofs; and, by degrees, the learner, who is willing to take a little pains, and begins to be versed in the Scriptures, will find it no great difficulty to charge his memory with most of the proofs annexed, which the question oftentimes easily introduces, and which, by frequent use, will in time become familiar. I remember to have seen an *explanation of the Assemblies shorter catechism*, (and I think it was the first that ever was published,) by a great man, the Rev. Dr. Wallis, of Oxford, which was done by breaking the propositions of the catechism in short questions, answered (as this) with *Yes* or *No*. That performance, though very short, was an excellent precedent, directing to a method of catechizing, which has been of good use to enrich the understanding of the learners, without overloading their memories. The text subjoined here will shew that our *Yea* is *Yea*, and our *Nay*, *Nay*. To make this the more easy, the several sections under each article, may be allotted to several catechumens.

But another thing I aim at, (and indeed the chief,) is, to promote the knowledge of the Scriptures. Divine truths, methinks, sound best in Divine language; and the *things which God has revealed to us by his Spirit*, cannot be conveyed in a more safe and proper vehicle, than by the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, (1 Cor. 2. 10, 13.) which, though I would be far from superstitiously tying myself, or others to, yet, I confess, I cannot but think they should be preferred. I have often observed how the Evangelist rectifies a mistake which rose upon a saying of Christ's, only by repeating the words spoken, John 21. 23. *He said not, he shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* He said so, and no more; add thou not to his words. We are directed not only to think, but to *speak according to his word*. Isa. 8. 20.

It is especially profitable to acquaint children betimes with their Bibles, and to shew them their religion there. *Timothy's catechism* was the Scripture, which he knew ἀπὸ βρέφους,—*from his very infancy*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. They who are ready and mighty in the Scriptures, will be thoroughly furnished for every good work, and thoroughly fortified against every evil work. What I have here endeavoured, may (I hope,) prove a good expedient for this purpose, obliging myself to produce a text of Scripture for every question, it cannot be thought they should be alike apposite. Perhaps here and there one may be found that is *diverted* from its *primary* intention by an allusion only, (which I think is warranted by divers of the New Testament quotations out of the Old,) yet I hope there are none *perverted*. Were we more conversant with the inspired writings, we should (as one of the ancients speaks) "adore the fulness of the Scriptures." I have quoted the texts as concisely as I could, in hopes the diligent reader, who searches the Scripture daily, will be stirred up to look further into the places referred to, which he will often find very well worth his while. To that end, I have throughout added the book, chapter, and verse; which yet it is needless for them who learn by heart, to trouble themselves with.

To the service of such ministers, governors of families, and other Christians, as shall see cause to make use of such a help, with an entire dependance upon the grace and blessing of God, for the acceptableness and usefulness of it, this small oblation is humbly tendered, by one who is earnestly desirous to increase in Scripture knowledge, and ambitious of the honour of being any way instrumental to propagate it.

Matth. Henry.

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Postscript to the Third Edition.

I am willing to take this opportunity to advise one thing more concerning the use of this catechism, which I have found very beneficial, *viz.* That the learners be put in their answers to turn the question into a proposition, which they will easily do with a little direction. Example—Is man a reasonable creature? Yes: Man is a reasonable creature; for there is a spirit in man, &c. And this will lead them, when the question gives occasion for it, to make application to themselves. Again, Is your business in the world to serve the flesh? No: It is not *my* business in the world to serve the flesh; for we are not debtors to the flesh.

A

SCRIPTURE CATECHISM.

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.

1. IS man a reasonable creature? *Yes:* For there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, Job 32. 8. Has he greater capacities than the brutes? *Yes:* For God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven, Job 35. 11.

2. Is man his own maker? *No:* It is God that hath made us and not we ourselves, Ps. 100. 3. Is he then his own master? *No:* There is a Lord over us, Ps. 12. 4. Is he his own carver? *No:* Should it be according to thy mind, Job 34. 33. Is he his own end? *No:* For none of us lives to himself, or dies to himself, Rom. 14. 7.

3. Is it your business in the world to serve the flesh? *No:* For we are not debtors to the flesh, that we should live after the flesh, Rom. 8. 12. Is it to pursue the world? *No:* For we are not of the world, John 17. 16.

4. Is your happiness bound up in the creature? *No:* For all is vanity and vexation of spirit, Ecc. 1. 14. Will the riches of the world make you happy? *No:* For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, Luke 12. 15. Will the praise and applause of men make you happy? *No:* For it is vain-glory, Gal. 5. 26. Will sport and pleasure make you happy? *No:* For the wise man said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, What doth it? Ecc. 2. 2. Can the gain of all the world make you happy? *No:* For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Mat. 16. 26.

5. Is God then your chief end? *Yes:* For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, Rom. 11. 36. Were you made for him? *Yes:* This people have I formed myself, Isa. 43. 21. Were you redeemed for him? *Yes:* Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.

6. Is it your chief business to glorify God? *Yes:* We must glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Must this be ultimately designed in all our actions? *Yes:* Do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Is God glorified by our praises? *Yes:* He that offers praise, glorifies me, Ps. 50. 23. And is he glorified by our works? *Yes:* Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, John 15. 8.

7. Is God your chief good? *Yes:* For happy is the people whose God is the Lord, Ps. 144. 15. Does all good come from him? *Yes:* For with him is the fountain of life, Ps. 36. 9. And is all good enjoyed in him? *Yes:* The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup, Ps. 16. 5.

8. Is it your chief happiness then to have God's favour? *Yes:* For in his favour is life, Ps. 30. 5. Is that the most desirable good? *Yes:* for his loving-kindness is better than life, Ps. 63. 3. Do you desire it above any good? *Yes:* Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, Ps. 4. 6, 7. And should you give all diligence to make it sure? *Yes:* Herein we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 9.

9. Is communion with God in grace here the best pleasure? *Yes:* It is good for me to draw near to God, Ps. 73. 28. Is the vision and fruition of God in glory hereafter the best portion? *Yes:* For in his presence there is fulness of joy, Ps. 16. 11. Will you therefore set your heart upon this chief good? *Yes:* Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; when my flesh and my heart fail, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Ps. 73. 25, 26.

Q. 2. *What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The Word of God (which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

1. Do we need a rule to direct us to our chief end? *Yes:* For we all like sheep have gone astray, Isa. 53. 6. Could we not find it out of ourselves? *No:* For man is born like the wild ass's colt, Job 11. 12.

2. Is divine revelation necessary to religion? *Yes:* For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. 10. 17. Is not the light of nature sufficient without it? *No:* For the world by wisdom knew not God, 1 Cor. 1. 21. Has God therefore given us a revelation? *Yes:* He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, Mic. 6. 8. Was there revelation from the beginning? *Yes:* At sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake unto the fathers, Heb. 1. 1.

3. Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the word of God, and a divine revelation? *Yes:* For all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. 3. 16. Were they indited by the Blessed Spirit? *Yes:* For holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1. 21. Were they confirmed by miracles? *Yes:* God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, Heb. 2. 4. Do they recommend themselves?

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themselves? *Yes:* For the word of God is quick and powerful, Heb. 4. 12. Is not the Bible then a cheat put upon the world? *No:* For these are not the words of him that hath a Devil, John 10. 21.

4. Was the book of the Scripture written for our use? *Yes:* Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, Rom. 15. 4. And is it of great use? *Yes:* For it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3. 16.

5. Are the Scriptures the great support of our religion? *Yes:* For we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Eph. 2. 20. Are they the standing rule of our faith and practice? *Yes:* We must have recourse to the law, and to the testimony, Isa. 8. 20. Are they the only rule? *Yes:* For other foundation can no man lay, 1 Cor. 3. 11. Are they our guide? *Yes:* For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, Pro. 6. 23. Do they shew us the way to heaven and happiness? *Yes:* For in them we think we have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ, John 5. 39.

6. Are the Scriptures our oracle which we must consult? *Yes:* What is written in the law, how readest thou? Luke 10. 26. Are they our touchstone which we must try by? *Yes:* If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. 8. 20. Are they the weapons of our spiritual warfare? *Yes:* Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Mat. 4. 10. Eph. 6. 17.

7. Is the written word a sufficient rule? *Yes:* For the law of the Lord is perfect, Ps. 19. 7. Is it plain? *Yes:* For the word is nigh thee, Rom. 10. 8. Is the Church's authority the rule of our faith: *No:* For our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, 1 Cor. 2. 5. May we depend upon unwritten traditions? *No:* For we must refuse profane and old wives fables, 1 Tim. 4. 7.

8. Will the written word be the rule of our judgment hereafter? *Yes:* For we must be judged by the law of liberty, Jam. 2. 12. Ought we therefore to be ruled by it now? *Yes:* As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, Gal. 6. 16. And to be comforted by it? *Yes:* For through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we have hope, Rom. 15. 4.

9. Are the Scriptures to be translated into vulgar tongues? *Yes:* For we should hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God, Acts 2. 11. And must we study them? *Yes:* Search the Scriptures, John 5. 39. And labour to understand them? *Yes:* Understandest thou what thou readest? Acts 8. 30. And must we rest satisfied with this revelation of God's will? *Yes:* For if we believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither would we be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luke 16. 31. Is it a great affront to God to neglect his word! *Yes:* I have written unto them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing, Hos. 8. 12.

10. Must little children get the knowledge of the Scripture? *Yes:* Timothy is commended for this, that from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And must their parents instruct them therein? *Yes:* They must teach them diligently unto their children, and talk of them, Deut. 6. 7.

11. Must we all love the word of God? *Yes:* O how love I thy law! And must we meditate therein? *Yes:* It is my meditation all the day, Ps. 119. 97. And will this be to our own advantage? *Yes:* For it is able to make us wise to salvation, 2 Tim. 3. 15.

Q. 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

1. Is it necessary that we have a faith concerning God? *Yes:* For he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6. Can we have that faith without being taught? *No:* For how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Rom. 10. 14. And have they not heard? *Yes:* Verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world, Rom. 10. 18.

2. Is not the knowledge of God a great privilege? *Yes:* For this is life eternal to know Thee the only true God, John 17. 3. Is it not the best knowledge? *Yes:* For the knowledge of the holy is understanding, Pro. 9. 10. Does the Scripture teach us that knowledge? *Yes:* For if we receive those words, and hide those commandments with us, then shall we understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, Pro. 2. 1, 5.

3. Do not the works of creation prove that there is a God? *Yes:* For we understand by the things that are made his eternal power and godhead, Rom. 1. 20. And do not the works of Providence prove it? *Yes:* For verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Ps. 58. 11. But do not the Scriptures tell us best what God is? *Yes:* For no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John 1. 18.

4. Are we all concerned to get the knowledge of God? *Yes:* We should all know him, from the least even to the greatest, Heb. 8. 11. Must children get that knowledge? *Yes:* I write unto you little children, because you have known the Father, 1 John 2. 13. And must we all grow in that knowledge? *Yes:* We must follow on to know the Lord, Hos. 6. 3.

5. Are we to believe what the Scripture reveals concerning God? *Yes:* For these things are written that we may believe, John 20. 31. And must we believe all that the Scripture reveals? *Yes:* Believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets, Acts 24. 14. Must we believe that which is not revealed? *No:* For the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2. 11.

6. Does God require duty of man? *Yes:* For unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom; and to depart from evil that is understanding, Job 28. 28. Is it enough to believe the truth revealed, if we do not the duty that is required? *No:* For faith without

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without works is dead, Jam. 2. 26. Is it enough to do the duty required, though we do not believe the truth revealed? *No:* For he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, 1 John 5. 10.

7. Does the Scripture teach us what duty God requires? *Yes:* He has shewed thee what the Lord thy God requires of thee, Mic. 6. 8. And must we do the duty that the Scripture teaches? *Yes:* We must observe to do according to all that is written therein, and not turn from it to the right hand, or to the left, Josh. 1. 7. Must this obedience always accompany faith? *Yes:* For they which have believed in God must be careful to maintain good work, Tit. 3. 8.

Q. 4. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

1. Is God a Spirit? *Yes:* For Christ himself has said, God is a Spirit, John 4. 24. Is he a pure Spirit? *Yes:* For God is light, and with him is no darkness at all, 1 John 1. 5. Has he a body as we have? *No:* Hast thou eyes of flesh? Or seest thou as a man seeth? Job 10. 4. Can he be seen with bodily eyes? *No:* For he is one, whom no man hath seen, or can see, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Are not the angels spirits? *Yes:* He maketh his angels spirits, Ps. 104. 4. Are not the souls of men spirits? *Yes:* For he formeth the spirit of man within him, Zec. 12. 1. But is God a Spirit like unto them? *No:* For he is the Father of spirits, Heb. 12. 9.

2. Is God infinite? *Yes:* For we cannot by searching find out God, Job 11. 7. Is he contained in any place? *No:* For the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, 1 Kings 8. 27. Is he every where present? *Yes:* For whither can we go from his spirit, or flee from his presence? Ps. 139. 7. Can any hide himself in secret places that God shall not see him? *No:* For do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord, Jer. 23. 24.

3. Is God Eternal? *Yes:* From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, Ps. 90. 2. Had he beginning of days? *No:* For he is the Ancient of Days? Dan. 7. 9. Shall there be any end of his life? *No:* For he is the same, and his years have no end, Ps. 102. 27. Is there with him any succession of time? *No:* For his days are not as the days of man, Job 10. 5. Can he die? *No:* He is the only Potentate that hath immortality, 1 Tim. 6. 16.

4. Is God unchangeable? *Yes:* For he is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning, Jam. 1. 17. Is there any decay of his perfections? *No:* For he fainteth not, neither is weary, Isa. 40. 28. Is there any alteration in his counsels? *No:* For he is not a man that he should repent, 1 Sam. 15. 29. Is it well for us that he is unchangeable? *Yes:* I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed, Mal. 3. 6.

5. Is God infinite in his Being? *Yes:* For he has said, I AM THAT I AM, Exod. 3. 14. Is he self-existent? *Yes:* For the Father hath life in himself, John 5. 26. Is he the best of beings? *Yes:* For who is a God like unto him? Exod. 15. 11. Is he the first of causes? *Yes:* For he is the Father of whom are all things, and we in him, 1 Cor. 8. 6. Is he the highest of powers? *Yes:* For he is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, 1 Tim. 6. 15.

6. Is he a God of perfect knowledge? *Yes:* For his understanding is infinite, Ps. 147. 5. Can any thing be hid from him? *No:* For all things are naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. 4 13. Does he know things to come? *Yes:* For he declareth the end from the beginning, Isa. 46. 10. Does he know our hearts? *Yes:* For he understandeth our thoughts afar off, Ps. 139. 2. Does he know all our actions? *Yes:* For his eyes are upon the ways of man, Job 34. 21.

7. Is God infinitely wise? *Yes:* For wisdom and might are his, Dan. 2. 20. Are all his works wisely done? *Yes:* In wisdom he hath made them all, Ps. 104. 24. And particularly the work of redemption? *Yes:* For it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, 1 Cor. 2. 7. Can the wisdom of God's counsels be fathomed? *No:* O the depth of the riches of the wisdom, and knowledge of God! Rom. 11. 33.

8. Is he a God of power? *Yes:* God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God, Ps. 62. 11. Is he Almighty? *Yes:* he is the Lord God Almighty, Rev. 15. 3. Is his power irresistible? *Yes:* For none can stay his hand, Dan. 4. 35. Is his sovereignty incontestable? *Yes:* For he giveth not account of any of his matters, Job 33. 13. Is any thing too hard for him? *No:* For with God all things are possible, Mat. 19. 26.

9. Is he a God of perfect holiness? *Yes:* For holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, Isa. 6. 3. Is there iniquity with God? *No:* He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Heb. 1. 13. Is this his glory? *Yes:* For he is glorious in holiness, Ex. 15. 11. And must we give him the glory of it? *Yes:* Give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, Ps. 30. 4. And must we study herein to resemble him? *Yes:* Be ye holy, for I am holy, 1 Pet. 1. 16.

10. Is he a just and righteous governor? *Yes:* The Lord is righteous in all his ways, Ps. 145. 17. Did he ever do wrong to any of his creatures? *No:* There is no unrighteousness in him, Ps. 92. 15. And does justice please him? *Yes:* The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Ps. 11. 7.

11. Is he a merciful God? *Yes:* He is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, Exod. 34. 6. And a good God? *Yes:* Thou art good, and dost good, Ps. 119. 68. Is he universally good? *Yes:* For he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Ps. 145. 9. Is he in a special manner good to his own people? *Yes:* For truly God is good to Israel, Ps. 73. 1. And should we acquaint ourselves with his goodness? *Yes:* O taste, and see that the Lord is good, Ps. 34. 8.

12. Is he a God of truth? *Yes:* The truth of the Lord endures for ever, Ps. 117. 2. Will he perform all his promises? *Yes:* For he is faithful that hath promised, Heb. 10. 23. Is there any danger of his deceiving

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ceiving us? *No:* It is impossible for God to lie, Heb. 6. 18.

13. Is this a compleat description of God? *No:* For, lo these are but parts of his ways; and how little a portion is heard of him? Job 26. 14. Must we therefore always speak of God with reverence? *Yes:* For behold God is great, and we know him not, Job 36. 26. And must we pray to him to teach us what we shall say? *Yes:* For we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness, Job 37. 19.

Q. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

1. Are there many Gods? *No:* For though there be that are called Gods, yet there is but one God, 1 Cor. 8. 5, 6. Can there be but one? *No:* For he has said, I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Isa. 46. 9. Are you sure there is but one? *Yes:* For the Lord our God is one Lord, and there is none other but He, Mark 12. 29. 32.

2. Is the God whom we serve that one God? *Yes:* For Jehovah he is God, Jehovah he is God, 1 Kin. 18. 39. Is he infinitely above all pretenders? *Yes:* For he is a great King above all Gods, Ps. 95. 3. Is he God alone? *Yes:* O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, thou art the God, even thou alone, Isa. 37. 16. Are all other Gods false Gods? *Yes:* For all the Gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens, Ps. 96. 5.

3. Is our God the true God? *Yes:* The Lord he is the true God, Jer. 10. 10. Is he the only true God? *Yes:* This is life eternal, to know the only true God, John 17. 3. Is he the living God? *Yes:* The living God, and an everlasting King, Jer. 10. 10. Is he the Sovereign Lord? *Yes:* For he is God over all, blessed for evermore, Rom. 9. 5. Is this one God enough? *Yes:* For he is God All-sufficient, Gen. 17. 1.

4. Is the Lord Jehovah the Maker of all things? *Yes:* He is the everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, Isa. 40. 28. Is he your Maker? *Yes:* He is the Lord our Maker, Ps. 95. 6. Is he the owner of all things? *Yes:* For he is the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, Gen. 14. 19. Is he your rightful owner? *Yes:* We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, Ps. 95. 7. Is he the ruler of all things? *Yes:* For his kingdom ruleth over all, Ps. 103. 19. Is he your ruler? *Yes:* O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, Ps. 116. 16. Is he the Benefactor of all the creatures? *Yes:* For he giveth to all life and breath, and all things, Acts 17. 25. Is he your Benefactor? *Yes:* For he daily loadeth us with his benefits, Ps. 68. 19. Shall he therefore be yours by your own consent? *Yes:* O God, thou art my God, Ps. 63. 1.

Q. 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God; the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

1. Are there three Gods? *No:* For the Lord is one, and his name one, Zec. 14. 9. Is there more than one person in the Godhead? *Yes:* For God said, Let *us* make man, Gen. 1. 26. Are there distinct persons in the Godhead? *Yes:* For he who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the express image of his person, Heb. 1. 3. Are there three persons in the Godhead? *Yes:* For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, 1 John 5. 7.

2. Is the Father God? *Yes:* For there is one God, and Father of all, Eph. 4. 6. Is Jesus Christ the Word? *Yes:* His name is called the Word of God, Rev. 19. 13. Is the Word God? *Yes:* For in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, John 1. 1. Is the Holy Ghost a divine person? *Yes:* For the Spirit searcheth all things, 1 Cor. 2. 10.

3. Is it the personal property of the Father to beget the Son? *Yes:* Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ps. 2. 7. Is it the personal property of the Son to be begotten of the Father? *Yes:* For he is the only begotten of the Father, John 1. 14. Is it the personal property of the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son? *Yes:* For Christ says, I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, John 15. 26.

4. Are these three one God? *Yes:* For it is said expressly, these three are one, 1 John 5. 7. Are they the same in substance, and equal in power and glory? *Yes:* For Christ says, I and my Father are one, John 10. 30. Can this doctrine be measured by reason? *No:* For flesh and blood hath not revealed it to us, Mat. 16. 17. But ought we to believe it? *Yes:* For we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Mat. 28. 19. And are we blessed with the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. 13. 14. And ought we to improve it? *Yes:* That we all may be one as the Father is in Christ, and he in the Father, that we also may be one in them, John 17. 21.

Q. 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purposes, according to the counsel of his own will: whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatever comes to pass.

1. Does God dispose of all things that come to pass? *Yes:* My times are in thy hand, Ps. 31. 15. Does he do it according to his own will? *Yes:* For he hath done whatsoever he pleased, Ps. 115. 3. Can any controul his will? *No:* For he doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. 4. 35. Has he determined before what he will do? *Yes:* For known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, Acts 15. 18.

2. Is there a counsel then in all the will of God? *Yes:* For he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, Eph. 1. 11. Is it an eternal counsel? *Yes:* For

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For it was ordained before the world, 1 Cor. 2. 7. Is it free? *Yes*: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Mat. 11. 26. Is it unchangeable? *Yes:* The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, Ps. 33. 11. Is it for his own glory? *Yes*: That we should be to the praise of his glory, Eph. 1. 12.

3. Were all the events of time ordained from eternity? *Yes:* He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, Job 23. 14. Does any thing come to pass by chance? *No*: For the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord, Pro. 16. 33. Does every thing come to pass as God has ordained it? *Yes*: For there are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, Pro. 19. 21.

4. Can we search out God's counsels? *No:* For his judgments are a great deep, Ps. 36. 6. Ought we not therefore to acquiesce in them? *Yes*: Here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him, 2 Sam. 15. 26. May we question God's proceedings? *No:* For his thoughts are above our thoughts, Isa. 55. 9.

Q. 8. *How does God execute his decrees?*

A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

1. Shall all God's decrees be executed? *Yes:* For the Lord of Hosts hath sworn, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, Isa. 14. 24. Can any of them be defeated? *No:* For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? Isa. 14. 27. Did God execute his decree in the work of Creation? *Yes:* He hath created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created, Rev. 4. 11. And does he execute his decrees in the works of Providence? *Yes:* For out of the mouth of the most high both evil and good proceed, Lam. 3. 38.

2. Did God begin to work in the creation of the world? *Yes:* Thou Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth, Heb. 1. 10. Is he still working? *Yes:* For Christ says, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, John 5. 17. Are all his works copied out of his counsels? *Yes:* For they are what his hand and his counsel determine before to be done, Acts 4. 28.

3. Are God's works many? *Yes:* O Lord, how manifold are thy works! Ps. 104. 24. Are they great? *Yes:* His work is honourable and glorious, Ps. 111. 3. Are they perfect in their kind: *Yes*: God is the rock, his work is perfect, Deut. 32. 4. Can they be amended? *No:* Whatsoever God doth, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, Eccl. 3. 14. Ought they to be studied? *Yes:* They are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, Ps. 111. 2. Is it a great sin to neglect them? *Yes:* Because they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up, Ps. 28. 5.

4. Can all God's works be thoroughly discovered? *No:* For no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end, Ecc. 3. 11. Can his designs in them be accounted for? *No:* For his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, Ps. 77. 19. But is he glorified in them? *Yes:* All his works do praise him, Ps. 145. 10.

Q. 9. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

1. Did God create the world? *Yes:* In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, Gen. 1. 1. Did he create every thing in the world? *Yes*: For without him was not any thing made that was made, John 1. 3. John 12. 7, 8, 9. Did he create the world by his word? *Yes:* For through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, Heb. 11. 3. Did all things come into being by that word? *Yes:* For by the word of God the heavens were of old, 2 Pet. 3. 5. And are they thereby preserved in being? *Yes:* By the same word they are kept in store, v. 7. Did God find any difficulty in making the world? *No:* For he spake and it was done; he said, Let there be light, and there was light, Ps. 33. 9. Gen. 1. 3. Did he need assistance in it? *No:* For he stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by himself, Isa. 44. 24.

2. Did he make all out of nothing? *Yes:* For the things which are seen, were not made of the things which do appear, Heb. 11. 3. Did he bring light out of darkness? *Yes:* For God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, 2 Cor. 4. 6. And order out of confusion? *Yes:* For the earth was without form, and void, Gen. 1. 2. Did he make all in six days? *Yes:* For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, Ex. 20. 11. Did God make all well? *Yes:* God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good, Gen. 1. 31. Did he make all firm? *Yes:* he hath made a decree which shall not pass, Ps. 148. 6. And all for himself? *Yes:* The Lord has made all things for himself, Pro. 16. 4.

3. Did God make all things by Jesus Christ? *Yes:* For by him also he made the worlds, Heb. 1. 2. and created all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 9. Col. 1. 16. John 1. 3. Did God manifest his own perfections in the work of creation? *Yes:* For the heavens declare the glory of God, Ps. 19. 1. Must we give him the glory of this work? *Yes:* We must worship him that made the heaven and the earth, Rev. 14. 7. Must we give him thanks for his creatures? *Yes:* Every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. 4. 4. May we be encouraged by the work of creation to trust in God? *Yes:* My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth, Ps. 121. 2.

4. Did God create the angels? *Yes:* He maketh his angels spirits, Heb. 1. 7. Are they attendants upon him? *Yes:* Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him, Dan. 7. 10. Are they employed for the good of the saints? *Yes:* They are sent forth to minister for them which shall be heirs of salvation, Heb.

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Heb. 1. 14. Have true believers communion with them in faith, hope, and love? *Yes:* For we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. 12. 22.

5. Did all the angels continue in their integrity? *No:* There were angels that left their first state, Jude 6. Is it probable that they who fell, fell by pride? *Yes:* For they that are lifted up with pride fall into the condemnation of the Devil, 1 Tim. 3. 6. Were they punished for their sin? *Yes:* God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, 2 Pet. 2. 4.

Q. 10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

1. Is man, God's creature? *Yes:* For we are also his offspring, Acts 17. 28. Were our first parents the work of his hands? *Yes:* Male and female created he them, and called their name Adam, Gen. 5. 2. Was man made with a consultation? *Yes:* For God said, let us make man, Gen. 1. 26. Do all the children of men descend from Adam and Eve? *Yes:* For God has made of one blood all nations of men, Acts 17. 26.

2. Was man's body at first made out of the earth? *Yes:* God made man of the dust of the ground, Gen. 2. 7. And are our bodies of the earth earthy? *Yes:* For I also am formed out of the clay, Job 33. 6. But are they not curiously wrought? *Yes:* For I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. 139. 14. Is God the Former of our bodies? *Yes:* Thou hast cloathed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews, Job 10. 11. Is he the Author of our senses? *Yes:* The hearing ear, and seeing eye, the Lord has made even both of them, Pro. 20. 12.

3. Is God the Father of our spirits? *Yes:* For he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, Gen. 2. 7. Has God given each of us a soul? *Yes:* The Lord liveth that made us this soul, Jer. 38. 16. Is it a rational soul? *Yes:* For the Spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, Pro. 20. 27. Is it immortal? *Yes:* For the Spirit of a man goes upward, Ecc. 3. 21. Does it die with the body? *No:* For when the dust returns to the earth as it was, the Spirit returns to God who gave it, Ecc. 12. 7. Is God then the Sovereign of the heart? *Yes:* For he has said, Behold, all souls are mine, Ezek. 18. 4. Must we therefore commit our souls to him? *Yes:* Into thine hand I commit my spirit, Ps. 31. 5.

4. Was man made after God's image? *Yes:* God created man in his own image, Gen. 1. 27. Did that image consist in knowledge? *Yes:* For we are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us, Col. 3. 10. Did it consist in righteousness and true holiness? *Yes:* For the new man after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4. 24. Was there in man at first a perfect purity and freedom from sin? *Yes:* Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, Ezek. 28. 15. compare 16. 13. Was there in him a perfect rectitude and disposition to good? *Yes:* For God made man upright, Ecc. 7. 29. Are there some remains of God's image still upon man? *Yes:* For men are made after the similitude of God, Jam. 3. 9. Was man made with a dominion over the creatures? *Yes:* For thou hast put all things under his feet, Ps. 8. 6. Have we not reason to admire God's favour to man? *Yes:* Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Ps. 144. 3.

Q. 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

1. When God had made the world, did he leave it to itself? *No:* For he upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1. 3. Does he see to the whole creation? *Yes:* For the eyes of the Lord are in every place, Pro. 15. 3. Does he condescend to take notice of his creatures? *Yes:* He humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth, Ps. 113. 6. Is any thing at a distance from him? *No:* For he is not far from every one of us, Acts 17. 27. Does he look on as one unconcerned? *No:* For his eyes behold, and his eyelids try the children of men, Ps. 11. 4.

2. Does God look after the world of angels? *Yes:* For he maketh peace in his high places, Job 25. 2. Does he look after this lower world? *Yes:* For the eyes of all wait upon him, Ps. 145. 15. Does he take care of the fowls? *Yes:* Our Heavenly Father feedeth them, Mat. 6. 26. What! even the sparrows? *Yes:* Not one of them shall fall to the ground without our Father, Mat. 10. 29. What! and the ravens? *Yes:* He feeds the young ravens which cry, Ps. 147. 9. Is he the Protector and Benefactor of all the creatures? *Yes:* Thou preservest them all, Neh. 9. 6. Is he man's Protector and Benefactor? *Yes:* For in him we live, and move, and have our being, Acts 17. 28. Do we depend upon God for the support of our life? *Yes:* For he holdeth our soul in life, Ps. 66. 9. And for the comforts of life? *Yes:* For he giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, Acts 14. 17. And do we depend upon him for the safety of our life? *Yes:* He keepeth all our bones, Ps. 34. 20. And for the continuance of life? *Yes:* For he is thy life, and the length of thy days, Deut. 30. 20.

3. Does God govern all things? *Yes:* His kingdom ruleth over all, Ps. 103. 19. Does he govern the holy angels? *Yes:* For they do his commandments, Ps. 103. 20. Does he govern the heavenly bodies? *Yes:* The stars in their courses fought against Sisera, Judg. 5. 20. Does he govern the power of the air? *Yes:* Stormy winds fulfil his word, Ps. 148. 8. Does he order what weather it shall be? *Yes:* For he saith to the snow, Be thou upon the earth, Job 37. 6. And does he govern the inferior creatures? *Yes:* He spake, and locusts came, Ps. 105. 34. Can he command them? *Yes:* I have commanded the ravens to feed thee, 1 Kings 17. 4. Can he controul them? *Yes:* He shut the lions mouths, Dan. 6. 22. Has he a sovereign dominion over the whole creation? *Yes:* For the Lord of Hosts is his name, Isa. 47. 4.

4. Does

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4. Does God govern the children of men? *Yes:* The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, Dan. 4. 32. Does he govern kings? *Yes:* For the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Pro. 21. 1. And does he govern kingdoms? *Yes:* For he is the governor among the nations, Ps. 22. 28. And families too? *Yes:* For except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, Ps. 127. 1. Does he govern great men? *Yes:* For God is the judge, he puts down one, and sets up another, Ps. 75. 6, 7. And mean men too? *Yes:* For every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord, Pro. 29. 26. Can man make his own fortune? *No:* For the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh, to direct his steps, Jer. 10. 23. When man purposes, does God dispose? *Yes:* A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps, Pro. 16. 9. Do all comforts and crosses come from God's hand? *Yes:* For he has said, I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things, Isa. 45. 7. Does God's providence extend itself to the smallest things? *Yes:* The very hairs of your head are all numbered, Mat. 10. 30.

5. Is God's government holy? *Yes:* He is holy in all his works, Ps. 145. 17. Is it wise? *Yes:* He is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, Isa. 28. 29. Is it powerful? *Yes:* For when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, Job 34. 29. Is it rightful? *Yes:* God is greater than man, Job 33. 12. Is it just? *Yes:* For shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Gen. 18. 25. Does God sometimes reward and punish in this life? *Yes:* The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner, Pro. 11. 31. But does he always? *No:* For all things come alike to all, Ecc. 9. 1, 2.

6. Does God govern the world for the good of his Church? *Yes:* For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have called thee by thy name, Isa. 45. 4. Is the government of the world committed to the Lord Jesus? *Yes:* For he is head over all things unto the Church, Eph. 1. 22. And is all ordered for God's glory? *Yes:* For the Lord alone shall be exalted, Isa. 2. 11. Is it a comfort to good men that God governs the world? *Yes:* The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice, Ps. 97. 1. Is it a terror to the wicked? *Yes:* The Lord reigns; let the people tremble, Ps. 99. 1. Ought we to give him the praise of it? *Yes:* Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigns, Rev. 19. 6.

Q. 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

1. Did God make man happy as well as holy? *Yes:* For he put him into the garden of Eden, Gen. 2. 15. Did he provide comfortably for him? *Yes:* For he said, I will make him a help meet for him, Gen. 2. 18. Did he admit him into communion with himself? *Yes:* For he then blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, Gen. 2. 3. Was God well pleased in him? *Yes:* For his delights were with the sons of men, Pro. 8. 31.

2. Did God give him a law? *Yes:* The Lord God commanded the man, Gen. 2. 16. Did he give him a command of trial? *Yes:* Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, Gen. 2. 17. Did he assure him of happiness, if he obeyed? *Yes:* For of every tree in the garden (even the tree of life) thou mayest freely eat, Gen. 2. 16. Did he threaten death upon his disobedience? *Yes:* For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die, Gen. 2. 17.

3. Was this God's covenant with Adam? *Yes:* For we read of those who, like Adam, transgressed the covenant, Hos. 6. 7. marg. Was Do this and live, one branch of that covenant? *Yes:* For the man that doeth them, shall live in them, Gal. 3. 12. Was Fail and die, the other branch of the covenant? *Yes:* The soul that sinneth, it shall die, Ezek. 18. 4. Was this the covenant of innocency? *Yes:* For the law was not of faith, Gal. 3. 12. Was there a mediator of this covenant? *No:* For it is the better covenant that is established in the hands of a mediator, Heb. 8. 6.

Q. 13. *Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were first created?*

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

1. Is man now in the state wherein he was created? *No:* For God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions, Ecc. 7. 29. Can we now say we are perfectly holy? *No:* If I say I am perfect, that shall prove me perverse, Job 9. 20. Can we say we are perfectly happy? *No:* For man is born to trouble, Job 5. 7. Are we as we were then? *No:* Man was planted a noble vine, but is turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine, Jer. 2. 21. Did man continue long in his state of innocence? *No:* For man being in honour abideth not, Ps. 49. 12.

2. Did God leave man to the freedom of his own will? *Yes:* For if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it, Pro. 9. 12. Did God draw Adam to sin? *No:* For God tempteth no man, Jam. 1. 13. Is he any way the Author of sin? *No:* Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, Job 34. 10. Did he do what was fit to be done to prevent it? *Yes:* What could have been done more to my vineyard? Isa. 5. 4. Was he obliged to do more? *No:* For may he not do what he will with his own? Mat. 20. 15. Does all the blame of man's sin lie upon himself then? *Yes:* O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, Hos. 13. 9.

3. Did man fall by sinning against God? *Yes:* Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity, Hos. 14. 1. Was that the beginning of sin in this world? *Yes:* For by one man sin entered into the world, Rom. 5. 12.

Q. 14. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

1. Is

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1. Is there a moral difference of good and evil? *Yes:* For we must cease to do evil, and learn to do well, Isa. 1. 16, 17. Is it all alike then what we do? *No:* For God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Ecc. 12. 14. Is there such a thing as sin in thought? *Yes:* For the thought of foolishness is sin, Pro. 24. 9. May sin be committed in word too? *Yes:* For in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, Pro. 10. 19.

2. Does sin suppose a law? *Yes:* For where there is no law, there is no transgression, Rom. 4. 15. and 5. 13. Is sin the breach of a law? *Yes:* For sin is the transgression of the law, 1 John 3. 4. Is it God's law only that can make a thing to be sin? *Yes:* For against thee, thee only, have I sinned, Ps. 51. 4. Is every breach of God's law sin? *Yes:* For all unrighteousness is sin, 1 John 5. 17. Are we to judge of sin by the law? *Yes:* For by the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3. 20. Could we discover sin without some law? *No:* For I had not known sin but by the law, Rom. 7. 7. Is the transgression of the law of nature sin? *Yes:* For they that have not the written law, shew the work of the law written in their hearts, Rom. 2. 14, 15. But does the written law discover the root of sin? *Yes:* I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, Rom. 7. 7.

3. Is ignorance of God sin? *Yes:* He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, 2 Thess. 1. 8. Is disaffection to God's government sin? *Yes:* My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, Ps. 81. 11. Is all disobedience to God's law sin? *Yes:* For the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience, Col. 3. 6. Is it a sin to omit the good which God has commanded? *Yes:* For to him that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin, Jam. 4. 17. Is it a sin to do it negligently? *Yes:* For if thou doest not well, sin lies at the door, Gen. 4. 7. Is it a sin to do the evil which God has forbidden? *Yes:* For he has said, O do not this abominable thing which I hate, Jer. 44. 4. Is the inclination to evil sin? *Yes:* For St. Paul speaks of the sin that dwells in us, Rom. 7. 17.

4. Is sin the worst of evils? *Yes:* It is an evil thing, and a bitter, to forsake the Lord, Jer. 2. 19. Is the sinfulness of it the worst thing in it? *Yes:* For sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful, Rom. 7. 13. Is sin worse than affliction? *Yes:* For Moses by faith chose rather to suffer affliction than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, Heb. 11. 25. Is it displeasing to God? *Yes:* God is angry with the wicked every day, Ps. 7. 11. Is it destructive to ourselves? *Yes:* Be sure your sin will find you out, Num. 32. 23.

5. Ought we not therefore to take heed of sin? *Yes:* Stand in awe, and sin not, Ps. 4. 4. And of all appearances of it? *Yes:* Abstain from all appearances of evil, 1 Thess. 5. 22. And all approaches towards it? *Yes:* Touch not the unclean thing, 2 Cor. 6. 17. And must we hate it? *Yes:* Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, Ps. 97. 10. Must little children take heed of sin? *Yes:* My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not, 1 John 2. 1. Is it folly to make light of sin? *Yes:* Fools make a mock at sin, Prov. 14. 9. Will our observing the law of God be the best preservative against sin? *Yes:* Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, Ps. 119. 11. Will an eye to God be the best argument against sin? *Yes:* How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God, Gen. 39. 9.

Q. 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the state wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the state wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

1. Did our first parents eat the forbidden fruit? *Yes:* Thou hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, Gen. 3. 17. Was their doing so disobedience? *Yes:* For it was by one man's disobedience that many were made sinners, Rom. 5. 19. Did the woman eat forbidden fruit first? *Yes:* The woman being deceived, was in the transgression, 1 Tim. 2. 14. Did the serpent tempt her to it? *Yes:* The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, 2 Cor. 11. 3. Was that serpent the Devil? The old Serpent is the Devil and Satan, Rev. 20. 2. Did he aim to make man as miserable as himself? *Yes:* He was a murderer from the beginning, John 8. 44.

2. Did the Tempter teach them to question the command? *Yes:* He said to the woman, hath God said ye shall not eat? Gen. 3. 1. Did he promise them safety in sin? *Yes:* He said, Ye shall not surely die, Gen. 3. 4. Did he promise them advantage by the sin? *Yes:* In the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, v. 5. Did he feed them with high thoughts of themselves? *Yes:* Ye shall be as Gods, v. 5. Did he suggest to them hard thoughts of God? *Yes:* For he said, God doth know this, v. 5. Did Eve do well to parley with him? *No:* For we should cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, Prov. 19. 27.

3. Did the Devil prevail in the temptation? *Yes:* For she took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat, Gen. 3. 6. Was there in this sin the lust of the flesh? *Yes:* For she saw that the tree was good for food. Was there in it the lust of the eye? *Yes:* For she saw that it was pleasant to the eyes. And the pride of life? *Yes:* For she saw it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. Was unbelief of the word of God at the bottom of it? *Yes:* It is the evil heart of unbelief that departs from the living God, Heb. 3. 12. Was there in it an opposition to the divine law? *Yes:* For sin took occasion by the commandment, Rom. 7. 8. Was disobedience in a small matter a great provocation? *Yes:* For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry, 1 Sam. 15. 23. If Adam fell thus, have we any reason to be secure? *No:* Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12.

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Q. 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

1. Are we concerned in our first parents' disobedience? *Yes:* For by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, Rom. 5. 18. Were we in their loins when they eat the forbidden fruit? *Yes:* For Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living, Gen. 3. 20. Was Adam a common father? *Yes:* For he was to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, Gen. 1. 28. Was he a public person? *Yes:* For he was the figure of him that was to come, Rom. 5. 14. Was the covenant made with him, and his posterity? *Yes:* For God always established his covenant with men, and with their seed after them, Gen. 9. 9.

2. Was Adam's sin our ruin then? *Yes:* For through the offence of one, many are dead, Rom. 5. 15. Was the honour of human nature thereby stained? *Yes:* For Adam begat a son in his own likeness, Gen. 5. 3. Was the power of the human nature thereby weakened? *Yes:* For when we were without strength, Christ died for us, Rom. 5. 6. Was the purity of it thereby corrupted? *Yes:* For in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing, Rom. 7. 18. Was Adam himself degenerated? *Yes:* For God said to him, Dust thou art, Gen. 3. 19. And are we in like manner degenerated? *Yes:* For we have all borne the image of the earthy, 1 Cor. 15. 49.

3. Is this degeneracy universal? *Yes:* For all flesh hath corrupted his way, Gen. 6. 12. Did our Lord Jesus descend from Adam by ordinary generation? *No:* For he is the Lord from Heaven, 1 Cor. 15. 47. Did he then sin in Adam? *No:* For he is undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. 7. 26. Did all the rest of mankind sin in Adam? *Yes:* For how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Job 25. 4. Are the ways of the Lord herein equal? *Yes:* But our ways are unequal, Ezek. 18. 29.

Q. 17. *Into what state did the fall bring mankind?*

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery.

1. Is mankind in a state of sin? *Yes:* For both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, Rom. 3. 9. Is a state of sin a sad state? *Yes:* For they that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8. Did the fall bring us into a state of sin? *Yes:* For by it many were made sinners, Rom. 5. 19. Does the world continue in that state? *Yes:* For the whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John 5. 19. And are you by nature in that state? *Yes:* If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me, Job 9. 20.

2. Is mankind in a state of misery? *Yes:* The misery of man is great upon him, Ecc. 8. 6. Is sin the cause of all that misery? *Yes:* For death entered by sin, and so death past upon all men, Rom. 5. 12. Is misery the consequence of sin? *Yes:* For evil pursues sinners, Prov. 13. 21. Do all the creatures share in the sad effects of sin? *Yes:* Cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. 3. 17. And could all this mischief come from that one sin? *Yes:* For how great a matter does a little fire kindle, James 3. 5, 6.

3. Did the fall bring mankind into a state of apostacy from God? *Yes:* For they are all gone aside, Ps. 14. 3. Is that a sinful state? *Yes:* For it is great whoredom to depart from the Lord, Hos. 1. 2. And is it a miserable state? *Yes:* Woe unto them, for they have fled from me, Hos. 7. 13.

4. Did the fall bring mankind into a state of slavery to Satan? *Yes:* For they are taken captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. 2. 26. Is that a sinful state? *Yes:* For the prince of the power of the air works in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. Is it a miserable state? *Yes:* For the God of this world hath blinded their minds, 2 Cor. 4. 4. Is it like the condition of the prodigal son? *Yes:* For he went into a far country, wasted his substance, began to be in want, and was sent into the fields to feed swine, Luke 15. 13, 14, 15.

Q. 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature (which is commonly called original sin) together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

1. Are we all born under guilt? *Yes:* For all the world is guilty before God, Rom. 3. 19. Does the whole race of mankind stand attainted at God's bar? *Yes:* For the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, Gal. 3. 22. Is this according to God's rule of judgment? *Yes:* For he visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, Exod. 20. 5. Is not God unrighteous who thus takes vengeance? *No:* God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world? Rom. 3. 6.

2. Are we all born in sin? *Yes:* Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, Ps. 51. 5. Are we of a sinful brood? *Yes:* For we are a seed of evil doers, Isa. 1. 4. May we be truly called sinners by nature? *Yes:* Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb, Isa. 48. 8.

3. Is there in every one of us by nature the want of original righteousness? *Yes:* There is none righteous, no, not one, Rom. 3. 10. Is there in us an aversion to that which is good? *Yes:* For the carnal mind is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. Is there in us a moral impotency to that which is good? *Yes:* For the carnal mind is not in subjection to the law of God, neither indeed can be, Rom. 8. 7. Can we of ourselves do any thing that is good? *No:* For we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, 2 Cor. 3. 5.

4. Is there in us a proneness to that which is evil? *Yes:* My people are bent to backsliding from me, Hos.

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Hos. 11. 7. Are there the snares of sin in our bodies? *Yes:* For there is a law in the members warring against the law of the mind, Rom. 7. 23. And are there the seeds of sin in our souls? *Yes:* For when I would do good, evil is present with me, Rom. 7. 21. And is the stain of sin upon both? *Yes:* For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Rom. 3. 23.

5. Did we all bring sin into the world with us? *Yes:* For man is born like the wild ass's colt, Job 11. 12. Is it in little children? *Yes:* For foolishness is in the heart of a child, Prov. 22. 15. As reason improves, does sin grow up with it? *Yes:* For when the blade is sprung up, then appear the tares also, Mat. 13. 26. Is it not a wonder of mercy then that we are any of us alive? *Yes:* It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, Lam. 3. 22.

6. Is the whole nature of man corrupted by the fall? *Yes:* The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint, Isa. 1. 5. Is the understanding corrupted? *Yes:* The understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, Eph. 4. 18. Is that unapt to admit the rays of divine light? *Yes:* For they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Is the will corrupted? *Yes:* The neck is an iron sinew, Isa. 48. 4. And is that unapt to submit to the rule of the divine law? *Yes:* For what is the Almighty (say they) that we should serve him? Job 21. 15. Are the thoughts corrupted? *Yes:* For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. 8. 21. Is the fancy full of vanity? *Yes:* Vain thoughts lodge within us, Jer. 4. 14. Are the affections corrupted? *Yes:* It is a carnal mind, Rom. 8. 7. Is conscience itself corrupted? *Yes:* Even the mind and conscience is defiled, Tit. 1. 15. Is the whole soul corrupted? *Yes:* The heart is deceitful above all things, Jer. 17. 9.

7. Is this corruption of the mind sin? *Yes:* For it is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. Have we it from our original? *Yes:* For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, John 3. 6. Do we derive it through our parents? *Yes:* For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Job 14. 4. Does it render us odious to God's holiness? *Yes:* For the foolish shall not stand in his sight, Ps. 5. 5. Does it render us obnoxious to his justice? *Yes:* For death reigns over them that hath not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, Rom. 5. 14.

8. Does this original corruption produce actual transgression? *Yes:* For a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Mat. 7. 18. Does it produce it betimes? *Yes:* For the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies, Ps. 58. 3. Does it produce it naturally? *Yes:* As a fountain casteth out her waters, Jer. 6. 7. Does all sin begin in the heart? *Yes:* For when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, James 1. 15. Is it not necessary therefore we should have a new nature? *Yes:* Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again, John 3. 7. Can we get to heaven without it? *No:* For flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 15. 50.

Q. 19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

1. When our first parents had eaten the forbidden fruit, did they become as God's? *No:* They were like the beasts that perish, Ps. 49. 12. Did the Devil make his words good then? *No:* For he is a liar, and the Father of it, John 8. 44. Did not he put a cheat upon them? *Yes:* The woman said, The serpent beguiled me, Gen. 3. 13. Did shame come in with sin? *Yes:* For they knew that they were naked, Gen. 3. 7. Did fear come in with sin? *Yes:* For they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, Gen. 3. 8. Was not that their misery? *Yes:* For fear hath torment, 1 John 4. 18.

2. Did they lose communion with God? *Yes:* For he drove out the man, Gen. 3. 24. Is fallen man unworthy of communion with God? *Yes:* For what communion has light with darkness? 2 Cor. 2. 14. Is he unfit for communion with God? *Yes:* For can two walk together except they be agreed? Amos 3. 3. Could fallen man ever get to heaven by virtue of the covenant of innocency? *No:* For cherubims and a flaming sword were set to keep that way to the tree of life, Gen. 3. 24.

3. Is fallen man under God's wrath? *Yes:* For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, Rom. 1. 18. Are we all so by nature? *Yes:* We are by nature children of wrath, even as others, Eph. 2. 2. Are we so by reason of sin? *Yes:* For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Eph. 5. 6. Is there a distance between God and man by reason of sin? *Yes:* Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, Isa. 59. 2. Is there a quarrel between God and man by reason of sin? *Yes:* My soul loathed them, and their soul also it abhorred me, Zech. 11. 8. Is it not sad to lie under God's wrath? *Yes:* For who knows the power of his anger? Ps. 90. 11.

4. Is fallen man under God's curse? *Yes:* For cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. 3. 10. Is this curse in force against all wicked people? *Yes:* The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, Prov. 3. 33. Has sin brought a curse upon the world? *Yes:* Cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. 3. 17.

5. Is mankind by the fall become liable to the miseries of this life? *Yes:* In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, Gen. 3. 17. Are we all by nature liable to these miseries? *Yes:* For man is born to trouble, Job. 5. 7. Is all the hurtfulness of the creatures the effect of sin? *Yes:* Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, Gen. 3. 18. Is the toil of business the effect of sin? *Yes:* In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, v. 19. Is pain and sickness the effect of sin?

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sin? *Yes:* There is not any rest in my bones, because of my sin, Ps. 38. 3. Are all our crosses the effect of sin? *Yes:* Our sins have withholden good things from us, Jer. 5. 25. Should we not therefore bear them patiently? *Yes:* Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? Lam. 3. 39.

6. Is all mankind by the fall become liable to death itself? *Yes:* For so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. 5. 12. Was a sentence of death immediately passed upon fallen man? *Yes:* Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3. 19. Do we all deserve death? *Yes:* The wages of sin is death, Rom. 6. 23. Is it the natural consequence of sin? *Yes:* For sin, when it is finished, brings forth death, Jam. 1. 15. Can any avoid it? *No:* What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Ps. 89. 48. Is it determined? *Yes:* It is appointed to men once to die, Heb. 9. 27. Do you expect it? *Yes:* I know that thou wilt bring me to death, Job 30. 23. Is sin the sting of death? *Yes:* The sting of death is sin, 1 Cor. 15. 56. Is the amazing fear of death the effect of sin? *Yes:* There are those who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage, Heb. 2. 15. Is the body's rotting in the grave the effect of sin? *Yes:* As drought and heat consume the snow-waters, so doth the grave those which have sinned, Job 24. 19.

7. Is mankind by the fall become liable to the pains of hell for ever? *Yes:* For he that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead, Pro. 21. 16. Ps. 9. 17. Can God make a soul for ever miserable? *Yes:* For after he hath killed, he hath power to cast into hell, Luke 12. 5. Is there a state of punishment in the other life? *Yes:* For we are warned to flee from the wrath to come, Mat. 3. 7. Is it the desert of sin? *Yes:* For when God renders to every man according to his works, he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. 2. 8, 9. Will it be the portion of impenitent sinners? *Yes:* Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell, Mat. 23, 33.

8. Is hell the wrath of an everlasting God? *Yes:* For the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Isa. 30. 33. Is it the anguish of an immortal soul? *Yes:* For their worm dieth not, Mark 9. 44. Is any way of relief open to them? *No:* Betwixt us and you there is a gulph fixed, Luke 16. 26. Is their punishment therefore everlasting? *Yes:* These shall go away into everlasting punishment, Mat. 25. 46. Should we not every one of us dread it? *Yes:* For it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. 10. 31. Isa. 33. 14.

Q. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?*

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to eternal life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of a state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

1. Might not God justly have left all mankind to perish in their fallen state? *Yes:* For in his sight shall no man living be justified, Ps. 143. 2. Would God have been a loser by it, if they had been left to perish? *No:* For, Can a man be profitable to God? Job 22. 2. But did he leave them to perish? *No:* For the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appears, Tit. 3. 4. Was the case of fallen angels helpless and desperate? *Yes:* For God spared not them, 2 Pet. 2. 4. But is the case of fallen man so? *No:* For he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. 3. 9. Is God's patience a token for good? *Yes:* The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, 2 Pet. 3. 15. Does it appear that God has a good will to man's salvation? *Yes:* As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn and live, Ezek. 33. 11. Is this an encouragement to us all to hope in his mercy? *Yes:* For if the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us such things as these, Judg. 13. 23.

2. Could man help himself out of his state of sin and misery? *No:* For when we were without strength Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. 5. 6. Could any creature help us? *No:* For none of them can by any means redeem his brother, Ps 49. 7. Could God himself only help us? *Yes:* O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help, Hos. 13. 9. Did God contrive a way for man's recovery? *Yes:* He hath devised means that his banished may not be expelled from him, 2 Sam. 14. 14. Was it the contrivance of infinite wisdom? *Yes:* It is the wisdom of God in a mystery, ordained before the world for our glory, 1 Cor. 2. 7. Has he provided a way for our recovery? *Yes:* I have found a ransom, Job 33. 24.

3. Did God particularly design the salvation of a remnant of mankind? *Yes:* There is a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom. 11. 5. Are there some whom God has chosen? *Yes:* God, hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, 2 Thes. 2. 13. Is there a certain number of such? *Yes:* For their names are in the book of life, Phil. 4. 3. Rev. 13. 8. Were they chosen from eternity? *Yes:* He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1. 4. Were they chosen for the sake of any thing in themselves? *No:* Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, John 15. 16. But of his mere good pleasure? *Yes:* He hath predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. 1. 5. Were they chosen to salvation as the end? *Yes:* God had appointed us to obtain salvation, 1 Thes. 5. 9. And to sanctification as the means? *Yes:* He has chosen us that we should be holy, Eph. 1. 4. Was it for the glory of God? *Yes:* That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, Rom. 9. 23.

4. Shall the election obtain? *Yes:* The purpose of God according to election shall stand, Rom. 9. 11. Does our salvation begin there? *Yes:* We love him, because he first loved us, 1 John 4. 19. Are others passed by? *Yes:* When the election hath obtained, the

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the rest are blinded, Rom. 11. 7. Does God know certainly whom he has chosen? *Yes:* The Lord knows them that are his, 2 Tim. 2. 19. Do we know it? *No:* For secret things belong not to us, Deut 29. 29. Can we know our own election otherwise than by our being sanctified? *No:* We must make our calling and so make our election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10.

5. Were the elect given to Christ? *Yes:* Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, John 17. 6. Did he undertake their salvation? *Yes:* For this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, John 6. 39. Was it promised him that he should effect it? *Yes:* He shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isa. 53. 10. And was he himself assured of it? *Yes*: All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, John 6. 37. And does it always prove so? *Yes:* As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts 13. 48. And shall any of them miscarry? *No:* For it is said of seducers, they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, Mat. 24.24.

6. Has God entered into a new covenant, pursuant hereto? *Yes:* For we are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. 6. 14. Does he insist upon the terms of the first covenant? *No:* He hath not dealt with us after our sins, Ps. 103. 10. Is he willing to deal with us upon new terms? *Yes:* I will make a new covenant with them, Jer. 31. 31. Is he willing to be ours in covenant? *Yes:* I will be to them a God, Heb. 8. 10. Will he accept us as his? *Yes:* They shall be to me a people. And will he be at peace with us? *Yes*: God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, 2 Cor. 5. 19.

7. Is this wrought out by a Redeemer? *Yes*: For there is not salvation in any other, Acts 4. 12. Was that Redeemer of God's own providing? *Yes:* God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, John 3. 16. Is the new covenant made with us in Christ? *Yes:* For he is the Mediator of the better covenant, Heb. 8. 6. Is it a covenat much for our advantage? *Yes:* For it is well ordered in all things, and sure, 2 Sam. 23. 5. Is perfect obedience the condition of it? *No:* For if by grace, then it is no more of works, Rom. 11. 6. Is faith the condition of it? *Yes:* For by grace ye are saved through faith, Eph. 2. 8. Is sincerity accepted as our gospel perfection? *Yes:* Walk before me, and be thou perfect, Gen. 17. 1. Is that which is required in the covenant promised in the covenant? *Yes:* I will cause you to walk in my statutes, Ezek. 36. 27. Does every transgression in the covenant cast us out of the covenant? *No:* I will visit their transgression with a rod, but my loving kindness will I not utterly take away, Ps. 89. 32, 33.

8. Will this covenant deliver us out of a state of sin and misery? *Yes:* Whosoever believes in Christ shall not perish, John 3, 16. Will it bring us into a state of salvation? *Yes*: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, John 3. 36. And can we desire any more? *No:* It is all my salvation, and all my desire, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

9. Was there intimation given to Adam of this way of salvation by a Redeemer? *Yes:* For it was said to him, That the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, Gen. 3. 15. Was it made known to the Old Testament saints? *Yes:* For of this salvation have the prophets inquired, and searched diligently, 1 Pet. 1. 10. But is it brought to a clearer light in the New Testament? *Yes*: Go preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned, Mark 16. 15, 16. Is this good news to fallen man? *Yes:* Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men, Luke 2. 14. Does this covenant exclude any that do not exclude themselves? *No:* Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the waters of life freely, Rev. 22. 17.

Q. 21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

A. 4. The only Redeemer of God's elect, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and so was, and continues to be God and Man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever.

1. Did mankind need a Redeemer? *Yes:* For by our iniquities we had sold ourselves, Isa. 50. 1. Did the elect themselves need a Redeemer? *Yes:* For we ourselves also were sometimes disobedient, Tit. 3. 3. Would there have been a Redeemer if Adam had not sinned? *No:* For they that be whole need not a physician, Mat. 9. 12. Could an angel have been our Redeemer? *No:* For his angels he charged with folly, Job 4. 18.

2. Is Jesus Christ the Redeemer? *Yes:* There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. 2. 5. Is he the only Redeemer? *Yes:* For there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, Acts 4. 12. Is he a universal Redeemer? *Yes:* He gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. 2. 6. Did he die to purchase a general offer? *Yes:* The Son of Man was lifted up, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, John 3. 14. 15. Is all the world the better for Christ's mediation? *Yes:* For by him all things consist, Col. 1. 17. Is it long of Christ then that so many perish? *No:* I would have gathered you, and you would not, Mat. 23. 37.

3. Is Christ in a special manner the redeemer of God's elect? *Yes:* I lay down my life for the sheep, John 10. 15. Was their salvation particularly designed in Christ's undertaking? *Yes:* Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, John 17. 2. Was their sanctification particularly designed? *Yes:* For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, John 17. 19. Is all mankind redeemed from among devils? *Yes:* For none must say as they did, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, Mat. 8. 29. But are the elect redeemed from among men? *Yes:* These were redeemed from among men, Rev. 14. 4.

4. Is the Redeemer LORD? *Yes:* Every tongue shall confess.

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confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, Phil. 2. 11. Is he Jesus a Saviour? *Yes:* Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, Mat. 1. 21. Is he Christ, anointed? *Yes:* For God, even thy God, hath anointed thee, Heb. 1. 9. Is he Emmanuel? *Yes:* They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us, Mat. 1. 23.

5. Is he the Son of God? *Yes:* Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Mat. 16. 16. Is he the Eternal Son of God? *Yes:* For he is before all things, Col. 1. 17. Is he God? *Yes:* Unto the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, Heb. 1. 8. Is he true God? *Yes:* His Son Jesus Christ is the true God, and eternal life, 1 John 5. 20. Is he the most High God? *Yes:* For Christ is over all, God—blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. Is he equal with the Father? *Yes:* For he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, Phil. 2. 6. Is he one with the Father? *Yes:* I and my Father are one, John 10. 30. Is he to be worshipped as God? *Yes:* For all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John 5. 23. Is he worshipped by the angels? *Yes:* Let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. 1. 6. And is there good reason for it? *Yes:* For he is the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. 1. 3. Was he begotten of his Father before all worlds? *Yes:* Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ps. 2. 7. Is he the only begotten Son of God? *Yes:* We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, John 1. 14.

6. Did the Son of God become man? *Yes:* The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, John 1. 14. Did he come into this world? *Yes:* He came forth from the Father, and came into the world, John 16. 28. Did he come in the fittest time? *Yes:* When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, Gal. 4. 4. Did he come with a full commission? *Yes:* For the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world, John 10. 36. Did he come to save us? *Yes:* The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke 19. 10. Did he come to conquer Satan? *Yes:* For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John 3. 8.

7. Did the Redeemer take our nature upon him? *Yes:* He was found in fashion as a man, Phil. 2. 8. Had he a being before his incarnation? *Yes:* Before Abraham was, I am, John 8. 58. Had he a being before the world? *Yes:* For the same was in the beginning with God, John 1. 2. Is not his incarnation a great mystery? *Yes:* Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Is it necessary that we believe it? *Yes:* For he that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, 1 John 4. 3. Was Jesus Christ God even when he was upon earth? *Yes:* I am in the Father, and the Father in me, John 14. 11. Is he man now he is in heaven? *Yes:* For he that descended is the same also that ascended, Eph. 4 10.

8. Is the Redeemer both God and Man? *Yes:* For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he shall be called the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, Isa. 9. 6. Is he both the Son of God, and the Son of Man? *Yes:* He was the Son of Adam, he was the Son of God, Luke 3. 38. Does he continue to be so? *Yes:* For Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. 13. 8. Was he man that he might suffer? *Yes:* For without shedding of blood, is no remission, Heb. 9. 22. Was he God that he might satisfy? *Yes:* For God has purchased the Church with his own blood, Acts 20. 28. Is he God and man in two distinct natures? *Yes:* For he is both the root and offspring of David, Rev. 22. 16. compare Mat. 22. 45. Is he so in one person? *Yes:* For to us there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him, 1 Cor. 8. 6. Is he so for ever? *Yes:* He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, Rev. 22. 13.

9. Is this Jesus the true Messiah promised to the fathers? *Yes:* We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, John 4. 42. Were the Scriptures fulfilled in him? *Yes:* To him give all the prophets witness, Acts 10. 43. Did his miracles prove his doctrine? *Yes:* The works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me, John 5. 36. Did the Father himself bear witness of him? *Yes:* By a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him, Mat. 17. 5. May we venture our souls upon this foundation? *Yes:* For this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, 1 John 5. 11.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ the Son of God became Man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

1. Did Christ the Son of God become man? *Yes:* Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, Heb. 2. 14. Was it requisite he should become Man? *Yes:* For in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, Heb. 2. 17. Has the Son of Man the fulness of the Godhead? *Yes:* For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. 2. 9. Has the Son of God the tenderness of a man? *Yes:* For he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb. 4. 15.

2. Did Christ take unto himself a true body? *Yes:* A body hast thou prepared me, Heb. 10. 5. Was it a body like unto our's? *Yes:* For he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. 8. 3. Did he take to himself a human soul? *Yes:* For he said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, Mat. 26. 38.

3. Was he conceived by ordinary generation? *No:* For he said, Ye are beneath, I am from above, John 8. 23. Was he conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost? *Yes:* The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, Luke 1. 35. Was he born of the Virgin Mary? *Yes:* The Scripture was fulfilled, Behold, a virgin shall be with

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with child, and bring forth a son, Mat. 1. 23. Was his conception and birth supernatural? *Yes:* That which was conceived in the Virgin Mary was of the Holy Ghost, Mat. 1. 20. Yet was he really and truly man? *Yes:* For he is not ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. 2. 11.

4. Was Christ the seed of the woman? *Yes*: For he was made of a woman, Gal. 4. 4. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? *Yes*: For the seed of the woman must break the serpent's head, Gen. 3. 15. Was he the Son of Abraham? *Yes:* For he took on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. 2. 16. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? *Yes:* For it was said to Abraham, in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. 12. 2. Was he the Son of David? *Yes:* Hosanna to the Son of David, Mat. 21. 9. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? *Yes:* He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets, Luke 1. 69, 70.

5. Was Christ born in Bethlehem? *Yes:* To you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, Luke 2. 11. Was he born among the Jews? *Yes:* Of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Rom. 9. 5. And was it the honour of that nation? *Yes:* He was the glory of his people Israel, Luke 2. 32. Did he come when the Messiah was expected? *Yes:* They then looked for redemption in Jerusalem, Luke 2. 38. Did he come when the sceptre was departed from Judah? *Yes:* For there then went out a decree that all the world should be taxed, Luke 2. 1. Did the angels attend him at his birth? *Yes:* There was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, Luke 2. 13.

6. Was the Redeemer born in sin as we are? *No:* He was without sin, Heb. 4. 15. Was he perfectly pure and holy? *Yes:* That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, Luke 1. 35. Was he pure and holy in his whole life? *Yes:* He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. 2. 22. Was it requisite he should be so? *Yes:* Such a High-Priest became us, that was holy, harmless, and undefiled, Heb. 7. 26. Could he have satisfied for our sin, if he had had any sin of his own? *No:* For he must through the Eternal Spirit offer himself without spot, Heb. 9. 14.

7. Was he subject to the sinless infirmities of our nature? *Yes:* he was in all points tempted like as we are, Heb. 4. 15. Was he hungry? *Yes*: When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred, Mat. 4. 2. Was he weary? *Yes*: Being weary with his journey, he sat on the well, John 4. 6. Did he sleep? *Yes:* When the ship was covered with waves he was asleep, Mat. 8. 24. Did he pass through the ages of human life? *Yes:* For Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, Luke 2. 52.

8. Was the Redeemer willing to be incarnate for us? *Yes:* For when he cometh into the world, he saith, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, Heb. 10. 5, 7. Is it well for us that he was so? *Yes:* For by this will we are sanctified, Heb. 10. 10. Was Christ's incarnation great condescension in him? *Yes:* For hereby he was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. 2. 9. Was it a great honour to our nature? *Yes*: What is man that thou art thus mindful of him? Heb. 2. 6, 7, 8. Is it good news to mankind? *Yes:* This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Q. 23. *What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?*

A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

1. Is Christ a complete Redeemer? *Yes:* For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, Col. 1. 19. Is he completely qualified for the undertaking? *Yes:* For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, John 3. 34. Is he authorized for it? *Yes*: For all things are delivered to him of the Father, Mat. 11. 27. Has he a full commission? *Yes*: For the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, John 5. 22. And has he an ability equal to his authority? *Yes:* For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, v. 26.

2. Is there all that in Christ which fallen man stands in need of? *Yes:* For Christ is all, and in all, Col. 3. 11. Is he light? *Yes:* I am the light of the world, John 8. 12. Is he life? *Yes:* In him was life, and the life was the light of men, John 1. 4. Is he our peace? *Yes:* He is our peace, Eph. 2. 14. Is he our head? *Yes:* He is the head of the body, the Church, Col. 1. 18. Is he the door? *Yes:* I am the door of the sheep, John 10. 7. Is he the way? *Yes:* I am the way, the truth, and the life, John 14. 6. Can we come to God as a Father, otherwise than by Jesus Christ as Mediator? *No:* For no man cometh to the Father but by me, John 14. 6. Is he our food? *Yes:* I am that bread of life, John 6. 48. Is he our friend? *Yes:* This is my beloved, and this is my friend, Cant. 5. 16.

3. Is Jesus Christ a Redeemer in office? *Yes:* For God hath exalted him with his own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31. Is he duly put in office? *Yes:* For him hath God the Father sealed, John 6. 27. Does he duly execute his office? *Yes:* For he was faithful to him that appointed him, Heb. 3. 2. Is he a Prophet? *Yes:* This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world, John 6. 14. Is he a Priest? *Yes:* He is the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Heb. 3. 1. Is he a King? *Yes:* He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Rev. 19. 16.

4. Did Christ execute these offices in his state of humiliation? *Yes:* I have glorified thee on the earth, John 17. 4. Does he execute them in his state of exaltation? *Yes:* For in heaven itself he now appears in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24. Is he then an all-sufficient Saviour? *Yes:* He is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, Heb. 7. 25. And is he as willing to save as he is able? *Yes:* Whosoever comes unto me I will in no wise cast out, John 6. 37.

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Q. 24. *How does Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

A. Christ executes the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

1. Does Christ execute the office of a Prophet? *Yes:* We know that thou art a teacher come from God, John 3. 2. Does God speak to us by him? *Yes:* He hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, Heb. 1. 2. Were there prophets under the Old Testament? *Yes:* God sent his servants the prophets, Jer. 25. 4. But was Christ above them all? *Yes:* For he is the Lord God of the holy prophets, Rev. 22. 6. compare Col. 1. 11. And were they his agents? *Yes:* It was the Spirit of Christ in them that testified, 1 Pet. 1. 11.

2. Was Moses the great type of Christ as a prophet? *Yes:* A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, Acts 3. 22. But was Christ greater than Moses? *Yes:* For Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son, Heb. 3. 5, 6. And is the doctrine of Christ better than that of Moses? *Yes:* For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, John 1. 17. Was Christ completely qualified to be a Prophet? *Yes:* For in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2. 3. Was ever any other so well qualified? *No:* For no man knows the Father, but the Son, Mat. 11. 27.

3. Has Christ, as a Prophet, revealed God's will to us? *Yes:* For he said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me, John 7. 16. and 12. 49, 50. Has he revealed God's will concerning our duty? *Yes:* For he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil, Mat. 5. 17. And concerning our happiness? *Yes:* For he was anointed to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke 4. 18.

4. Did Christ execute this office when he was on earth? *Yes:* For he taught them as one having authority, Mat. 7. 29. Did he introduce his doctrine with Thus saith the Lord, like the Old Testament prophets? *No:* But Verily, Verily, I say unto you, John 3. 3. Did he confirm his doctrine by miracles? *Yes:* Believe me, (said he) for the very works sake, John 14. 11. Were his miracles many? *Yes:* Many signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, John 20. 30. Were they profitable? *Yes:* He went about doing good, Acts 10. 38. Did Christ teach by the example of his life? *Yes:* That we might follow his steps, 1 Pet. 2. 21.

5. Does he still execute this office? *Yes:* For he said, I have declared thy name unto them, and will declare it, John 17. 26. Does he reveal God's will to us by his word? *Yes:* For these things are written that we may believe, John 20. 31. And by his Spirit? *Yes:* The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things, John 14. 26. Does Jesus Christ teach his people? *Yes:* All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, Isa. 54. 13. And does he teach effectually? *Yes:* For the Son of Man is come, and hath given us an understanding, 1 John 5. 20. And does he teach compassionately? *Yes:* For he can have compassion on the ignorant, Heb. 5. 2.

6. Must we learn of this teacher? *Yes:* Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart, Mat. 11. 29. Are we to receive his doctrine? *Yes:* Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, Col. 3. 16. And must we abide in it? *Yes:* If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, John 8. 31.

Q. 25. *How does Christ execute the office of a Priest?*

A. Christ executes the office of a Priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

1. Did fallen man need a Priest? *Yes:* For every high-priest is ordained for man in things pertaining to God, Heb. 5. 1. Did Christ execute the office of a Priest? *Yes:* We have a great High-Priest, Jesus the Son of God, Heb. 4. 14. Was he appointed to this office? *Yes:* For Christ glorified not himself to be made a High-Priest, Heb. 5. 5. Was he confirmed in this office? *Yes:* For the Lord sware, and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, Heb. 7. 21.

2. Did Christ, as a Priest, make atonement for sin? *Yes:* He is a merciful and faithful High-Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, Heb. 2. 17. Did he do this by the sacrifice of himself? *Yes:* He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. 9. 26. Was he himself the Priest? *Yes:* For through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself, Heb. 9. 14. Was he himself the sacrifice? *Yes:* He made his soul an offering for sin, Isa. 53. 10. Was he himself the Altar? *Yes:* For we have an Altar, Heb. 13. 10. Would not the legal sacrifices serve? *No:* For it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, Heb. 10. 4. Did God declare them insufficient? *Yes:* Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, v. 5. Was this sacrifice necessary then? *Yes:* What the law could not do, in that it was weak, that Christ did, Rom. 8. 3.

3. Did Christ, as a sacrifice, bear our sins? *Yes:* His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. 2. 24. Did he bear them by the Father's appointment? *Yes:* The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all, Isa. 53. 6. Did he suffer for them? *Yes:* He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, v. 5. And not for any sin of his own? *No:* Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. 9. 26. Did he suffer to satisfy for sin? *Yes:* He was once offered to bear the sins of many, Heb. 9. 28. And was the satisfaction accepted? *Yes:* He gave himself for us a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour, Eph. 5. 2.

4. Did Christ offer himself voluntarily? *Yes:* No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself, John 10. 18. Was it his own act and deed to make his soul an offering? *Yes:* For he said, Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit, Luke 23. 46. Did this sacrifice need to be repeated? *No:* For by one offering he perfected for ever them that are sanctified,

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tified, Heb. 10. 14. Did Christ do this for the purchase of our pardon? *Yes:* For when he did it, he said. Father, forgive them, Luke 23. 34. Was it designed to save us from ruin? *Yes:* He gave his life a ransom for many, Mat. 20. 28. And to reconcile us to God? *Yes:* For he made peace through the blood of his cross, Col. 1. 20. Is this our plea for peace and pardon? *Yes:* Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, Rom. 8. 34. Is Christ then the great propitiation? *Yes:* He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2. 2. And have we hereby access to God? *Yes:* He suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3. 18. And had the Old Testament saints the benefit of this sacrifice? *Yes:* For he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13. 8.

5. Does Christ, as a Priest, make intercession? *Yes:* For he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors, Isa. 53. 12. Is he always doing this? *Yes:* He ever lives, making intercession, Heb. 7. 25. Does he do this as an advocate: *Yes:* If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, 1 John 2. 1. And as a High-Priest? *Yes:* Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, Exod. 28. 12. Does he make intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction? *Yes:* For by his own blood he entered into the holy Place, Heb. 9. 12.

6. Is Christ a Priest after the order of Aaron? *No:* But after the order of Melchisedec, Ps. 110. 4. Is he a Royal Priest? *Yes:* For he is a Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both, Zec. 6. 13. Is he a Priest that needs a successor? *No:* For this man, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, Heb. 7. 24. Is he a Priest that needs a sacrifice for himself? *No:* For the law makes men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath makes the Son, who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. 7. 28. Have all believers an interest in Christ's priesthood? *Yes:* For we have a High-Priest over the house of God, Heb. 10. 21. Is this an encouragement in our approaches to God? *Yes:* Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, Heb. 4. 16. And is this it we must depend upon for our acceptance with God? *Yes:* For spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

Q. 26. *How does Christ execute the office of a King?*

A. Christ executes the office of a King, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

1. Is Christ put into the office of a King? *Yes:* I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, Ps. 2. 6. Does he execute that office? *Yes:* He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, Luke 1. 33. Is he King as Mediator? *Yes:* He hath authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man, John 5. 27. Is his kingdom a spiritual kingdom? *Yes:* My kingdom is not of this world, John 18. 36.

2. Is Christ universal monarch? *Yes:* For all power is given to him both in heaven and on earth, Mat. 28. 18. Has he a right to rule all? *Yes:* He is Lord of all, Acts 10. 36. Does he rule all? *Yes:* He is the Governor among the nations, Ps. 22. 28. Does he rule all for the good of his Church? *Yes:* He is head over all things to the Church, Eph. 1. 22. Is he in a special manner the Church's King? *Yes:* O daughter of Sion, thy King comes, Zec. 9. 9.

3. Does Christ, as a King, subdue his people to himself? *Yes:* Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Ps. 110. 3. Does he do it by the word of his grace? *Yes:* He draws with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love, Hos. 11. 4. Does he do it effectually? *Yes:* He makes ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke 1. 17. Does he conquer the opposition of the carnal mind? *Yes:* For the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. 10. 4. Does he set up his throne in the soul? *Yes:* Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 5. And does he rule there? *Yes:* For he writes his law in their hearts, Heb. 8. 10.

4. Does Christ, as a King, reign in his Church? *Yes:* The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King, Isa. 33. 22. Does he enact laws? *Yes:* He gave commandments to his Apostles, Acts 1. 2. Does he commission officers? *Yes:* By me Kings reign, Pro. 8. 15. Does he give judgment? *Yes:* We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Cor. 5. 10. Is homage and allegiance due to him? *Yes:* For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, Phil. 2. 10. Does he rule in righteousness? *Yes:* The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre, Ps. 45. 6.

5. Does Christ, as a King, protect his subjects? *Yes:* For he shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, Isa. 32. 2. And does he secure the peace of his kingdom? *Yes:* For this man shall be the peace, Mic. 5. 5. Has he authority to pardon sin? *Yes:* The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin, Mat. 9. 6. Has he authority to reward services? *Yes:* I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. 2. 10.

6. Does Christ, as King, restrain his enemies? *Yes:* On this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Mat. 16. 18. Will he conquer them at last? *Yes:* For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, 1 Cor. 15. 25. Will he conquer death itself? *Yes:* The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, 1 Cor. 15. 26. Does he count those his enemies that will not have him to reign over them? *Yes:* Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them bring hither, and slay them before me, Luke 19. 27.

7. Is Christ a merciful King? *Yes:* He is meek, and having salvation, Zec. 9. 9. Is he the poor man's king? *Yes:* He shall deliver the needy when he cries, Ps. 72. 12. Has he a large kingdom? *Yes:* He shall have dominion from sea to sea, Ps. 72. 8. Have we reason to hope it shall be larger than now it is? *Yes:* For the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, Rev. 11. 15. Shall

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it be a lasting kingdom? *Yes:* His throne shall be as the days of heaven, Ps. 89. 29. And when the mystery of God shall be finished, shall the kingdom of the Redeemer be resigned to the Creator? *Yes:* Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. 15. 24.

8. Ought we to rejoice in Christ's dominion? *Yes:* Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King, Ps. 149. 2. Must we accept him for our King? *Yes:* Take my yoke upon you, Mat. 11. 29. Must we pay tribute to him? *Yes:* Send ye the Lamb to the Ruler of the land, Isa. 16. 1. Must we obey him? *Yes:* For he is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, Heb. 5. 9.

Q. 27. *Wherein did consist Christ's humiliation?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

1. Did Jesus Christ humble himself? *Yes:* For being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation, Phil. 2. 6, 7. Was it a deep humiliation? *Yes:* For he said, I am a worm, and no man, Ps. 22. 6. Was it requisite he should humble himself? *Yes:* For thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, Luke 24. 46. And was that a proper expedient to atone for our sin? *Yes:* For the sinner had said, I will be like the Most High, Isa. 14. 14.

2. Did Christ humble himself in his birth? *Yes:* For he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was made in the likeness of men, Phil. 2. 6, 7. Was he born of that which was then a poor family? *Yes:* He was a root of dry ground, Isa. 53. 2. Was he born of a poor woman? *Yes:* For she offered for her cleansing only a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, Luke 2. 24. compare Lev. 12. 8. Was his supposed father a poor man? *Yes:* They said, Is not this the carpenter's son, Mat. 13. 55. Was he born in a poor place? *Yes:* Bethlehem was little among the thousands of Judah, Mic. 5. 2. Was he born in poor circumstances? *Yes:* In the stable of an inn, and laid in a manger, Luke 2. 7. Had he the respect paid him that was due to an incarnate Deity? *No:* For he was in the world, and the world knew him not, John 1. 10. Was he respected by his countrymen? *No:* He came to his own, and his own received him not, v. 11. Was he born honourably? *No:* For he took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. 2. 7. Was he born wealthy? *No:* Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, 2 Cor. 8. 9.

3. Was Christ made under the law? *Yes:* God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. 4. 4. Was he circumcised? *Yes:* When eight days were accomplished, Luke 2. 21. Was he presented in the temple? *Yes:* They brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, v. 22. Did he keep the passover? *Yes:* When he was twelve years old, he went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast, v. 42. Was he obedient to his parents? *Yes:* He went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them, v. 51. Did he pay tribute? *Yes:* That give for me and thee, Mat. 17. 24, 27. Did he fulfil all righteousness? *Yes:* Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness, Mat. 3. 15. Did he submit to the law of the mediatorship? *Yes:* Thy law is within my heart, Ps. 40. 8.

4. Was his education mean? *Yes:* For they said, Is not this the carpenter? Mark 6. 3. Was the place of his abode despicable? *Yes:* Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? John 1. 46. Did he live in honour? *No:* For he was despised and rejected of men, Isa. 53. 3. Was he attended by great folks? *No:* Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him? John 7. 48. Were his followers mean? *Yes:* For they were fishers, Mat. 4. 18. Did he live in mirth and pleasure? *No:* He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, Isa. 53. 3. Was the sin of sinners a grief to him? *Yes:* He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts, Mark 3. 5. Were the sorrows of his friends a grief to him? *Yes:* Jesus wept, John 11. 35. Had he a house of his own? *No:* The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head, Luke 9. 58. Was he fed with the finest of the wheat? *No:* He had barley-loaves, John 6. 9. Did he live upon alms? *Yes:* For certain women ministered to him of their substance, Luke 8. 3. Had he a stately place to preach in? *No:* He taught the people out of the ship, Luke 5. 3.

5. Was he tempted of Satan? *Yes:* He was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, Mark 1. 13. Was that a part of his sufferings: *Yes:* For he suffered, being tempted, Heb. 2. 18. Was he persecuted betimes? *Yes:* Herod sought the young child to destroy him, Mat. 2. 13. Was he slandered and reproached? *Yes:* They said of him, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, Luke 7. 34. Was he represented as a madman? *Yes:* They said, He hath a Devil, and is mad, John 10. 20. And as one that is in league with the Devil? *Yes:* They said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, Mat. 12. 24. Did they cavil at his preaching? *Yes:* He endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, Heb. 12. 3. Did he bear all this patiently? *Yes:* When he was reviled, he reviled not again, 1 Pet. 2. 23.

6. But notwithstanding this, had he honour done him in his humiliation? *Yes:* For it was said of him, He shall be great, Luke 1. 32. Did God put honour upon him? *Yes:* He received from God the Father honour and glory, 2 Pet. 1. 17. Did angels do him honour? *Yes:* Behold, angels came and ministered to him, Mat. 4. 11. Did foreigners do him honour? *Yes:* Wise men of the east came to worship him, Mat. 2. 2. Did the common report of the people do him honour? *Yes:* For some said he was Elias, others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets, Mat. 16. 14. Did those that saw his miracles do him honour? *Yes:* For they said, It was never so seen in Israel, Mat. 9. 33. Did inferior creatures do him honour? *Yes:* Even the winds and the seas

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seas obeyed him, Mat. 8. 27. Were Devils themselves compelled to acknowledge him? *Yes:* For they said, We know thee who thou art, The Holy One of God, Mark 1. 24.

7. Did he humble himself unto death? *Yes:* He humbled himself, and became obedient to death, Phil. 2. 8. Did he die for us? *Yes:* He was delivered for our offences, Rom. 4. 25. Was this according to the counsels of God? *Yes:* He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2. 23. Did he suffer in his soul? *Yes:* For he said, Now is my soul troubled, John 12. 27. Did he suffer from his Father? *Yes:* He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, Isa. 53. 4. Did he suffer in soul from his Father? *Yes:* For he put him to grief, v. 10. Did this put him into an agony? *Yes:* He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, Mat. 26. 37. Did he suffer this for us? *Yes:* For he made him sin for us who knew no sin, 2 Cor. 5. 21. And yet did the Father love him even when he bruised him? *Yes:* Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, John 10. 17.

8. Did he suffer from Satan? *Yes:* Thou shalt bruise his heel, Gen. 3. 15. Did Satan set-upon him? *Yes:* The Prince of this world cometh, John 14. 30. But did Satan conquer him? *No:* He hath nothing in me, John 14. 30. Did he suffer from the Jews? *Yes:* For they cried, crucify him, crucify him, Luke 23. 21. Did he suffer from the chief of the Jews? *Yes:* He was the stone which the builders refused, Ps. 118. 22 Did he suffer from the Romans? *Yes:* The princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8. Was he betrayed by Judas? *Yes:* They put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him, John 13. 2. Was he sold for thirty pieces of silver? *Yes:* A goodly price that I was prized at, Zech. 11. 13. Was he forsaken by his own disciples? *Yes*: All his disciples forsook him, and fled, Mat. 26. 56.

9. Was he falsely accused? *Yes:* They sought false witness against him to put him to death, Mat. 26. 59. Was he basely abused? *Yes:* He hid not his face from shame and spitting, Isa. 50. 6. Was he condemned as a blasphemer? *Yes:* They said, he hath spoken blasphemy, Mat. 26. 65. Was he condemned as a traitor? *Yes:* For they said, he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, Luke 23. 2. Was he scourged? *Yes:* For by his stripes we are healed, Isa. 53. 5. Was he exposed to contempt? *Yes:* He was a reproach of men, and despised of the people, Ps. 22. 6. Did they scoff at him as a Prophet? *Yes:* They said, Prophesy who smote thee, Mat. 26. 68. Did they scoff at him as a King? *Yes*: They said, Hail, King of the Jews, Mat. 27. 29. Did they scoff at him as a Priest and Saviour? *Yes:* They said, he saved others, himself he cannot save, Mat. 27. 42.

10. Was he sentenced to the cross? *Yes:* Pilate delivered him to be crucified, Mat. 27. 26. Was he crucified between two thieves; *Yes:* He was numbered with the transgressors, Isa. 53. 12. Did he die a bloody death? *Yes:* For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul, Lev. 17. 11. Did he die a painful death? *Yes:* They pierced his hands and feet, Ps. 22. 16. And a shameful death? *Yes:* He endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. 12. 2. And a cursed death? *Yes*: For he that is hanged is accursed of God, Deut. 21. 23. Gal 3. 13. Did God seem to withdraw from him in his sufferings? *Yes:* He cried with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Mat. 27. 46.

11. Did Christ die to glorify God? *Yes:* For this cause came I to this hour, Father, glorify thy name, John 12. 27, 28. Did he die to satisfy for our sins? *Yes:* It was to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9. 24. Did he die to conquer Satan? *Yes:* He spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross, Col. 2. 15. Did he die to save us from sin? *Yes:* He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, Tit. 2. 14. Did he die to purchase heaven for us? *Yes:* For it is the purchased possession, Eph. 1. 14. Heb. 9. 15. Was he in his death made a curse for us? *Yes:* For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. 3. 13. Did Christ sweat for us? *Yes:* His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, Luke 22. 44. And thorns being also a fruit of the curse, did Christ wear them for us? *Yes:* They platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, Mat. 27. 29.

12. Did Christ do all that was to be done in his sufferings for us? *Yes:* He said, It is finished, John 19. 30. Did the events answer the predictions? *Yes:* For the Scriptures must be fulfilled, Mark 14. 49. Are we sure that Christ was truly dead? *Yes:* For one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, and he that saw it bare record, John 19. 34, 35. Did Christ die as a martyr? *Yes:* For before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, 1 Tim. 6. 13. Did he die as a testator? *Yes:* For where a testament is, there must needs be the death of the testator, Heb. 9. 16. Did he die as a sacrifice? *Yes:* Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5. 7.

13. Was there honour done to Christ even in his sufferings? *Yes:* The earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, Mat. 27. 51. And were some thereby convinced? *Yes:* They feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God, Mat. 27. 54. Is the cross of Christ then a reproach to us? *No:* God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. 6. 14. Is it what we should all be acquainted with? *Yes:* I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. 2. 2. And ought we to celebrate the praises of our crucified Saviour? *Yes:* Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and glory, and blessing, Rev. 5. 12.

14. When Christ was dead, was he buried? *Yes:* They took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre, Acts 13. 29. Was he buried according to the custom? *Yes:* As the manner of the Jews is to bury, John 19. 40. Did he continue under the power of

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of death for a time? *Yes:* For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Mat. 12. 40. Was this his descent into hell? *Yes:* He descended into the lower parts of the earth, Eph. 4. 9. Did his separate soul go to paradise? *Yes:* This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, Luke 23. 43. Did his body see corruption? *No:* Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption, Acts 2. 27.

Q. 28. *Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

1. Is Jesus Christ exalted? *Yes:* Because he humbled himself, therefore God also hath highly exalted him, Phil. 2. 9. Was his humiliation the way to exaltation? *Yes:* He suffered these things, and so entered into his glory, Luke 24. 26. Was his exaltation the reward of his humiliation? *Yes:* I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me, John 17. 5. Had he it in his eye in his sufferings? *Yes:* For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, Heb. 12. 2.

2. Was his resurrection the first step of his exaltation? *Yes:* He was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 1 Cor. 15. 4. Did he continue always in the bands of death? *No:* For it was impossible he should be holden of them, Acts 2. 24. Did he rise to life? *Yes:* He both rose and revived, Rom. 14. 9. Did the same body rise? *Yes:* Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, Luke 24. 39. Is he the same Jesus still? *Yes:* I am he that liveth, and was dead, Rev. 1. 18. Did he lie in the grave all the Jewish Sabbath? *Yes:* For he rose in the end of the Sabbath, Mat. 28. 1. Did he rise the first day of the week? *Yes:* As it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mat. 28. 1. Have we sufficient proof of his resurrection? *Yes:* He shewed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, Acts 1. 3. Did he rise to die no more? *Yes:* Death hath no more dominion over him, Rom. 6. 9.

3. Did Christ rise by his own power? *Yes:* Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, John 2. 19. & 10. 18. Was that a divine power? *Yes:* For he was crucified through weakness, but he lived by the power of God, 2 Cor. 13. 4. Was it the great proof of his being the Son of God? *Yes:* He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. 1. 4. Was it the will of the Father he should rise? *Yes:* For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone, Mat. 28. 2. Did the Father raise him? *Yes:* God raised him from the dead, Acts 13. 30. Was this an evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction? *Yes:* For he was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4. 25. And we may plead it? *Yes:* It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, Rom. 8. 34.

4. Did Christ rise as a public person? *Yes:* For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor. 15. 21. Are true believers raised with him to a spiritual life? *Yes:* He hath quickened us together with Christ, Eph. 2. 5. And shall they be shortly raised to eternal life? *Yes:* Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming, 1 Cor. 15. 23. Is the resurrection of Christ one of the great foundations of Christianity? *Yes:* If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, v. 14.

5. Did Christ stay on earth forty days after his resurrection? *Yes:* He was seen of them forty days, Acts 1. 3. Did he then ascend up into heaven? *Yes:* While he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, Luke 24. 51. Did he ascend in a cloud? *Yes:* A cloud received him out of their sight, Acts 1. 9. Was he welcome in heaven? *Yes:* When the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him, Dan. 7. 13.

6. Was it for our advantage that he ascended up into heaven? *Yes:* It is expedient for you that I go away, John 16. 7. Did he ascend as a conqueror? *Yes:* When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, Eph. 4. 8. Did he ascend as our forerunner? *Yes:* As the forerunner he is for us entered, Heb. 6. 20. Is he gone to prepare a place for us? *Yes:* I go to prepare a place for you, John 14. 2. Did he enter as our high-priest within the veil? *Yes:* By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, Heb. 9. 12.

7. Did he sit at the right hand of God? *Yes:* He is seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, Heb. 8. 1. Has he authority to sit there? *Yes:* The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Ps. 110. 1. Is he there now? *Yes:* He is even at the right hand of God, Rom. 8. 34. Has he been seen there? *Yes:* Stephen said, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, Acts 7. 56. Will he continue there? *Yes:* The heavens must receive him till the restitution of all things, Acts 3. 21. Has he the highest honour there? *Yes:* God hath given him a name above every name, Phil. 2. 9. Has he the sovereign power there? *Yes:* For angels, authorities, and powers are made subject to him, 1 Pet. 3. 22. Is he Lord of all there? *Yes:* Thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands, Heb. 2. 7. Ought we therefore to have our hearts in heaven? *Yes:* Seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God, Col. 3. 1.

8. Will Christ come again? *Yes:* If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, John 14. 3. Are you sure he will come again? *Yes:* For he said, Surely I come quickly, Rev. 22. 20. Will he come in glory? *Yes:* He shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, Mat. 24. 30. Will his angels attend him? *Yes:* He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, Mat. 25. 31. Will he come publicly? *Yes:* Behold he comes in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, Rev. 1. 7.

9. Will Christ come to judge the world? *Yes:* God hath

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hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, Acts 17. 31. Will he come to the terror of all his enemies? *Yes:* They also which pierced him shall wail because of him, Rev. 1. 7. Will he come to the comfort of all his faithful followers? *Yes:* To them that look for him, he will appear the second time unto salvation, Heb. 9. 28. Will this be at the last day? *Yes:* I will raise him up at the last day, John 6. 39. Ought we to wait for that day? *Yes:* Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. 2. 13.

Q. 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

1. Is redemption purchased by Christ? *Yes:* He obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. 9. 12. Is he then the Author of it? *Yes:* He became the Author of salvation, Heb. 5. 9. Is it redemption by price? *Yes:* Ye are bought with a price, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Is it a redemption by power? *Yes:* For he hath led captivity captive, Ps. 68. 18. Is this redemption offered to all? *Yes:* He hath proclaimed liberty to the captives, Isa. 61. 1. May all that will take the benefit of it? *Yes:* Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, Isa. 55. 1. Have all the world therefore some benefit by it? *Yes:* Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, Mark 16. 15. But have all the world a like benefit by it? *No:* Thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world, John 14. 22.

2. Is it enough for us that there is a redemption purchased? *No:* For there are those who deny the Lord who bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. Is it enough to hear of it? *No:* For to some it is a savour of death unto death, 2 Cor. 2. 16. Is it enough to have a name among the redeemed? *No:* Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, Rev. 3. 1. Is it necessary therefore that we be partakers of the redemption? *Yes:* That we may say, Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20. Do all partake of it? *No:* Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, Acts 8. 21. Do all believers partake of it? *Yes:* We are made partakers of Christ, Heb. 2. 14. Do they receive the Redeemer? *Yes:* We have received Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. 2. 6. Do any receive this of themselves? *No:* A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above, John 3. 27.

3. Must the redemption be applied to us? *Yes:* It is Christ in you the hope of glory, Col. 1. 27. Is it the Spirit's work to apply it? *Yes:* For it is the Spirit that quickens, John 6. 63. Is he sent for that purpose? *Yes:* He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you, John 16. 15. Is he sent in Christ's name? *Yes:* He is the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, John 14. 26. Have we as much need of the Spirit to apply the redemption to us, as of the Son to purchase it for us? *Yes:* For when Christ had purchased it, it was expedient for us he should go away, that he might send the Comforter, John 16. 7.

4. Is the Spirit given to the Church in general? *Yes:* Another Comforter shall abide with you for ever, John 14. 16. Is he promised to particular persons? *Yes:* Turn ye at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, Prov. 1. 23. Are we to pray for the Spirit then? *Yes:* Our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke 11. 13. Do all believers receive of the Spirit, *Yes:* God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, Gal. 4. 6. Is he their teacher: *Yes:* He shall teach them all things. Is he their remembrancer? *Yes:* He shall bring all things to their remembrance, John 14. 26. Is he the earnest? *Yes:* He hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. 1. 22. Does he begin the good work of grace in the heart? *Yes:* For when he is come, he shall convince, John 16. 8. And does he perfect it? *Yes:* For he hath wrought us for the self same thing, 2 Cor. 5. 5.

Q. 30. *How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling?

1. Does the Spirit act freely in applying the redemption? *Yes:* The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John 3. 8. Does he act mysteriously? *Yes:* Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, Ecc. 11. 15. Does he act effectually? *Yes:* All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, John 6. 37.

2. Is faith necessary to our interest in the redemption? *Yes:* For without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. Is it the great thing necessary? *Yes:* Only believe, all things are possible to him that can believe, Mark 5. 36. and 9. 23. Can we have a saving interest in the redemption without faith? *No:* He that believeth not, is condemned already, John 3. 18. Is it that which is required on our part? *Yes:* By grace ye are saved through faith. And is it of ourselves? *No:* Not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. Is it given for Christ's sake? *Yes:* Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, to believe on him, Phil. 1. 29.

3. Does the Spirit work faith in us? *Yes:* It is the faith of the operation of God, Col. 2. 12. Is it a divine work then? *Yes:* This is the work of God, that ye believe, John 6. 29. Is it a work of divine power? *Yes:* We believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, Eph. 1. 19, 20. Is it wrought in all the saints? *Yes:* For they have all obtained alike precious faith, 2 Pet. 1. 1. Shall it be wrought in all the chosen? *Yes:* For it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. 1. 1.

4. Are all true believers united to Christ? *Yes:* He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Are they

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they interested in his death? *Yes:* We are crucified with Christ, Gal. 2. 20. And in his burial? *Yes:* We are buried with him in baptism, Rom. 6. 4. And in his resurrection? *Yes:* He has quickened us together with Christ, Eph. 2. 5. And in his ascension? *Yes:* He has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2. 6.

5. Is there a real union between Christ and believers: *Yes:* For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, Heb. 2. 11. Is he the Head? *Yes:* He is the Head of the body, the church, Col. 1. 18. Are they his members? *Yes:* Who are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, Eph. 5. 30. Is he the Root? *Yes:* For of his fulness have all we received, John 1. 16. Are they the branches? *Yes:* I am the vine, ye are the branches, John 15. 5. Is he the Foundation? *Yes:* Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation a stone, a tried stone, Isa. 28. 16. Are they built upon him? *Yes:* Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, 1 Pet. 2. 5.

6. Is there a relative union between Christ and believers, *Yes:* I ascend to my Father, and your Father, John 20. 17. Are they his children? *Yes:* Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me, Heb. 2. 13. Are they his brethren? *Yes:* He is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. 2. 11, 12. Are they his spouse? *Yes:* I have espoused you to one husband, 2 Cor. 11. 2. Are they his subjects? *Yes:* They are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col. 1. 13. Are they his soldiers? *Yes:* Good soldiers of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. 2. 3. Are they his servants? *Yes:* Ye call me Master and Lord, John 13. 13. Are they his scholars? *Yes:* They sit at Jesu's feet and hear his word, Luke 10. 39. Are they his sheep? *Yes:* For he is the great Shepherd of the sheep, Heb. 13. 20.

7. Is it by faith that we are united to Christ? *Yes:* For Christ dwells in the heart by faith, Eph. 3. 17. Is that owing to the Spirit? *Yes:* We are a habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. 2. 22. Does communion result from this union? *Yes:* For truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John 1. 3. And is that owing to the Spirit? *Yes:* We have an access by one Spirit unto the Father, Eph. 2. 18. Can we be united to Christ without the indwelling of the Spirit? *No:* For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. 8. 9. Have all that are united to Christ an interest in the benefits of redemption? *Yes:* For of him are we in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

8. Are we united to Christ in our effectual calling? *Yes:* For we are called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 9. Will the common call unite us to Christ? *No:* For many are called, but few are chosen, Mat. 22. 14. Is it the effectual call then that does it? *Yes:* For whom he called, them he justified, Rom. 8. 30.

9. Does the gospel call us from sin to God? *Yes:* It turns from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18. Does it call us from self to Christ? *Yes:* If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and follow me, Mat. 16. 24. Does it call us from darkness to light? *Yes:* He hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. 2. 9. And from uncleanness to holiness? *Yes:* God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness, 1 Thes. 4. 7. And from this world to the other? *Yes:* If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, Col. 3. 1. Is this call effectual when we come at the call? *Yes:* Follow me, and he arose and followed him, Mat. 9. 9. Is it our great concern to make this sure? *Yes:* Make your calling and your election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10.

Q. 31. *What is effectual calling?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

1. Is the common call given to the world? *Yes:* He sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden, Mat. 22. 3. Can ministers make that call effectual? *No:* For who hath believed our report, Isa. 53. 1. Is it the work of God to make it effectual? *Yes:* For it is God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 7. Does he do it in a way suitable to our nature? *Yes:* I drew them with cords of a man, Hos. 11. 4. Is it necessary to our salvation, that the call should be effectual? *Yes:* Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, 2 Tim. 1. 9.

2. Are all who are effectually called convinced of sin? *Yes:* I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, Rom. 7. 9. Is it the Spirit's work to convince? *Yes:* When he is come he will convince the world of sin, John 16. 8. Is the word the ordinary means of conviction? *Yes:* For by the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3. 20. Is it necessary we should be convinced of sin? *Yes:* For they that are whole, need not a physican, Mat. 9. 12. Must we be convinced of the fact of sin? *Yes:* These things thou hast done, Ps. 50. 21. And of the fault of sin? *Yes:* Know therefore, and see that it is an evil thing, Jer. 2. 19. And of the folly of sin? *Yes:* Herein thou hast done foolishly, 2 Chron. 16. 9. And of the filth of sin? *Yes:* For how canst thou say, I am not polluted? Jer. 2. 23. And of the fruit of sin? *Yes:* Your sins have separated between you and your God, Isa. 59. 1, 2. And of the fountain of sin? *Yes:* They shall know every man the plague of his own heart, 1 Kings 8. 38.

3. Must we also be convinced of our misery? *Yes:* Thou art wretched and miserable, Rev. 3. 17. And of our danger? *Yes:* Flee from the wrath to come, Mat. 3. 7. Must we be convinced of our helplesness in ourselves? *Yes:* When sin revived I died, Rom. 7. 9. And of the possibility of our being helped by the grace of God? *Yes:* How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare! Luke 15. 17.

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17. Will these convictions put us in pain? *Yes:* When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, Acts 2. 37. And bring us to be at a loss within ourselves? *Yes:* Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2. 37. And put us upon inquiry? *Yes:* They shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward, Jer. 50. 5. Are these convictions necessary to prepare us for an invitation to Christ? *Yes:* Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, Mat. 11. 28.

4. Does the Spirit, when he has convinced us of sin and misery, leave us so? *No:* For he has torn, and he will heal us, Hos. 6. 1. When he has shewed us our wound, does he shew us our remedy? *Yes:* O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help, Hos. 13. 9. Does he enlighten our minds? *Yes:* The Spirit of wisdom and revelation is given, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, Eph. 1. 17, 18. Does he enlighten them with the knowledge of Christ? *Yes:* He gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Does he discover to the soul Christ's ability to save? *Yes:* I have laid help upon one that is mighty, Ps. 89. 19. And his willingness to save? *Yes:* I will, be thou clean, Mat. 8. 3. Should we be most ambitious of the knowledge of Christ? *Yes:* Counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, Phil. 3. 8. Does the Spirit direct convinced sinners to Christ? *Yes:* Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, Zech. 9. 12.

5. Is it enough to have the mind enlightened? *No:* For we are called into a professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. 9. 13. Must the will therefore be renewed? *Yes:* For it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13. Is it the work of the Spirit to incline the will to do that which is good? *Yes:* Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, Ps. 119. 36. And is that the renewing of the will? *Yes:* A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, Ezek. 36. 26. Does that make the will pliable? *Yes:* I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, Ezek. 11. 19. Does it bring it into subjection to the will of God? *Yes:* Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Acts 9. 6. And is that a cheerful subjection? *Yes:* Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Rom. 5. 5.

6. Is Christ offered to us in the gospel? *Yes:* Behold, I stand at the door and knock, Rev. 3. 20. Is he freely offered? *Yes:* Come, buy, without money, and without price, Isa. 55. 1. Are we concerned to embrace that offer? *Yes:* Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled, Prov. 9. 5. Are we by nature averse to it? *Yes:* Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life, John. 5. 40. Do sinners perish then through their own wilfulness? *Yes:* I have called, and ye have refused, Prov. 1. 24. Does the Spirit in effectual calling overcome this aversion? *Yes:* With loving kindness have I drawn thee, Jer. 31. 3. Does he persuade us to embrace this offer? *Yes:* For every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John 6. 45. Does he enable us? *Yes:* For you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2. 1.

7. Can we turn to God by any power of our own? *No:* For we are not sufficient of ourselves, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Is it the grace of God that turns us to him? *Yes:* Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, Jer. 31. 18. Is it free grace? *Yes:* He went on frowardly in the way of his heart, I have seen his ways, and will heal him, Isa. 57. 17, 18. Does it turn us by a work upon the will? *Yes:* The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, Acts 16. 14. Is it special grace? *Yes:* It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. 9. 16. Shall this grace be given to all the elect? *Yes:* All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, John 6. 37. Shall it be effectual? *Yes:* His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, 1 Cor. 15. 10. May we in faith pray for this grace? *Yes:* I will for this be inquired of in the house of Israel, Ezek. 36. 37. Can any turn to God without this special grace? *No:* For no man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, John 6. 44. Must that grace therefore have all the glory? *Yes:* We must shew forth the praises of him that hath called us, 1 Pet. 2. 9.

Q. 32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

1. Are all those happy which are effectually called? *Yes:* For God hath called us to his kingdom and glory, 1 Thes. 2. 12. Are they partakers of the blessings of the new covenant? *Yes:* For the promise is sure to all the seed, Rom. 4. 16. Are they happy even in this life? *Yes:* For after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1. 13.

2. Are they dignified and preferred? *Yes:* Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. 2. 9. Are they brought near? *Yes:* Ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh, Eph. 2. 13. Are they enriched? *Yes:* God hath called the poor in this world rich in faith, Jam. 2. 5. Are they taken into the communion of saints? *Yes:* For we are come to the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, Heb. 12. 23. And into communion with the holy angels? *Yes:* For we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. 12. 22. Are they entitled to the best possessions? *Yes:* All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, 1 Cor. 3. 22. Are they happy in the best blessings? *Yes:* The God and Father of our Lord Jesus hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, Eph. 1. 3. Are they happy both for soul and body? *Yes:* He hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Pet. 1. 3.

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3. Are they justified? *Yes:* Whom he called, them he justified, Rom. 8. 30. Is that an unspeakable benefit? *Yes:* Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, Ps. 32. 1. Are they adopted? *Yes:* For he hath predestinated us to the adoption of children, Eph. 1. 5. And is that an unspeakable benefit? *Yes:* For if children, then heirs, Rom. 8. 17. Are they sanctified? *Yes:* They are sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 1. 2. And is that an unspeakable benefit? *Yes:* For we are partakers of his holiness, Heb. 12. 10.

4. Do they partake of other benefits? *Yes:* The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Ps. 84. 11. Are all these benefits given to them that are effectually called? *Yes:* For the promise of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts 2. 39. And shall every thing turn to their advantage? *Yes:* All things work together for good to them that are the called, Rom. 8. 28. Will you therefore make it sure that you are effectually called, by coming at the call? *Yes:* Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God, Jer. 3. 22.

Q. 33. *What is justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

1. Have we all need to be justified? *Yes:* For we are all guilty before God, Rom. 3. 19. Is it enough if we justify ourselves? *No:* If I justify myself my own mouth shall condemn me, Job 9. 20. Is it enough if our neighbours justify us, *No:* For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, Luke 16. 15. Must it be God's act then? *Yes:* It is God that justifieth, Rom. 8. 33. And his only? *Yes:* For none can forgive sins but God only, Mar. 2. 7. And is it an act of free grace? *Yes:* We are justified freely by his grace, Rom. 3. 24.

2. Are all that are justified discharged from the sentence of the law? *Yes:* For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1. Have they their sins pardoned? *Yes:* We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, Eph. 1. 7. Does God forgive them? *Yes:* I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, Isa. 43. 25.

3. When God forgives sin does he forgive all? *Yes:* Having forgiven all your trespasses, Col. 2. 13. Does he forgive even great sins? *Yes:* Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, Isa. 1. 18. Does he forgive many sins? *Yes:* He will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7. Does he forgive freely? *Yes:* I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. Does he forgive fully? *Yes:* Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more, Heb. 8. 12. Is he forward to forgive? *Yes:* I said I will confess, and thou forgavest, Ps. 32. 5. Does he forgive and forget? *Yes:* Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, Mic. 7. 19.

4. Is forgiveness of sins offered to all upon gospel terms? *Yes:* For repentance and remission of sins is preached to all nations, Luke 24. 47. Is it secured to all the chosen remnant? *Yes:* For Christ is exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins, Acts 5. 31. Have all believers their sins pardoned? *Yes:* Through him all that believe are justified, Acts 13. 39. Are they accepted in God's sight? *Yes:* He hath made us accepted in the beloved, Eph. 1. 6. Are they accepted as righteous? *Yes:* For we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21. May those that have been ungodly be thus justified? *Yes:* He justifies the ungodly, Rom. 4. 5.

5. Can we be justified by the covenant of innocency? *No:* For who can say, I have made my heart clean? Prov. 20. 9. Can we be justified by any thing in ourselves? *No:* How can men be justified with God? Job 25. 4. If we know no ill by ourselves, will that justify us? *No:* Though I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, 1 Cor. 4. 4. Will the law of Moses justify us? *No:* We are justified from all those things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts 13. 39. Will our own works justify us? *No:* By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, Rom. 3. 20. Would the ceremonial sacrifices justify men? *No:* They could not make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. 10. 1. Are we justified for the righteousness of Christ! *Yes:* By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, Rom. 5. 19. And for that only? *Yes:* Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, Phil. 3. 9.

6. Is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us for our justification? *Yes:* For He is made of God unto us righteousness, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Did Christ die that it might be imputed? *Yes:* He shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities, Isa. 53. 11. Do we owe our justification then to the death of Christ? *Yes:* The blood of Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John 1. 7. And does that lay the foundation of our salvation? *Yes:* Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath, Rom. 5. 9. Were we justified from eternity? *No:* For in due time Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. 5. 6. If Christ had died, and not risen again, could he have justified us? *No:* For he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, Rom. 4. 25. Is that then our plea and peace and pardon? *Yes:* For who then is he that shall condemn? Rom. 8. 34. May we then depend upon Christ for righteousness? *Yes:* In the Lord I have righteousness and strength, Isa. 45. 24. Is it become an act of justice in God to pardon sin upon the account of Christ's righteousness? *Yes:* For He is Just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus Rom. 3. 26. 1 John 1. 9.

7. Are we to receive the righteousness of Christ? *Yes:* We have now received the atonement, Rom. 5. 11.

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11. Do we receive it by faith? *Yes:* Through his name; whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, Acts 10. 43. And by faith only? *Yes:* For being justified by faith we have peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. Did Christ's death satisfy the law? *Yes:* For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, Gal. 3. 13. Is that then our only righteousness in the law court? *Yes:* For we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. 5. 10. Do we by true faith come up to the terms of the gospel? *Yes:* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts 16. 31. Is that then our righteousness in the gospel court? *Yes:* For to him that believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness, Rom. 4. 5. Is it therefore our life? *Yes:* For the just shall live by his faith, Hab. 2. 4. Is it so as it applies Christ's righteousness? *Yes:* This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. 6.

6. Is justifying faith a working faith? *Yes:* For by works is faith made perfect, Jam. 2. 22. And will that faith justify us which does not produce good works? *No:* For by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, Jam. 2. 24. Is faith then dead without good works? *Yes:* For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also, Jam. 2. 26. And are good works dead without faith? *Yes:* For without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6. Must they both act together then? *Yes:* For that which avails is faith, which works by love, Gal. 5. 6. Do we then make void the law through faith? *No:* God forbid, yea, we establish the law, Rom. 3. 31. Is our faith our own? *No:* It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. Are our good works our own? *No:* For thou also hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. 26. 12. Is any room left for boasting then? *No:* It is excluded by the law of faith, Rom. 3. 27. Must God therefore have all the glory? *Yes:* For by the grace of God I am that I am, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Q. 34. *What is adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

1. Are all believers God's children? *Yes:* Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 26. Are they so by nature? *No:* We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3. Are they so by adoption? *Yes:* We receive the adoption of sons, Gal. 4. 5. Do they deserve to be made God's children? *No:* How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land? Jer. 3. 19. Are they altogether unworthy of such a favour? *Yes:* I am no more worthy to be called thy son, Luke 15. 19. Is it bestowed upon them notwithstanding their unworthiness? *Yes:* I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 18.

2. Is adoption an act of God's free grace? *Yes:* Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, 1. John 3. 1. Are we by it received into the number of God's children? *Yes:* There shall they be called the children of the living God, Rom. 9. 26. Are we received into that number upon our believing? *Yes:* As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, John 1. 12.

3. Have we leave to call God, Father? *Yes:* Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, Rom. 8. 15. Does he encourage us to do so? *Yes:* Thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from me, Jer. 3. 19. May we call him so, though we have been prodigals? *Yes:* I will go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, Luke 15. 18. May we look upon all good Christians as our brethren? *Yes:* For all ye are brethren, Mat. 23. 8. And do they all make one family? *Yes:* Of whom the whole family both in heaven and earth is named, Eph. 3. 15.

4. Does God give the nature of his children to all whom he receives into the number? *Yes:* Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, Gal. 4. 6. Do they partake of a divine nature? *Yes:* They are made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4. Are all God's children born again then? *Yes:* They are born not of the will of man, but of God, John 1. 13. Is our adoption then to be known by our disposition? *Yes:* For in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, 1 John 3. 10.

5. Have all God's adopted children a right to the privileges of children? *Yes:* They are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. 8. 21. Does their father pity them? *Yes:* Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Ps. 103. 13. Does he spare them? *Yes:* As a man spares his own son that serves him, Mal. 3. 17. Does he take care of them? *Yes:* Children, have ye any meat? John 21. 15. Does he provide for them? *Yes:* For they that seek the Lord shall want no good thing, Ps. 34. 10. Does he correct them in love? *Yes:* For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Heb. 12. 7. Does he hear their prayers? *Yes:* Your Father in heaven will give good things to them that ask him, Mat. 7. 11. Will he give them the inheritance of sons? *Yes:* It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luke 12. 32. Will he bring them all safe to it? *Yes:* He will gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad, John 11. 52. Will Christ present them all to the Father? *Yes:* Behold I and the children which thou hast given me, Heb. 2. 13.

6. Must all God's children reverence him? *Yes:* If I be a Father, where is my honour? Mal. 1. 6. Must they obey him? *Yes:* As obedient children, 1 Pet. 1. 14. Must they imitate him? *Yes:* Be ye followers of God, as dear children, Eph. 5. 1. Must they submit to him? *Yes:* Father, thy will be done, Mat. 26. 42.

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Q. 35. *What is sanctification?*

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

1. Are all that are justified sanctified? *Yes:* For Jesus Christ is made both righteousness and sanctification, 1 Cor. 1. 30. Is it necessary they should be so? *Yes:* For without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. Did Christ die, that they might be sanctified? *Yes:* For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, John 17. 19. And was this the intention of their election? *Yes:* He hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification, 2 Thes. 2. 13.

2. Is sanctification the work of God? *Yes:* We are sanctified by God the Father, Jude 1. Is it the work of the Spirit of God? *Yes:* It is sanctification of the Spirit, 1 Pet. 1. 2. Is it a work of free grace? *Yes:* According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3. 5. Is it a work wrought in us? *Yes:* For we are his workmanship, created unto good works, Eph. 2. 10.

3. Is sanctification something more than being civilized? *Yes:* For he is not a Jew, that is one outwardly, Rom. 2. 28. Is it more than being baptized? *Yes:* It is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, 1 Pet. 3. 21. Is it an inward change of the heart? *Yes:* We must be renewed in the spirit of our mind, Eph. 4. 23. Is it the renovation of the whole man? *Yes:* If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Will it suffice to have a new name? *No:* For thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, Rev. 3. 1. Will it suffice to have a new face? *No:* For there are those that have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it, 2 Tim. 3. 5. Must there be a new heart? *Yes:* A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, Ezek. 36. 26. And a new nature? *Yes:* Put on the new man, Eph. 4. 24. And a new birth? *Yes:* Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, John 3. 3.

4. Must we be cleansed from sin? *Yes:* From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you, Ezek. 36. 25. Must we be consecrated to God? *Yes:* For we are the temple of God, 1 Cor. 3. 16. Must the law be written in the heart? *Yes:* I will put my law in their heart, Heb. 8. 10. Must the understanding be enlightened? *Yes:* Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see, Rev. 3. 18. Must the heart be softened? *Yes:* I will take away the stony heart, and give a heart of flesh, Ezek. 11. 19. Must the will be bowed? *Yes:* Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Acts 9. 6. Must the affections be made spiritual? *Yes:* Set your affections on things above, Col. 3. 2. Must the body also be an instrument of holiness? *Yes:* Present your bodies a living sacrifice, Rom. 12. 1.

5. Must we be renewed after the image of God? *Yes:* Put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10. And after the pattern of Christ? *Yes:* For Christ must be formed in us, Gal. 4. 19. Is sin mortified in all that are sanctified? *Yes:* They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, Gal. 5. 24. Is grace planted in them? *Yes:* There is a well of water springing up to eternal life, John 4. 14. Is this work perfect at first? *No:* It is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, Mark 4. 28.

6. Do all that are sanctified die unto sin? *Yes:* Reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin, Rom. 6. 11. Do they live unto righteousness? *Yes:* Being dead to sin, we live unto righteousness, 1 Pet. 2. 24. Are they enabled to do so? *Yes:* For it is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. 8. 13. And is the course of their conversation accordingly? *Yes:* They walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8. 1. Is it our duty to submit to the Spirit as a sanctifier? *Yes:* Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the works of the flesh, Gal. 5. 16. And is the grace of God promised us for this purpose? *Yes:* Sin shall not have dominion over you, Rom. 6. 14.

Q. 37. *What are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

1. Are they that are justified happy in this life? *Yes:* For being justified by faith, we have peace with God, Rom. 5. 1. And are they so that are adopted? *Yes:* Beloved now are we the sons of God, 1 John 3. 2. And are they so that are sanctified? *Yes:* For to the pure all things are pure, Tit. 1. 15.

2. May they have an assurance of God's love? *Yes:* Ye know that ye have eternal life, 1 John 5. 13. Is the Spirit the author of that assurance? *Yes:* The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. 8. 16. Is it wrought by evidences? *Yes:* Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments, 1 John 2. 3. Do all believers attain this assurance? *No:* Some walk in darkness, and have no light, Isa. 50. 10. But should they labour after it? *Yes:* Shew the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end, Heb. 6. 11. And is it an unspeakable comfort? *Yes:* For the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost, Rom. 5. 5. And is it just cause for triumph? *Yes:* I know whom I have believed, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

3. Is peace of conscience a precious privilege? *Yes:* For if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, 1 John 3. 21. Is it the fruit of grace? *Yes:* For the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever, Isa. 32. 17. Has Christ left it as a legacy to his disciples? *Yes:* Peace I leave with you, my

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my peace I give unto you, John 14. 27. Can those who are unjustified have this peace? *No:* There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isa. 57. 21. Should those that are justified labour after it? *Yes:* Return to my rest, O my soul, Psa. 116. 7. Should this peace govern us? *Yes:* Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, Col. 3. 15. And will it preserve us? *Yes:* The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds, Phil. 4. 7. And will it be our comfort in the day of evil? *Yes:* Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Is it therefore our interest to secure it? *Yes:* Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, Acts 24. 16.

4. May those who are justified have joy in the Holy Ghost? *Yes:* For believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Have they cause for joy? *Yes:* For gladness is sown for the upright in heart, Ps. 97. 11. Is it their duty to rejoice? *Yes:* Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice, Phil. 4. 4. Is it their interest to rejoice? *Yes:* For the joy of the Lord is their strength, Neh. 8. 10. May they rejoice in all conditions? *Yes:* For we glory in tribulations also, Rom. 5. 3. And is this a superlative joy? *Yes:* It is gladness in the heart more than in the time that their corn and wine encreased, Ps. 4. 7.

5. Is grace growing? *Yes:* He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job. 17. 9. Is it so in its nature? *Yes:* For it is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day, Pro. 4. 18. Is it our duty to grow in grace? *Yes:* Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 18. And may we rest in what we have attained? *No:* But press forward towards the mark, Phil. 3. 14. Is it promised to all believers that they shall grow? *Yes:* For to him that hath shall be given, Mat. 25. 29. Will the grace of God make them grow? *Yes:* I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lilly, Hos. 14. 5.

6. Shall true believers persevere to the end? *Yes:* For he that hath begun a good work will perform it, Phil. 1. 6. Will hypocrites persevere? *No:* These have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away, Luke 8. 13. Does it appear by their apostacy that they never were sincere? *Yes:* They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would of no doubt have continued with us, 1 John 2. 19. But shall any that are justified finally fall away? *No:* For whom he justified, them he glorified, Rom. 8. 30. Is every fall a falling away? *No:* For though he falls, he shall not be utterly cast down, Ps. 37. 24. May the appearances of grace be lost? *Yes:* From him shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have, Luke 8. 18. But can true grace be finally lost? *No:* It is that good part which shall never be taken away, Luke 10. 42. Will God recal his gifts? *No:* The gifts and callings of God are without repentance, Rom. 11. 29. Will he secure them? *Yes:* We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and 5. 7. Is the perseverance of the saints secured by the divine power? *Yes:* No man is able to pluck them out of my father's hands, John 10. 29. And by the divine providence? *Yes:* For he will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And by the divine grace? *Yes:* I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. 32. 40. And by the intercession of Christ? *Yes:* I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, Luke 22. 32. And by the indwelling of the Spirit? *Yes:* The anointing which you have received, abideth in you, 1 John 2. 27. And by the stability of the promise? *Yes:* My covenant will I not break, Ps. 89. 34. May they be secure then? *No:* Be not high-minded, but fear, Rom. 11. 20. But may they be encouraged? *Yes:* He will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. 4. 18.

Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

1. Is the happiness of believers confined to this present life? *No:* If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. 15. 19. Is the best of their happiness in this life? *No:* For in the world ye shall have the tribulation, John 16. 33. Must they die as well as others? *Yes:* It is appointed unto men once to die, Heb. 9. 27. Must the best and most useful die? *Yes:* The righteous perisheth, and merciful men are taken away, Isa. 57. 1. Ought they then to wait for it? *Yes:* All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change comes, Job 14. 14. And to prepare for it? *Yes:* Therefore be ye also ready, Mat. 24. 44.

2. Is death loss to a good christian? *No:* For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Phil. 1. 21. Should it therefore be a terror? *No:* For the righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. 14. 32. Does God take special care of the death of his people? *Yes:* For precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, Ps. 116. 15. Is death in the covenant? *Yes:* All is yours, whether life or death, 1 Cor. 3. 22. Can it separate them from the love of God? *No:* Neither death nor life can do that, Rom. 8. 38.

3. Are believers perfect in holiness in this Life? *No:* I have not yet attained, neither am already perfect, Phil. 3. 12. Are their souls made perfect at death? *Yes:* The spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb. 12. 23. Are they delivered from sin? *Yes:* He that is dead is freed from sin, Rom. 6. 7. Are they made perfect in knowledge? *Yes:* Then shall I know, even as also I am known, 1 Cor. 13. 12. And perfect in holiness? *Yes:* For they are come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. 4. 13. Might they pass into glory without being made perfect in holiness? *No:* For corruption cannot inherit incorruption, 1 Cor. 15. 50.

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Being made perfect in holiness, are they confirmed in it? *Yes:* He that is holy, let him be holy still, Rev. 22. 11.

4. Do the souls of believers at death sleep with their bodies? *No:* For when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 8. Do they go to Christ? *Yes:* Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, Phil. 1. 23. And will he receive them? *Yes:* Lord Jesus receive my spirit, Acts 7. 59. Shall they be where he is? *Yes:* That where I am, there ye may be also, John 14. 3. Will they be with him in heaven? *Yes:* We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 1. Do they pass into this glory at death? *Yes:* That when ye fail ye may be received into everlasting habitations, Luke 16. 9. Do they immediately pass into it? *Yes:* This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, Luke 23. 43. Are they guarded by angels thither? *Yes:* He was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke 16. 22. Are they happy then in their death? *Yes:* Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, Rev. 14. 13. Happier than in life? *Yes:* The day of their death is better than the day of their birth, Ecc. 7. 1. And is their end peace? *Yes:* Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, Ps. 37. 37.

5. Is death gain to the wicked man? *No:* For when a wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish, Pro. 11. 7. Is it therefore a terror to the wicked? *Yes:* This night thy soul shall be required of thee, Luke 12. 20. Do the souls of the wicked at death go into torment? *Yes:* The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, Luke 16. 22, 23. Do they go away under the guilt of their sins? *Yes:* If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, John 8. 24. Is it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? *Yes:* For our God is a consuming fire, Heb. 12. 29. Are the souls of believers distinguished from them? *Yes:* But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, Ps. 49. 15.

6. Are the bodies of believers well provided for at death? *Yes:* For the Lord is for the body, 1 Cor. 6. 13. May they be cheerfully committed to the grave? *Yes:* My flesh also shall rest in hope, Ps. 16. 9. Do they still remain united to Christ? *Yes:* For they sleep in Jesus, 1 Thes. 4. 14. Do they rest in their graves? *Yes:* For there the weary be at rest, Job 3. 17. Is the grave a good christian's bed? *Yes:* He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, Isa. 57. 2. May the saints triumph over the grave then? *Yes:* O Grave where is thy victory? 1 Cor. 15. 55 And need they to fear no evil in it? *No:* For the sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp, Isa. 11. 8. Are all who are regenerate delivered from the second death? *Yes:* Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power, Rev. 20. 6.

7. Shall the dead be raised again? *Yes:* There shall be a resurrection of the dead both of the just, and of the unjust, Acts 24. 15. Shall the same body be raised again? *Yes:* Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Job 19. 26. Shall it be done by the power of Christ? *Yes:* For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 Cor. 15. 22. Shall there be a vast difference between the godly and the wicked at the resurrection? *Yes:* For some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. 12. 2. Has Christ himself assured us of this? *Yes:* The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation, John 5. 28, 29. Is it certain when this shall be? *Yes:* For he hath appointed a day, Acts 17. 31. But is it known to us? *No:* For of that day and hour knoweth no man, Mark 13. 32.

Q. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

1. Shall the dead bodies of believers be raised? *Yes:* For the dead shall be raised, 1 Cor. 15. 52. Is it possible that the same body should return to life again? *Yes:* Why should it seem a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Acts 26. 8. Is it certain that they shall be raised? *Yes:* For if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen, 1. Cor. 15. 13. Has Christ undertaken for the resurrection of believers? *Yes:* I am the resurrection and the life, John 11. 25. Are they in error who deny it? *Yes:* Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, Mat. 22. 29.

2. Shall the believer's body be raised up in glory? *Yes:* It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory, 1. Cor. 15. 43. Shall it be the glory of Christ's glorified body? *Yes:* He shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. 3. 21. Shall they be raised by virtue of their union with Christ? *Yes:* Together with my dead body shall they arise, Isa. 26. 19. Shall they be raised to such a life as we now live? *No:* For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, Mat. 22. 30. Shall they be raised to an immortal life? *Yes:* For this mortal must put on immortality, 1 Cor. 15. 53. Shall they that are found alive be changed? *Yes:* Behold, I shew you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1 Cor. 15. 51.

3. Shall all the saints at that day be brought to Jesus Christ? *Yes:* At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there shall be a gathering together unto him, 2 Thes. 2. 1. Shall they be separated from the wicked? *Yes:* As the Shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, Mat. 25. 32. Shall all the saints be then together? *Yes:* For he shall gather his elect from the four winds, Mat. 24. 31. And none but saints? *Yes:* For he

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he shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, Mat. 13. 41. And saints made perfect? *Yes:* For then that which is perfect is come, 1 Cor. 13. 10. Shall they attend upon Christ at his coming? *Yes:* Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, Jude 14. Shall they be assessors with him in his judgment? *Yes*: For the saints shall judge the world, 1 Cor. 6. 2.

4. Shall they be openly acknowledged in the day of judgment? *Yes:* Him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven, Mat. 10. 32. Will God own them as his own? *Yes:* They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels, Mal. 3. 17. And will that be their honour? *Yes:* If any man serve me, him will my Father honour, John 12. 26. Shall they be openly acquitted? *Yes:* For their sins shall be blotted out when the times of refreshing come, Acts 3. 19.

5. Shall the wicked be condemned then? *Yes:* He shall say to them on his left hand, depart from me. Shall they be sent away with a blessing? *No:* Depart ye cursed. Shall they go into a place of ease? *No:* into fire. Into ordinary fire? *No:* Into fire prepared. Shall it be for a short time? *No:* But into everlasting fire. Shall they have good company? *No:* But the Devil and his angels, Mat. 25. 41. Will the salvation of the saints aggravate their condemnation? *Yes:* For they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, Luke 13. 28.

6. Shall the saints at the day of judgment be put in possession of eternal life? *Yes:* The righteous into life eternal, Mat. 25. 46. Shall they be blest? *Yes:* Come ye blessed of my Father, Mat. 25. 34. Shall they be perfectly blessed? *Yes:* For in thy presence is fulness of joy, Ps. 16. 11. Shall there be any sin in heaven? *No:* For they are as the angels of God in heaven, Mat. 22. 30. Shall there be any sorrow there? *No:* For God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. 21. 4. Shall there be any dying there? *No:* There shall be no more death, Rev. 21. 4.

7. Is heaven a place of rest? *Yes:* There remaineth a rest for the people of God, Heb. 4. 9. Is it light? *Yes:* It is the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. 1. 12. Is it honour? *Yes:* It is a crown of glory that fades not away, 1 Pet. 5. 4. Is it wealth? *Yes:* It is an inheritance incorruptible, 1 Pet. 1. 4. Is it joy? *Yes:* Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, Mat. 25. 21.

8. Shall we in heaven see God? *Yes:* When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3. 2. Shall we see him clearly? *Yes:* Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, 1 Cor. 13. 12. Shall we enjoy him? *Yes:* God himself shall be with them, and be their God, Rev. 21. 3. Shall we be satisfied in the vision and fruition of God? *Yes:* I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, Ps. 17. 15. Shall this be everlasting? *Yes:* So shall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Thes. 4. 17.

9. Is this happiness purchased? *Yes:* It is the purchased possession, Eph. 1. 14. Is it promised? *Yes:* It is eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised, Tit. 1. 2. Is it sure to all good christians? *Yes:* Even the poor in the world, if rich in faith, are heirs of the kingdom Jam. 2. 5. Should we not be solicitous that it may be sure with us? *Yes:* What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? Luke 18. 18. Should we not then have it much in our eye? *Yes:* For we look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, 2 Cor. 4. 18. And should we not be comforted and encouraged with the prospect of it? *Yes:* For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed, Rom. 8. 18.

Q. 39. *What is the duty which God requires of man?*

A. The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.

1. Does God require duty of men? *Yes:* Now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, Deut. 10. 12. Of every man? *Yes:* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, Mat 13. 9. Has he authority to require duty? *Yes:* If I be a master, where is my fear? Mal. 1. 6. Is it fit he should rule us? *Yes:* For we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture, Ps. 100. 3. Is it fit we should obey him? *Yes:* For the borrower is the servant to the lender, and the fool is servant to the wise in heart, Prov. 22. 7. 11. 29. Ought we therefore to enquire what our duty is? *Yes:* Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, Ps. 119. 33.

2. Has God made known his will concerning our duty? *Yes:* He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel, Ps. 147. 19. Are we to obey it? *Yes:* Thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments, Deut. 27. 10. Is that obedience the condition of our acceptance? *Yes:* Obey my voice, and I will be your God, Jer. 7. 23. Is obedience to God reasonable? *Yes:* It is our reasonable service, Rom. 12. 1. Is it easy? *Yes:* For his commandments are not grievous, 1 John 5. 3. And will it be acceptable? *Yes:* For to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15. 22.

3. Must our obedience to God be sincere? *Yes:* Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth, Josh. 24. 14. Must it be universal? *Yes:* Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, Ps. 119. 6. Must it be with delight? *Yes:* I delight in the law of God after the inward man, Rom. 7. 22. Must it be constant? *Yes:* Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, Prov. 23. 17. Must God's commands take place of mens? *Yes:* We ought to obey God rather than man, Acts 5. 29. and 4. 19.

4. Should we therefore labour to know the will of God? *Yes:* Understand what the will of the Lord is, Eph. 5. 17. Are we to study his secret will? *No:* For secret things belong not to us. But his revealed will? *Yes:* For things revealed belong to us, and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law, Deut. 29. 29. Is obedience to God's revealed will the whole duty of man? *Yes:* Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his com-

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commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, Ecc. 12. 13.

Q. 40. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience.*

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

1. Was the moral law revealed to man in innocency? *Yes:* For God created man in his own image, Gen. 1. 27. Is it written in the heart of man? *Yes:* They shew the work of the law written in their heart, Rom. 2. 15. Is there then a law of nature? *Yes:* Doth not even nature itself teach you? 1 Cor. 11. 14. Is that a law of God? *Yes:* For he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, Job 33. 16. Does natural conscience enforce that law? *Yes:* For the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, Rom. 2. 14. Did the Gentiles sin by the breach of that law? *Yes:* What they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves, Jude 10. And will they be punished for the breach of it? *Yes:* They that have sinned without law, shall perish without law, Rom. 2. 12.

2. Has God given us the moral law more fully? *Yes:* I have written unto them the great things of my law, Hos. 8. 12. Are we under that law as a covenant? *No:* For a man is not justified by the works of the law, Gal. 2. 16. Are we under it as a rule? *Yes:* We are under the law to Christ, 1 Cor. 9. 21.

3. Is the law of God very extensive? *Yes:* Thy commandment is exceeding broad, Ps. 119. 96. And very excellent? *Yes:* The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good, Rom. 7. 12. Is it admirable? *Yes:* Thy testimonies are wonderful, Ps. 119. 129. Is any thing unjust in it? *No:* I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, Ps. 119. 128. Is it beyond any other law? *Yes:* What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, Deut. 4. 8.

4. Does the law of God bind the inward man? *Yes:* For the law is spiritual, Rom. 7. 14. Does it forbid heart-sins? *Yes:* Wash thy heart from wickedness, Jer. 4. 14. Does it require heart-service? *Yes:* My son, give me thy heart, Pro. 23. 26. Does the law shew us our way? *Yes:* It is a light to our feet, Ps. 119. 105. Does it discover sin to us? *Yes:* By the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3. 20. Does it warn us concerning sin and duty? *Yes:* By them is thy servant warned, Ps. 19. 11. Does it shew us the need of Christ? *Yes:* The law was our school-master, to bring us to Christ, Gal. 3. 24. And Does Christ do that for us which the law could not? *Yes:* Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, Rom. 10. 4.

5. Ought we to love the law of God? *Yes:* I love thy commandments above gold, Ps. 119. 127. And to consult it upon all occasions? *Yes:* Thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors, v. 24. And to confirm it? *Yes:* We must walk in the law of the Lord, v. 1.

Q. 41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

1. Was the moral law in force before the ten commandments were given? *Yes:* For Abraham commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. Was it at last summed up in these commandments? *Yes:* For the law was given by Moses, John 1. 17. Was the law of the ten commandments given first to Israel? *Yes:* He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts to the children of Israel, Ps. 103. 7. But are they binding to us now? *Yes:* For Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil, Mat. 5. 17.

2. Did God himself give these commandments? *Yes:* From his right hand went a fiery law for them, Deut. 33. 2. Did God himself speak to them? *Yes:* Thou camest down upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, Neh. 9. 13. Did he use the ministry of angels therein? *Yes:* They received the law by the disposition of angels, Acts 7. 53. Did God himself write them? *Yes:* He gave unto Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God, Ex. 31. 18.

3. Was the law given with much terror? *Yes:* For it was given upon a mount that burnt with fire, and with blackness, and darkness, and tempest. Heb. 12. 18. Was the sight terrible to Moses himself? *Yes:* For he said, I exceedingly fear and quake, Heb. 12. 21. Did it strike an awe upon the people? *Yes:* For they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient, Ex. 24. 7. And should not we be awed by the consideration of it? *Yes:* Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Did the ten commandments include the whole moral law? *Yes:* If thou wilt enter into life, keep these commandments, Mat. 19. 17.

Q. 42. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

1. Is all the law summed up in a word? *Yes:* All the law is fulfilled in one word, Gal. 5. 14. Is that a short and sweet word? *Yes:* For it is love; love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. 13. 10.

2. Is it our duty to love God? *Yes:* Take good heed to yourselves that ye love the Lord your God, Josh. 23. 11. Must we love him with a sincere love? *Yes:* Grace be with them that love him in sincerity, Eph. 6. 24. And with a strong love? *Yes:* My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, Ps. 42. 2. And with a superlative love? *Yes:* There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, Ps. 73. 25. And is all this included in the first and great commandment? *Yes:* Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this

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this is the first and great commandment, Mat. 22. 37, 38. And is this the sum of our duty to God? *Yes:* For if any man love God, the same is known of him, 1 Cor. 8. 3. Must those who love God be careful to please him? *Yes:* For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, 1 John. 5. 3. And must they be afraid to offend him? *Yes:* Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, Ps. 97. 10.

3. Is there good reason why we should thus love God? *Yes:* Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, Deut. 11. 1. For is he most lovely in himself? *Yes:* God is love, 1 John 4. 8. And most loving to us? *Yes:* We love him because he first loved us, 1 John 4. 19. Will he return our love? *Yes:* I love those that love me, Pro. 8. 17. Will he reward it in this world? *Yes:* All things shall work together for good to them that love God, Rom. 8. 28. And in the other world? *Yes:* For eye hath not seen what God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Will you then love God above all? *Yes:* I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, Ps. 18. 1. And pray to God to give you grace to love him? *Yes:* The Lord direct our hearts into his love, 2 Thes. 3. 5.

4. Is it our duty to love our neighbour too? *Yes:* He that loveth God, must love his brother also, 1 John 4. 21. Can we pretend to love God, if we do not love our neighbour? *No:* He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen, 1 John 4. 20. Is this the fulfilling of the law? *Yes:* All is comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, Rom. 13. 9. James 2. 8. Gal. 5. 14. Is it the second great commandment? *Yes:* The second is like unto it? Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, Mat. 22. 39. Is it an old commandment? *Yes:* Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, I am the Lord, Lev. 19. 18. Is it a new commandment? *Yes:* A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, John 13. 34.

5. Must we have a respect for all men? *Yes:* Honour all men, 1 Pet. 2. 17. Especially for all good men? *Yes:* We must honour them that fear the Lord, Ps. 15. 4. Must we esteem one another? *Yes:* Let each esteem other better than themselves, Phil. 2. 3. Must we sympathise with one another? *Yes:* Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep, Rom. 12. 15. Must we please one another? *Yes:* For even Christ pleased not himself, Rom. 15. 2, 3. Must we help one another? *Yes:* Bear ye one another's burthens, Gal. 6. 2. Must we do good to one another? *Yes:* As we have opportunity we must do good to all men, Gal. 6. 10. Must we pray for one another? *Yes:* Pray one for another that ye may be healed, James 5. 16. Must we love even our enemies? *Yes:* Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, Mat. 5. 44.

6. Must you hurt no-body in word or deed? *No:* A citizen of Sion doth not evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour, Ps. 15. 3. Must you be true and just in all your dealings? *Yes:* That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, Deut. 16. 20. Must you bear no malice or hatred in your heart? *No:* For whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John 3. 15.

7. Are we to love our neighbour as ourselves? *Yes:* For we are members one of another, Eph. 4. 25. As truly as we love ourselves? *Yes:* Let love be without dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9. And as fruitfully? *Yes:* Not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, 1 Cor. 10. 33. And as constantly as we love ourselves? *Yes:* Let brotherly love continue, Heb. 13. 1. Ought we therefore to do as we would be done by? *Yes:* Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, Mat. 7. 12. Should we in our places promote Christian love? *Yes:* For every one that loveth is born of God, 1 John 4. 7. And will this be our comfort? *Yes:* Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you, 2 Cor. 13. 11.

Q. 43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*
A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. Did God himself speak the ten commandments? *Yes:* God spake all these words, saying, Exod. 20. 1. Was it fit they should be introduced with a solemn preface? *Yes:* Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, Isa. 1. 2. Did he therein assert his own authority? *Yes:* I am the Lord thy God. Did he remind them of the great things he had lately done for them? *Yes:* I am the Lord thy God, from the land of Egypt, Hos. 12. 9.

2. Was the condition of Israel in Egypt very miserable? *Yes:* For the Egyptians made them to serve with rigour, Exod. 1. 13. Did God bring them out of Egypt? *Yes:* He brought Israel from among them, for his mercy endureth for ever, Ps. 136. 11. Did he do it miraculously? *Yes:* With a strong hand, and a stretched-out arm, for his mercy endureth for ever, v. 12. Did this oblige them to keep his commandments? *Yes:* When I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I said, Obey my voice, Jer. 7. 22, 23. But does this concern us? *Yes:* For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, Heb. 4. 2. For is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? *Yes:* Of the Gentiles also, Rom. 3. 29.

Q. 44. *What does the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*
A. The preface to the ten commandments teaches us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all God's commandments.

1. Is God the Lord Jehovah? *Yes:* I am the Lord, that is my name, Isa. 42. 8. Is that a reason why we should keep his commandments? *Yes:* Ye shall observe all my statutes, and do them, I am the Lord, Lev. 19. 37. Is he our God? *Yes:* He is thy praise, and he is thy God, Deut. 10. 21. Is that a reason why we should keep his commandments? *Yes:* For all

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people will walk every one in the name of their God, Mic. 4. 5. Ps. 95. 7.

2. Is he our Redeemer? *Yes:* Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Isa. 63. 16. Has he redeemed us from outward troubles? *Yes:* Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, Josh. 14. 10. And are we therefore bound to keep his commandments? *Yes:* Truly, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds, Ps. 116. 16. And are we very ungrateful if we do not? *Yes:* Now thou hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments? Ezra 9. 13, 14.

3. Has God brought us out of a spiritual Egypt? *Yes:* For Christ proclaims liberty to the captives, Isa. 61. 1. Are we delivered from the bonds of sin? *Yes:* He shall redeem Israel from all their iniquities, Ps. 130. 8. And is our deliverance by Christ greater than their's out of Egypt? *Yes:* For if the Son make you free, then you shall be free indeed, John 8. 36. And are we therefore bound to keep all his commandments? *Yes:* For we are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him, Luke 1. 74, 75. And was this the design of our redemption? *Yes:* He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, Tit. 2. 14. Is there then all the reason in the world why we should be religious? *Yes:* Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, Isa. 1. 18.

Q. 45. *What is the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

1. Is it an essential duty of religion to worship God? *Yes:* For those have no hope that are without God in the world, Eph. 2. 12. Are we concerned to be right in the object of our worship? *Yes:* We must know what we worship, John 4. 22. Does the first commandment direct us in this? *Yes:* For the first of all the commandments is this, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Mark 12. 29.

2. Does God lay a great stress upon our having him for our God? *Yes:* Hear, O my people, and I will speak, I am God, even thy God, Ps. 50. 7. And upon our having him only? *Yes:* Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee; there shall no strange God be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange God, Ps. 81. 8, 9. Did Israel need this commandment? *Yes:* For their fathers served other Gods, Josh. 24. 2. And were they tempted to serve other Gods? *Yes:* The Gods of the people that were round about them, Deut. 13. 7.

Q. 46. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

1. Does that which forbids to have any other Gods, require us to have the true God? *Yes:* Put away the strange Gods, and serve the Lord only, 1 Sam. 7. 3, 4. Is it our duty to acknowledge God? *Yes:* The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God, 1 Kings 18. 39. And must we acknowledge him to be the only true God? *Yes:* Thou art the God, even Thou alone, 2 Kings 19. 15.

2. Is it our duty to acquaint ourselves with him? *Yes:* Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, Job 22. 21. Must we grow in that acquaintance? *Yes:* Increasing in the knowledge of God, Col. 1. 10. And may we attain to it? *Yes:* Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, Hos. 6. 3.

3. Must we accept of God for our God? *Yes:* Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, Deut. 26. 17, 18. And must we join ourselves to him? *Yes:* Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, Jer. 50. 5. And consent to be his? *Yes:* O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, Ps. 116. 16. Must we take God the Father to be our chief good and highest end? *Yes:* O God, thou art my God, Ps. 63. 1. And God the Son to be our Prince and Saviour? *Yes:* My Lord and my God, John 20. 28. And God the Holy Ghost to be our sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter? *Yes:* For they that are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, Rom. 8. 14. Must we renounce all others? *Yes:* For by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. 26. 13. Must we do this deliberately? *Yes:* Chuse ye this day whom ye will serve, Josh. 24. 15. Must we do it solemnly? *Yes:* One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, Isa. 44. 5. Must we do it resolutely? *Yes:* Nay, but we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 21. May we be at liberty to change our Master? *No:* But with purpose of heart must cleave to the Lord, Acts 11. 23.

4. When we have avouched the Lord for our God, must we apply ourselves to him? *Yes:* If the Lord be God, then follow him, 1 Kings 18. 21. Must we glorify him accordingly? *Yes:* Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, Ps. 29. 2. Must we worship him? *Yes:* Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Mat. 4. 10. Must we worship him with inward worship? *Yes:* We must serve him with our spirits, Rom. 1. 9. Is that the worship he requires? *Yes:* For such the Father seeks to worship him, John 4. 23.

5. Must we remember God? *Yes:* Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, Ecc. 12. 1. And think of him with delight? *Yes:* My meditation of him shall be sweet, Ps. 104. 34. Must we adore and admire him? *Yes:* Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Exod. 15. 11. Must we fear him above all? *Yes:* Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, Isa. 8. 13. And reverence him? *Yes:* He is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him, Ps. 89. 7. Must we submit to his word? *Yes:* Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears, 1 Sam. 3. 9. And submit to his will? *Yes:* It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, v. 18.

6. Must we love God above all? *Yes:* O love the Lord all ye his saints, Ps. 31. 23. Must our desire be towards him? *Yes:* So panteth my soul after thee, O God, Ps. 42.

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Ps. 42. 1. Must our delight be in him? *Yes:* Delight thyself always in the Lord, Ps. 37. 4. Must our dependance be upon him? *Yes:* In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, Ps. 31. 1.

7. Must we live a life of communion with God? *Yes:* Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, Ps. 25. 15. And a life of complacency in him? *Yes:* Rejoice in the Lord always, Phil. 4. 4. And a life of conformity to him? *Yes:* Be ye holy, for I am holy, 1 Pet. 1. 16. And a life of confidence in him: *Yes:* Commit thy way unto the Lord, Ps. 37. 5. And a life of regard to him? *Yes:* In all thy ways acknowledge him, Pro. 3. 6. Must our hearts go out towards him? *Yes:* Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Ps. 25. 1. And must we have him always in our eye? *Yes:* I have set the Lord always before me, Ps. 16. 8. And must we walk with him in the whole course of our conversation? *Yes:* As Enoch walked with God, Gen. 5. 24. And is this inward worship the life of religion? *Yes:* It is better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, Mark 12. 33.

Q. 47. *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.

1. Is it a great sin to deny the Being of God? *Yes:* The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, Ps. 14. 1. Or to deny his omniscience? *Yes:* They say, the Lord shall not see, Ps. 94. 7. Or to deny his justice? *Yes:* He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it, Ps. 10. 13. Or his holiness? *Yes:* Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself, Ps. 50. 21. Or his goodness? *Yes:* I knew thee to be a hard man, Mat. 25. 24. Or his faithfulness? *Yes:* Where is the promise of his coming? 2 Pet. 3. 4. Is it a sin to question God's providence? *Yes:* Is the Lord among us? Or is he not? Exod. 17. 7. Or to question his power? *Yes:* Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Ps. 78. 19. And is there such a thing as practical atheism? *Yes:* They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, Tit. 1. 16.

2. Is it a great sin to be ignorant of God? *Yes:* Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak it to your shame, 1 Cor. 15. 34. Is it a damning sin? *Yes:* He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, 2 Thess. 1. 8. Is it the cause of all other sins? *Yes:* There is neither truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, in the land, Hos. 4. 1. Is it a great sin to forget God? *Yes:* Thou hast forgotten the God that formed thee, Deut. 32. 18. And to cast off the fear of him? *Yes:* There is no fear of God before his eyes, Ps. 36. 1. And to live without prayer? *Yes:* Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, Isa. 43. 22. And not to glorify him? *Yes:* The God in whose hand thy breath is, hast thou not glorified, Dan. 5. 23.

3. Is all distrust of God a sin? *Yes:* The evil heart of unbelief departs from the living God, Heb. 3. 12. And tempting God? *Yes:* Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, Mat. 4. 7. And all the coldness of our love to him? *Yes:* But their heart is far from me, Mat. 15. 8. Does this commandment forbid all ungodliness? *Yes:* For the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, Rom. 1. 18. And all idolatry? *Yes:* Little children, keep yourselves from idols, 1 John 5. 21.

4. Had the Gentiles other Gods besides the true God? *Yes:* They had Gods many, and Lords many, 1 Cor. 8. 5. And were those Gods devils? *Yes:* They sacrificed to devils, and not to God, 1 Cor. 10. 20. May we have communion with them? *No:* I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. 10. 20. Have those fellowship with them who consult with witches? *Yes:* Is it because there is not a God in Israel, that thou goest to enquire of Beelzebub, the God of Ekron, 2 Kings 1. 3. Did the Gentiles multiply their Gods? *Yes:* According to the number of thy cities are thy Gods, Jer. 2. 28. Were they Gods of their own making? *Yes:* And they that make them are like unto them, Ps. 115. 8. Was not that a great affront to the living God? *Yes:* They changed the truth of God into a lie, Rom. 1. 25.

5. Is there not such a thing as spiritual idolatry? *Yes:* These men have set up their idols in their hearts, Ezek. 14. 4. Is it idolatry to make a God of our appetites? *Yes:* Whose God is their belly, Phil. 3. 19. Or a God of our money? *Yes:* For covetousness is idolatry, Col. 3. 5. May we give that respect to any creature which is due to God alone? *No:* For his glory he will not give to another, Isa. 42. 8. Is it therefore a sin to love them more than God? *Yes:* He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, Mat. 10. 37. And to trust in them? *Yes:* Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, Jer. 17. 5. Is this spiritual adultery? *Yes:* She went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the Lord, Hos. 2. 13.

Q. 48. *What are we especially taught by these words, [before me,] in the first commandment?*

A. These words, [Before me,] in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

1. Are we always in God's sight? *Yes:* Thou knowest my down-setting, and my up-rising, Ps. 139. 2. Are all our actions in his sight? *Yes:* All my ways are before thee, Ps. 119. 168. Does he take notice of them? *Yes:* He pondereth all our goings, Pro. 5. 21.

2. Are all our good works before him? *Yes:* I know thy work, and thy labour, and thy patience, Rev. 2. 2. Does he know all our inward worship of him? *Yes:* The Lord hearkened, and heard those that thought on his name, Mal. 3. 16. And should that encourage us to have him for our God? *Yes:* For your Father sees in secret, and will reward openly, Mat. 6. 4.

3. Are all our evil works before him? *Yes:* He sets our iniquities before him, Ps. 90. 8. Is the having of other Gods oftentimes a secret sin? *Yes:* They do it in the dark, and say, The Lord sees us not, Ex. 8. 12.

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But does God see it? *Yes:* He that formed the eye shall he not see? Ps. 94. 9. Does he take notice of all our neglects of him? *Yes:* If we have forgotten the name of our God he knows it. And does he take notice of all our inclinations to other Gods? *Yes:* If we have stretched out our hands to a strange God, shall not God search this out? Ps. 44. 20, 21. And is he much displeased with secret idolatry? *Yes:* Seest thou the great abominations that they commit? Ezek. 8. 6. And should this oblige us to be faithful to him? *Yes:* For the Lord searcheth all hearts, 1 Chron. 28. 9.

Q. 49. *What is the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath; or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

1. Does the second commandment concern the ordinances of God's worship, at the first object of it? *Yes:* Therefore ye shall keep mine ordinances, Lev. 18. 10. Was it requisite there should be a law concerning them? *Yes:* Lest ye say, How did these nations serve their Gods? So will I do likewise, Deut. 12. 30. Is this binding to us now? *Yes:* Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry, 1 Cor. 10. 14. Are we Christians forbidden to worship images? *Yes:* That they should not worship idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, Rev. 9. 20.

2. Does this commandment forbid the making of images for a religious use? *Yes:* Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image, Deut. 27. 15. Does it forbid the making an image of what is in heaven above? *Yes:* Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, shouldest be driven to worship them, Deut. 4. 19. Or on earth beneath? *Yes:* As they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox, Ps. 106. 20. Or in the waters under the earth? *Yes:* As they made the likeness of creeping things, Rom. 1. 23.

3. Does it forbid us to bow down to them? *Yes:* Shall I bow down to the stock of a tree? Isa. 44. 19. Or to worship them? *Yes:* Thou shalt worship no other God, Ex. 34. 14. Or to shew any respect to them? *Yes:* I will take away the names of Baalim out of their mouth, Hos. 2. 17. Was it requisite this commandment should be thus enlarged? *Yes:* Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, Isa. 28. 10. And that it should be backed with many reasons? *Yes:* For they are mad upon their idols, Jer. 50. 38.

Q. 50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his word.

1. Is it our duty solemnly to worship God? *Yes:* Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Mat. 4. 10. Do we thereby honour him: *Yes:* We give unto him the glory due unto his name, Ps. 29. 2. Does the light of nature teach us to worship God? *Yes:* They cried every man unto his God, Jon. 1. 5. But does it teach us sufficiently how to worship him? *No:* Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Acts 17. 23. Has God in his word appointed us in what way to worship him? *Yes:* For this was ordained in Joseph for a testimony, Ps. 81. 5. And must we worship him in the appointed way? *Yes:* See thou make all things according to the pattern shewed thee, Heb. 8. 5.

2. Are we to receive such ordinances as God has appointed? *Yes:* The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey, Josh. 24. 24. Should we labour to understand them? *Yes:* What mean ye by this service? Ex. 12. 26. And are we to observe them? *Yes:* Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Mat. 28. 20. And to observe them duly? *Yes:* As the duty of every day requires, Ezra 3. 4.

3. Are we to keep God's ordinances? *Yes:* That good thing which was committed to thee, keep, 2 Tim. 1. 14. Are we to keep them carefully? *Yes:* Keep them as the apple of thine eye, Pro. 7. 2. Must we keep them pure without corruption? *Yes:* Add thou not to his words, Pro. 30. 6. And entire, without diminution? *Yes:* We must walk in all the ordinances of the Lord, Luke 1. 6. May we neither add nor diminish? *No:* Thou shalt neither add thereto, nor diminish from it, Deut. 12. 32.

4. Must we worship God in the Spirit? *Yes:* We are the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, Phil. 3. 3. Must we be inward with God in every service? *Yes:* For bodily exercise profiteth little, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Is ignorance the mother of devotion? *No:* For if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? Mal. 1. 8. Is it the mother of destruction? *Yes:* My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Hos. 4. 6.

5. Ought we to have an eye to the word of God in our religious worship? *Yes:* For whatsoever is not of faith is sin, Rom. 14. 23. And to glorify God in it? *Yes:* I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, Lev. 10. 3. And ought we to shun all idolatrous worships? *Yes:* For I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. 10. 20.

Q. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

1. Is it a sin to worship the true God by images? *Yes:* For it changes the truth of God into a lie, Rom. 1. 25. Are not images laymen's books? *No:* For an image is a teacher of lies, Hab. 2. 18. Is it possible to make an image of God? *No:* We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device, Acts 17. 29. Do we know what to represent God by? *No:* To whom then will ye liken God? Isa. 40. 18. Do they that pretend to

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to it put a great affront upon him? *Yes:* For they change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, Rom. 1. 23.

2. May we worship Christ by an image? *No:* For though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more, 2 Cor. 5. 16. Is it idolatry to worship the consecrated host? *Yes:* For it is bread which we break, 1 Cor. 10. 16. Is it idolatry to pray to saints and angels? *Yes:* See thou do it not, but worship God, Rev. 19. 10. and 22. 9.

3. Must we be careful to avoid all appearances of idolatry? *Yes:* Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves, Deut. 4. 15. Should we chuse to die rather than worship images? *Yes:* But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Dan. 3. 18.

4. Is it a sin to worship God in any way not appointed in his word? *Yes*: In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, Mat. 15. 9. May we ourselves invent ordinances of worship? *No:* They went a whoring with their own inventions, Ps. 106. 39. Is it not enough if what we invent is not forbidden? *No:* They offered a strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, Lev. 10. 1. Is it a sin to despise any of God's ordinances? *Yes:* Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it? Mal. 1. 13. Or to be careless in our attendance upon them? *Yes:* Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and vows and sacrifices to the Lord a corrupt thing, Mal. 1. 14. Are they spiritual idolaters who make images of God in their fancy? *Yes:* They are vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened, Rom. 1. 21.

Q. 52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, are God's sovereignty over us, his property in us, and the zeal he has to his own worship.

1. Is there good reason why we should take heed of idolatry? *Yes:* Turn ye not to idols, neither make to yourselves molten Gods, I am the Lord your God, Lev. 19. 4. Has God a sovereignty over us? *Yes:* For he is a great God, and a great King above all Gods, Ps. 95. 3. Ought we therefore to worship him as he has appointed us? *Yes:* O come let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, Ps. 95. 6. And not to worship idols? *Yes:* For they can do neither good nor evil, Isa. 41. 23.

2. Has God a property in us? *Yes:* For we are the people of his pasture, Ps. 95. 7. Ought we therefore to worship him? *Yes:* He is thy Lord, and worship thou him, Ps. 45. 11. And not to worship other Gods? *Yes:* For hath a nation changed their Gods? Jer. 2. 11.

3. Is God jealous in the matters of his worship? *Yes:* The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God, Ex. 34. 14. Is he much displeased with those who corrupt it? *Yes:* They provoked the Lord God of Israel, to anger with their vanities, 1 Kings 16. 13. Do those who do so hate him? *Yes:* Idolaters are haters of God, Rom. 1. 25, 30. Will he visit their iniquity? *Yes*: In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them, Ex. 32. 34. Will he visit it upon the children? *Yes:* Our fathers sinned, and are not, and we have borne their iniquities, Lam. 5. 7. And is it just with him to do so? *Yes*: For they are the children of whoredoms, Hos. 2. 4. But will he visit it for ever? *No:* But to the third and fourth generation, Ex. 34. 7.

4. Will those who love God keep his commandments? *Yes:* If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, John 15. 10. Will he shew mercy to such? *Yes:* For he hath said, I love them that love me, Pro. 8. 17. Will he shew mercy to thousands of such? *Yes:* For the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps. 103. 17.

Q. 53. *What is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

1. Does the third commandment concern the manner of our worshipping God? *Yes:* That we serve the Lord with fear, Ps. 2. 11. Is it enough that we seek God in a due ordinance? *No:* But we must seek him after the due order, 1 Chron. 15. 13.

2. Is God's name all that whereby he makes himself known? *Yes:* He proclaimed the name of the Lord, Ex. 34. 5. Ought we to make use of his name? *Yes:* By thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. 26. 13. And to take heed of abusing it? *Yes:* Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God, I am the Lord, Lev. 18. 21.

Q. 54. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requires a holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works.

1. Does this commandment require us to glorify the name of God? *Yes:* They shall worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name, Ps. 86. 9. Are we to think of God's name with seriousness? *Yes:* They feared the Lord, and thought upon his name, Mal. 3. 16. Are we to speak of it with reverence? *Yes:* For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few, Ecc. 5. 2. Are we to call upon his name with a holy awe? *Yes:* For we that are but dust and ashes speak to the Lord of glory, Gen. 18. 27. Are we to worship God reverently in every religious duty? *Yes:* We must serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, Heb. 12. 28. And is there good reason for it? *Yes:* For our God is a consuming fire, Heb. 12. 29. Ought we to behave ourselves very reverently in public worship? *Yes:* For God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him, Ps. 89. 7.

2. Must we be holy in worshipping God? *Yes:* Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, Ps. 96. 9. Must we be holy in prayer and praise? *Yes:* Lifting up

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up holy hands, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Must our thoughts be fixed? *Yes:* O God, my heart is fixed, Ps. 108. 1. Must pious and devout affections be working in us? *Yes:* We must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. Must we be very humble in our approaches to God? *Yes:* As the publican that stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, Luke 18. 13.

3. Must we give glory to God in his word? *Yes:* For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name, Ps. 138. 2. Must we hear it with reverence? *Yes:* We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, Acts 10. 33. Must we give glory to God in swearing when we are called to it? *Yes:* Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt swear by his name, Deut. 6. 13. Must we be cautious in swearing? *Yes:* We must fear an oath, Ecc. 9. 2. Must we be conscientious in swearing? *Yes:* Thou shalt swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, Jer. 4. 2. Must we give glory to God in vowing? *Yes:* Vow and pay unto the Lord your God. Ps. 76. 11.

4. Must we glorify God in his great works? *Yes:* We must magnify his works which men behold, Job 36. 24. And must we glorify him by our good works? *Yes:* Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2. 19.

Q. 55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.

1. Do all hypocrites take God's name in vain? *Yes:* For they make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness, Isa. 48. 1. Do they thereby profane that name? *Yes:* For the name of God is blasphemed through them, Rom. 2. 24. Do hypocritical worshippers take God's name in vain? *Yes:* For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, Ezek. 33. 31. And is their seeming religion a vain religion? *Yes:* That man's religion is vain, James 1. 26. Can it be pleasing to God? *No:* Bring no more vain oblations, Isa. 1. 11, 13. Can it be profitable to themselves? *No:* For they receive the grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. 6. 1. Do covenant-breakers take God's name in vain? *Yes:* For they lie unto him with their tongues, Ps. 78. 36.

2. Is it a sin against this commandment to use the name of God lightly and carelessly? *Yes:* For thou shalt fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God, Deut. 28. 58. Will God's friends thus affront him? *No:* Thine enemies take thy Name in vain, Ps. 139. 20. Is it the character of the wicked? *Yes:* Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins, Jer. 12. 2.

3. Is it a sin against this commandment to swear rashly? *Yes:* Above all things, my brethren, swear not, Jam. 5. 12. Is it a sin to swear by creatures? *Yes:* Whether by heaven, or by the earth, or by the head, Mat. 5. 34, 35, 36. Must our communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay? *Yes:* For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil, Mat. 5. 37. Is it a sin to swear falsely? *Yes:* Thou shalt not forswear thyself, Mat. 5. 33. Is prophane swearing a great sin? *Yes:* For it blasphemes that worthy name by which we are called, Jam. 2. 7. Is it an inexcusable sin? *Yes:* For they transgress without cause, Ps. 25. 3. Does it bring judgments upon families? *Yes:* For the curse shall enter into the house of him that swears falsely, and shall consume it, Zech. 5. 4. And upon nations? *Yes:* Because of swearing the land mourns, Jer. 23. 10.

4. Is it a sin against this commandment to jest with the word of God? *Yes:* Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong, Isa. 28. 22. Or to use it as a charm? *Yes:* As those exorcists which said, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, Acts 19. 13. Is it a sin to put a slight upon sacred things? *Yes:* Ye have profaned my name, in that ye say, the table of the Lord is contemptible, Mal. 1. 12.

Q. 56. *What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment, is that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

1. Do the breakers of the third commandment commonly escape punishment from men? *Yes:* For men hear the voice of swearing, and utter it not, Lev. 5. 1. And do they fancy they shall escape God's judgments? *Yes:* The wicked contemn God, and yet say in their heart, he will not require it, Ps. 10. 13. But shall they escape God's judgments? *No:* Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 6. 7.

2. Shall those who prophane God's holy name escape his righteous judgments? *No:* The Lord will make their plagues wonderful, Deut. 28. 59. Shall hypocrites escape them? *No:* Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, Mat. 23. 13. Shall scoffers escape them? *No:* For they shall be broken, and snared, and taken, Isa. 28. 13. Shall covenant breakers escape them? *No:* Seeing he despised the oath, by breaking the covenant, he shall not escape, Ezek. 17. 18.

3. Shall swearers go unpunished? *No:* For he that sweareth shall be cut off, Zech. 5. 3. Shall they who use God's name vainly go unpunished? *No:* For every idle word that men speak they must give account, Mat. 12. 36. And shall their words be witnesses against them? *Yes:* God shall cause their own tongues to fall upon them, Ps. 64. 8.

Q. 57. *What is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment, is, Remember the Sabbath-Day, to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the

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the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

1. Does the fourth commandment concern the time of worship? *Yes:* For there is a time to every purpose, Eccl. 3. 1. Must our worship be confined to that time? *No:* For we must pray always, Eph. 6. 18. But is that appointed for the certain time? *Yes:* Blow up the trumpet in the time appointed, Ps. 81. 3. Is it the will of God we should take special notice of this command? *Yes:* For he has said, Remember it. Are we apt to forget it? *Yes:* They have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, Ezek. 22. 26.

2. Must we keep holy the Sabbath-day? *Yes:* Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it, Deut. 5. 12. Is a sabbath a day of rest? *Yes:* It shall be a Sabbath of rest unto you, Lev. 16. 31. Must we labour the six days, and do all our work? *Yes:* For in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, Gen. 3. 19. But is not work for God part of our work? *Yes:* For we must work the works of God, John 6. 28. Must we not then do that on the six days? *Yes:* Every day will I bless thee, Ps. 145. 2. But must we especially do it on Sabbath-days? *Yes:* For it is the holy of the Lord, Isa. 58. 13. Must we therefore rest from other work on that day? *Yes:* That we may attend upon the Lord without distraction, 1 Cor. 7. 35.

3. Must children keep holy the Sabbath-day? *Yes:* Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter. And servants? *Yes:* That thy man-servant and maid-servant may rest as well as thou, Deut. 5. 14. And is there good reason for the sanctification of the Sabbath? *Yes:* Ye shall keep my sabbaths, I am the Lord your God, Lev. 19. 3.

Q. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath unto himself.

1. Must holy time be kept holy? *Yes:* For every thing is beautiful in its season, Eccl. 3. 11. Can man make time holy? *No:* For I am the Lord which sanctify you, Lev. 20. 8.

2. Has God appointed a Sabbath? *Yes:* It is as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, Deut. 5. 12. Had he authority to do so? *Yes:* For the day is thine, the night also is thine, Ps. 74. 16. Did he appoint it for us? *Yes:* For the Sabbath was made for man, Mark 2. 27. Did he appoint one day in seven? *Yes:* For a seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. One whole day? *Yes:* For the evening and the morning were the first day, Gen. 1. 5.

3. Must we keep it? *Yes:* Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep, Ex. 31. 13. Must we keep it as a treasure? *Yes:* We must call the Sabbath honourable, Isa. 58. 13. And keep it as a talent? *Yes:* For thou madest known unto them thy holy Sabbaths, Neh. 9. 14. Must we keep it with care? *Yes:* We must lay hold on it, to keep the Sabbath from polluting it, Isa. 56. 2. Must we keep it holy to God? *Yes:* For he that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord, Rom. 14. 6.

Q. 59. *Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath?

1. Was the sabbath appointed from the beginning of the world? *Yes:* God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, when the heavens and the earth were finished, Gen. 2. 1, 2, 3. Was it in remembrance of the work of creation? *Yes:* Because that in it he rested from all his work, Gen. 2. 3. Was it observed before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai? *Yes:* For before that it was said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord, Ex. 16. 23. Was that appointed to be kept on the seventh day of the week? *Yes:* For he spake of the seventh day on this wise, Heb. 4. 4.

2. Was the law of the Sabbath given more particularly to Israel? *Yes:* I gave them my Sabbath to be a sign between me and them, Ezek. 20. 12. Was it religiously observed among them? *Yes:* For their enemies did mock at their Sabbaths, Lam. 1. 7. Did they sanctify the Sabbath in solemn assemblies? *Yes:* Moses of old time is read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, Acts 15. 21. Was the blessing confined to the seventh day? *No:* For the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it, Ex. 20. 11.

3. Was the Sabbath to continue in gospel times? *Yes:* For there remaineth the keeping of a Sabbath to the people of God, Heb. 4. 9. marg. Did Christ intend it should continue? *Yes:* For he said, Pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath-day, Mat. 24. 20. Did he in order to that expound the fourth commandment? *Yes:* For he shewed that it is lawful to do well upon the Sabbath-day, Mat. 12. 12. Is there the same need of Sabbaths now that ever there was? *Yes:* For I gave them my Sabbaths that they might know that I am the Lord, Ezek. 20. 12.

4. Is the sabbath changed now to the first day of the week: *Yes:* For on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread, Acts 20. 7. Was it because on that day of the week our Lord Jesus rose from the dead? *Yes:* For he rose as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mat. 28. 1. And because on that day the Spirit was poured out? *Yes:* For that was when the day of the Pentecost was fully come, Acts 2. 1. Was it fit there should be an alteration? *Yes:* For it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought them up from the land of the north, Jer. 16. 14, 15.

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5. Did the Apostles observe the first day of the week? *Yes:* On the first day of the week let every one lay by, 1 Cor. 16. 2. Did the primitive church call it the Lord's day? *Yes:* I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, Rev. 1. 10. In a thing of this nature ought we to acquiesce? *Yes:* For if any man will be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God, 1 Cor. 11. 16.

Q. 60. *How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?*

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful in other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

1. Must we rest on the Sabbath-day? *Yes:* Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, Ex. 31. 15. Must we rest from worldly employments? *Yes:* Ye shall hallow the Sabbath-day, to do no work therein, Jer. 17. 24. And from recreations? *Yes:* Not finding thine own pleasure, Isa. 58. 13. Is this to signify our being dead to this world? *Yes:* For he that is entered into his rest has ceased from his own works, Heb. 4. 10. And to awaken us to think of leaving it? *Yes:* For here we have no continuing city, Heb. 13. 14. Must this rest be dedicated to God? *Yes:* It is a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord, Ex. 35. 2.

2. Must we spend time on that day in the public exercises of God's worship? *Yes:* For it is a holy convocation, Lev. 23. 3. Must we do so every Sabbath, as we have opportunity? *Yes:* From one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord, Isa. 66. 23. And must we not absent ourselves from public worship? *No:* Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, Heb. 10. 25. Must we spend time on that day in the private exercises of religion? *Yes:* It is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings, Lev. 23. 3. Did the disciples of Christ thus spend the first Lord's day? *Yes:* For on the first day of the week the disciples were assembled, John 20. 19.

3. Must we prepare for the Sabbath-day beforehand? *Yes:* It was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on, Luke 23. 54. Must the Sabbath be a day of holy joy? *Yes:* We will rejoice and be glad in it, Ps. 118. 24. Must it be a day of praise? *Yes:* The psalm for the Sabbath-day begins, It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord, Ps. 92. 1. Must we be spiritual in the duties of the Day? *Yes:* I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day? Rev. 1. 10. And must we take pleasure in them? *Yes:* Call the Sabbath a delight, Isa. 58. 13.

4. Are works of mercy and charity proper for a Sabbath day? *Yes:* Ought not this woman to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day, Luke 13. 16. And may works of necessity be done on that day? *Yes:* Do not you on the Sabbath lead your ox, or your ass, to watering, Luke 13. 15.

Q. 61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance of the duties required, prophaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words or works about wordly employments, or recreations.

1. Do we prophane the Sabbath if we neglect the Sabbath work? *Yes:* I came seeking fruit, but find none, Luke 13. 7. Or if we perform carelessly? *Yes:* Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick, Mal. 1. 13. Or if we be weary of it? *Yes:* They say when will the Sabbath be gone? Amos 8. 5. Or if we idle away Sabbath time? *Yes:* Why stand ye here all the day idle? Mat. 20. 6. And much more if we do that which is in itself sinful? *Yes:* They have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my Sabbaths, Ezek. 23. 38.

2. Do we profane the Sabbath by violating the Sabbath rest? *Yes:* What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day? Neh. 13. 17. May we not buy and sell on that day? *No:* Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise, John 2. 16. May we not work harvest-work on that day? *No:* In earing-time, and in harvest, thou shalt rest, Ex. 34. 21. May we not however think and speak at our pleasure on that day? *No:* Not doing thine own ways, nor speaking thine own words, Isa. 58. 13.

3. Was he punished that gathered sticks on the Sabbath? *Yes:* They stoned him with stones that he died, Num. 15. 36. Are nations sometimes punished for Sabbath profanation? *Yes:* If ye will not hallow the Sabbath-day, I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, Jer. 17. 27. Is the contempt of the Sabbath a contempt of God? *Yes:* This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath-day, John 9. 16.

Q. 62. *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his claiming a special property in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath-day.

1. Has God allowed us six days of the week? *Yes:* Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. Has he reserved but one day in seven for himself? *Yes:* For he hath not made us to serve with an offering, nor wearied us with incense, Isa. 43. 23. Does he claim a special property in the seventh day? *Yes:* It is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. Has our Lord Jesus a property in it? *Yes:* For the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath, Mark 2. 28. Ought we not therefore to devote it to his service? *Yes:* For will a man rob God? Mal. 3. 8.

2. Did God the Creator set usan example of Sabbath rest? *Yes:* For the seventh day he rested and was refreshed, Ex. 31. 17. Did God the Redeemer set us an example of Sabbath work? *Yes:* For as his custom was,

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was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day. Luke 4. 16. And has he given us encouragement in the Work of the Christian Sabbath? *Yes:* For when they were assembled on the first day of the week, Jesus stood in the midst. John 20. 19.

3. Has God blessed the Sabbath-day, and so put an honour upon it. *Yes:* The Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it. Is it not an ill thing then for us to put a slight upon it? *Yes:* As they do that despise the holy things, and profane the Sabbath, Ezek. 22. 8. Has God appointed it to be a day of blessings to us? *Yes:* There will I come to thee, and will bless thee, Ex. 20. 24. Are not they enemies to themselves then that neglect it? *Yes:* They forsake their own mercies, John 2. 8.

Q. 63. *What is the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment is, honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

1. Do the six last commandments concern our duty to our neighbour? *Yes:* For this is his commandment, that we love one another, 1 John 3. 23. And must we mind that as well as our duty to God? *Yes:* Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men, 2 Cor. 8. 21. And are we concerned to be very careful in second table duties? *Yes:* That the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed, 1 Tim. 6. 1. Will our devotions be acceptable without this? *No:* When ye make many prayers I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood, Isa. 1. 15.

2. Is religion toward God a branch of universal righteousness? *Yes:* Render to God the things that are God's, Mat. 22. 21. And his righteousness toward men a branch of true religion? *Yes:* For pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, Jam. 1. 27. Does the law of God require both? *Yes:* To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, Mic. 6. 8. And does the grace of the gospel teach both? *Yes:* To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. 2. 12. Must every godly man then be an honest man? *Yes:* For we must live in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. 2. 2. And must he be a charitable man? *Yes:* He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous, Ps. 112. 4. And will the trial be by this at the great day? *Yes:* For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, Mat. 25. 35.

3. Does the fifth commandment concern our duty to our relations? *Yes:* For all ye are brethren, Mat. 23. 8. And must we be careful to do this duty? *Yes:* That they who will not be won by the word, may be won by the conversation, 1 Pet. 3. 1.

Q. 64. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honour, and performing the duty, which belongs to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

1. Is it the duty of children to reverence their parents? *Yes:* Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, Lev. 19. 3. And must they give honour to them? *Yes:* If I be a father, where is my honour? Mal. 1. 6. And may they upon no account despise them? *No:* Despise not thy mother when she is old, Pro. 23. 22. Ought they to carry themselves respectfully towards them? *Yes:* King Solomon rose up to meet his mother, and bowed himself to her, 1 Kings 2. 19. And to speak honourably of them? *Yes:* Her children rose up, and called her blessed, Pro. 31. 28.

2. Is it the duty of children to obey their parents? *Yes:* Children obey your parents in the Lord, Eph. 6. 1. And to receive their instructions? *Yes:* Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother, Pro. 1. 8. And to submit to their correction? *Yes:* The fathers of our flesh corrected us, and we gave them reverence, Heb. 12. 9. Should children labour to rejoice the hearts of their parents? *Yes:* My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, Pro. 23. 15. And to requite them? *Yes:* Let them shew piety at home, and requite their parents, 1 Tim. 5. 4. And to have their consent in disposing of themselves? Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and went to Padan-Aram, for a wife, Gen. 28. 7. Is Christ an example of this subjection? *Yes:* For he went with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject to them, Luke 2. 51.

3. Is it the duty of children to be respectful to the aged? *Yes:* Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, Lev. 19. 32. And must they be observant of their teachers? *Yes:* For they will mourn at the last, who obey not the voice of their teachers, and incline not their ear to them that instruct them, Pro. 5. 11. 13. And must they order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters? *Yes:* Ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder, 1 Pet. 5. 5.

4. Is it the duty of parents to be tender of their children? *Yes:* For can a woman forget her sucking child? Isa. 49. 15. And mild toward them? *Yes:* For a father pities his children, Ps. 103. 13. And to bear with them? *Yes:* As a man spares his son that serves him, Mal. 3. 17. And yet must they correct them when it is necessary? *Yes:* For he that spares his rod, hates his son; but he that loves him, chastens him betimes, Pro. 13. 24.

5. Is it the duty of parents to pray for their children? *Yes:* Job offered for his sons' burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all, Job 1. 5. And to bless God for them? *Yes:* They are the Children which God hath graciously given thy servant, Gen. 33. 5. Are they to bless them in the name of the Lord? *Yes:* By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, Heb. 11. 20. And are they to provide for them what is convenient? *Yes:* If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8.

6. Is it the duty of parents to bring up their children in the fear of God? *Yes:* Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6. 4. And to teach them

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them the things of God? *Yes:* Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, Deut. 6. 7. And to oblige them to their duty? *Yes:* I know Abraham, that he will command his children to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. And ought they to set them a good example? *Yes:* I will walk within my house with a perfect heart, Ps. 101. 2. And must they patiently part with their children when God calls for them? *Yes:* Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, Gen. 22. 16.

7. Is it the duty of servants to honour their masters and mistresses? *Yes:* Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, 1 Tim. 6. 1. Is it their duty to obey them? *Yes:* Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, Eph. 6. 5. And to be just and true to them? *Yes:* Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, Tit. 2. 10. Ought they to be diligent in the duty of their place? *Yes:* Not with eye-service, as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, Col. 3. 22. And to do it cheerfully? *Yes:* Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, and with good-will, doing service, Col. 3. 23. Eph. 6. 7. Ought they to be patient under rebukes? *Yes:* Not answering again, Tit. 2. 9. What, though they suffer unjustly? *Yes:* Servants be subject not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, 1 Pet. 2. 18. And must they have an eye to God in all? *Yes:* As to the Lord, and not to men, Col. 3. 23.

8. Is it the duty of masters to be just to their servants? *Yes:* Masters give to your servants that which is just and equal, Col. 4. 1. And to be gentle towards them? *Yes:* Forbearing threatening, Eph. 6. 9. Should all masters of families worship God with their families? *Yes:* As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 15. And should they restrain sin in their families? *Yes:* Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle, Job. 22. 23.

9. Is it the duty of wives to be respectful to their husbands? *Yes:* Let the wife see that she reverence her husband, Eph. 5. 33. And to love them? *Yes:* They must love their husbands, and love their children, Tit. 2. 4. Must they be submissive to their husbands? *Yes:* Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord, Col. 3. 18. Must they be faithful and obedient to them? *Yes:* They must be chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands, Tit. 2. 5. Must they receive instruction from them? *Yes:* If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, 1 Cor. 14. 35. Must they be helpers to them in religion? *Yes:* That they may be won by the conversation of the wives, 1 Pet. 3. 1.

10. Is it the duty of husband's to love their wives? *Yes:* Husband's love your wives, and be not bitter against them, Col. 3. 19. Must they love them dearly? *Yes:* Let every one love his wife even as himself, Eph. 5. 33. And delight in them? *Yes:* Rejoice with the wife of thy youth, Pro. 5. 18, 19. And be tender of them? *Yes:* Giving honour to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, 1 Pet. 3. 7.

11. Is it the duty of husbands and wives to be pleasing one to another? *Yes:* He that is married careth how to please his wife, and she that is married how to please her husband, 1 Cor. 7. 33, 34. Is it their duty to live in the fear of God, and to pray together? *Yes:* As heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. 3. 7. Should they promote the eternal salvation one of another? *Yes:* What, knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 1 Cor. 7. 16.

12. Is it the duty of subjects to reverence their magistrates? *Yes:* Fear God, honour the King, 1 Pet. 2. 17. And to obey them in the Lord? *Yes:* We must be subject to principalities and powers, and obey magistrates, Tit. 3. 1. And to be loyal to them? *Yes:* For the powers that be are ordained of God, Rom. 13. 1. Is it our duty to pray for magistrates? *Yes:* For kings, and for all that are in authority, 1 Tim. 2. 2. And to pay them tribute? *Yes:* Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, Rom. 13. 7. Must we be peaceable under their government? *Yes:* That we under them may lead a quiet and peaceable life, 1 Tim. 2. 2. And all this conscientiously? *Yes:* Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, Rom. 13. 5. Ought magistrates to be as parents to their subjects? *Yes:* Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers, Isa. 49. 23.

13. Is it the duty of people to love and respect their ministers? *Yes:* Know them which labour among you, and esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. Ought they to submit to their instructions? *Yes:* Obey your guides, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, Heb. 13. 7. And to provide for their comfortable subsistance? *Yes:* Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth, Gal. 6. 6. And ought ministers to be as spiritual fathers to their people? *Yes:* We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doeth his children, 1 Thes. 2. 11.

14. Is it the duty of equals to be kind one to another? *Yes:* Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, Rom. 12. 10. And to be respectful one to another? *Yes:* In honour prefering one another, Rom. 12. 10. And to be submissive one to another? *Yes:* Yea, all of ye, be subject one to another, 1 Pet. 5. 5.

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belongs to every one in their several places and relations.

1. Is it a sin for children to despise their parents? *Yes:* Cursed be he that sets light by his father or mother, Deut. 27. 16. Or to disobey them? *Yes:* The eye that mocks at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it, Prov. 30. 17. Is it a sin for children prodigally to spend their parents substance? *Yes:* He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, Prov. 29.

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29. 16. Or to grieve their parents? *Yes:* A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother, Prov. 10. 1.

2. Is it a sin for inferiors to be rude and undutiful to their superiors? *Yes:* For a child to behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable, Isa. 3. 5. Is it a sin for superiors to be harsh and unkind to their inferiors? *Yes:* Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged, Col. 3. 21.

3. Is it a sin to be vexatious to our relations? *Yes:* Her adversary provoked her to make her to fret, 1 Sam. 1. 6. And to be quarrelsome with our relations? *Yes:* Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren, Gen. 13. 8. And to be suspicious of our relations? *Yes:* For charity thinketh no evil, 1 Cor. 13. 4. 5.

Q. 66. *What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

1. Is there a gracious promise made to those that honour their parents? *Yes:* It is the first commandment with promise, Eph. 6. 2. Is long life promised? *Yes:* That thy days may be long in the land. Is outward prosperity pomised? *Yes:* That it may be well with thee, Eph. 6. 3. Are temporal blessings promised to good people? *Yes:* Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. 4. 8. And are they promised particularly to pious and dutiful children? *Yes:* My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and long life and peace shall they add to thee, Prov. 3. 1, 2.

2. Do all good children prosper in this world? *No:* For all things come alike to all, Ecc. 9. 2. But are they most likely to prosper? *Yes:* For by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour, and life, Prov. 22. 4. Shall they prosper as far as is for God's glory? *Yes:* I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me, Ps. 50. 15. And as far as is for their own good? *Yes:* For we read of those whom God sent into captivity for their good, Jer. 24. 5. But shall good children live however in the heavenly Canaan? *Yes:* There their inheritance shall be for ever. Ps. 37. 18. And are disobedient children often punished in this life: *Yes:* As Absalom that was hanged in an oak, 2 Sam. 18. 9.

Q. 67. *What is the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment, is, Thou shalt not kill.

1. Does the sixth commandment concern our own and our neighbour's life? *Yes:* For the life is more than meat, Mat. 6. 25. Has God a tender regard to the life of men? *Yes:* For He giveth to all life and breath, Acts 17. 25. Has he by this law made a hedge about life? *Yes:* That men might not be like the fishes of the sea, Hab. 1. 14.

2. Did there need this law? *Yes:* For men live in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, Tit. 3. 3. Is it a part of the law of nature? *Yes:* For the barbarous people said of a murderer, that vengeance suffers him not to live, Acts 28. 4.

Q. 68. *What is required in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

1. Are we to take care of our own lives? *Yes:* No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, Eph. 5. 29. Must we endeavour the preservation of them? *Yes:* Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life, Job 2. 4. Are we to be careful of our diet? *Yes:* Hast thou found honey, eat so much as is sufficient for thee, Prov. 25. 16. Are we to use physic when we need it? *Yes:* Take a lump of figs, and lay it upon the boil, Isa. 38. 21. And are we to be cheerful? *Yes:* For a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, Prov. 17. 22.

2. But may we deny Christ to save our lives? *No:* He that so saveth his life shall lose it, Mat. 16. 25. May we commit any wilful sin to save our lives? *No:* We must do no evil, that good may come. Rom. 3. 8. But what we do for the preservation of our own lives, must it be with an eye to God's glory? *Yes:* That I may live, and keep thy word, Ps. 119. 17. Live and praise thee, v. 175.

3. Are we to be compassionate even to the brute creatures? *Yes:* A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, Prov. 12. 10. Are we to be careful of the lives of others as well as of our own? *Yes:* It was Cain that said, Am I my brother's keeper? Gen. 4. 9. Are we to do what we can in our places for the relief of those who are exposed to violence? *Yes:* We must deliver them that are ready to be slain, Prov. 24. 11, 12. Must we succour the distressed, like the good Samaritan? *Yes:* Go thou and do likewise, Luke 10. 37.

4. Are we to support the lives of those who are in straits? *Yes:* The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, Job. 29. 13. Are we to be meek towards those that provoke us? *Yes:* Shewing all meekness towards all men, Tit. 3. 2. And are we to be merciful toward those who need us? *Yes:* Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, Col. 3. 12.

Q. 69. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, and whatsoever tends thereunto.

1. May we dispose of our own lives at our pleasure? *No:* For surely your blood of your lives will I require, Gen. 9. 5. Is it a sin in any case to kill ourselves? *Yes:* Do thyself no harm, Acts 16. 28. Is it an exceeding sinful sin? *Yes:* It was the sin of Saul and Judas,

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das, 1 Sam. 31. 4. Mat. 27. 5. Is it a sin needlessly to expose our own lives? *Yes:* Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, Mat. 4. 7. But must we not expose our lives to keep a good conscience? *Yes:* Neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course with joy, Acts 20. 24.

2. Is drunkenness a sin against our own lives? *Yes:* Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares, Luke 21. 34. Is uncleanness so? *Yes:* He that commits fornication, sins against his own body, 1 Cor. 6. 18. Is immoderate care and grief a sin against our own lives? *Yes:* For the sorrow of the world worketh death, 2 Cor. 7. 10.

3. Is it lawful for the magistrate to take away the life of a malefactor? *Yes:* For he bears not the sword in vain, Rom. 13. 4. May soldiers kill in a lawful war? *Yes:* Cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood, Jer. 48. 10. But is wilful murder a great sin? *Yes:* The voice of my brother's blood cries, Gen. 4. 10. Is it an iniquity to be punished by the judge? *Yes:* Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, Gen. 9. 6. And ought the murderer to be put to death? *Yes:* A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person, shall flee to the pit, let no man stay him, Prov. 28. 17.

4. Is murder a great affront to God? *Yes:* For in the image of God made he man, Gen. 9. 6. Does it make men like the devil? *Yes:* For he was a murderer from the beginning, John 8. 44. Is it of dangerous consequence to the murderer? *Yes:* For no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, 1 John 3. 15. Ought we therefore to pray that God would keep us from it? *Yes:* Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God of my salvation, Ps. 51. 14.

5. Is malice heart-murder? *Yes:* He that hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John 3. 15. Is rash anger a breach of this commandment? *Yes:* But I say unto you, Whosoever his angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, Mat. 5. 22. Is giving foul language a breach of this commandment? *Yes:* Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, or thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire, Mat. 5. 22. Is revenge a breach of this commandment? *Yes:* Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, Rom. 12. 19.

Q. 70. *What is the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment, is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Does this commandment concern our own and our neighbour's chastity? *Yes:* For this is the will of God, even our sanctification, 1 Thes. 4. 3. Is it needful there should be such a commandment? *Yes:* For since all are gone aside, they are all become filthy, Ps. 14. 3. Is it agreeable to the light of nature? *Yes:* For Abimelech called adultery a great sin, Gen. 20. 9. And is this command for the public good of mankind? *Yes:* For whoredom and wine take away the heart, Hos. 4. 11.

Q. 71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

1. Is it our duty to keep our bodies pure from all fleshly lusts? *Yes:* We must possess our vessel in sanctification and honour, and not in the lust of concupiscence, 1 Thes. 4. 4. Are we to present our bodies to God? *Yes:* Present your bodies unto God, a living sacrifice, Rom. 12. 1. Are we to glorify him with them? *Yes:* Glorify God with your bodies, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Are we to use them for him? *Yes:* For your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, 1 Cor. 6. 19. And to employ them in his service? *Yes:* Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. 6. 13. May they then be used in the service of our lusts? *No:* For if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, 1 Cor. 3. 17.

2. Ought we to preserve our chastity in heart? *Yes:* That we may be holy both in body and spirit, 1 Cor. 7. 34. And must we keep out all unclean thoughts and desires? *Yes:* We must flee youthful lust, 2 Tim. 2. 22. And is that the way to prevent the acts of uncleanness? *Yes:* For when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin, James 1. 15.

3. Ought we to preserve our chastity in speech? *Yes:* Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, Col. 4. 6. Is it the character of good people to be modest? *Yes:* I will turn to the people a pure language, Zeph. 3. 9.

4. Ought we to preserve our chastity in behaviour? *Yes:* We must have a chaste conversation coupled with fear, 1 Pet. 3. 2. And in our cloathing? *Yes:* Women must adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, 1 Tim. 2. 9. Must we abstain from all appearances of uncleanness? *Yes:* Hating even the garment spotted with the flesh, Jude 23. And from all approaches to it? *Yes:* Come not nigh the door of her house, Prov. 5. 8.

5. Must we resolve against wanton looks? *Yes:* I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a maid, Job. 31. 1. Must we always keep our bodies in soberness and chastity? *Yes:* We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. And must we crucify all the lusts of the flesh? *Yes:* They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, Gal. 5. 24. Must the body be subdued? *Yes:* I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, 1 Cor. 9. 27. And must its sinful desires be denied? *Yes:* If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, Mat. 5. 29.

Q. 72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

1. Is adultery a very great sin? *Yes:* How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God, Gen. 39. 9. Is

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9. Is it an iniquity to be punished by the judge? *Yes:* The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death, Lev. 20. 10. Is fornication a very great sin? *Yes:* Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, Eph. 5. 3. Will these sins certainly shut men out of heaven, if they be not repented of, and forsaken? *Yes:* For, fornicators and adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 10.

2. Are unclean thoughts sins? *Yes:* For whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, Mat. 5. 28. Are unclean reflections sins? *Yes:* For some multiply their whoredoms by calling to remembrance the days of their youth, Ezek. 23. 19. Are unclean desires sins? *Yes:* Inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence, are to be mortified in us, Col. 3. 5. And must all fleshly lusts be shunned? *Yes:* Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers, and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. 2. 11.

3. Are unclean words sin? *Yes:* For there must be neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, Eph. 5. 4. Must we therefore take heed of speaking any filthy words? *Yes:* Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, Eph. 4. 29. May we take delight in hearing filthy talk? *No:* For evil communications corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. 15. 33.

4. Are all unchaste actions forbidden in this commandment? *Yes:* Not only adultery and fornication, but uncleanness and lasciviousness, (Gal. 5. 19.) Chambering and wantonness, Rom. 13. 13. Are the occasions of uncleanness here forbidden? *Yes:* Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph. 5. 11.

5. Is all uncleanness provoking to God? *Yes:* For, I the Lord am holy, Lev. 20. 26. Is it against our bodies? *Yes:* For the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, 1 Cor. 6. 13. Is it a wrong to our souls? *Yes:* For fleshly lusts war against the soul, 1 Pet. 2. 11. Is it wounding to conscience? *Yes:* I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, Ecc. 7. 26.

6. Are idleness and gluttony occasions of uncleanness, and forbidden in this commandment? *Yes:* For this was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, Ezek. 16. 49. And is drunkenness also a sin of dangerous consequence? *Yes:* For drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 10.

Q. 73. *What is the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

1. Does the eighth commandment concern our own and our neighbour's wealth and outward estate? *Yes:* For the earth God has given to the children of men, Ps. 115. 16. Is it necessary there should be such a command? *Yes:* For every brother will utterly supplant, Jer. 9. 4.

2. Is robbing God the worst theft? *Yes:* Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, Mal. 3. 8, 9. And is justice to God the highest justice? *Yes:* Render to God the things that are God's, Mat. 22. 21.

Q. 74. *What is required in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment requires all lawful procuring and furthering our own and our neighbour's wealth and outward estate.

1. Is religion a friend to outward prosperity? *Yes:* For, In wisdom's left hand are riches and honour, Prov. 3. 16. Does it teach us to be diligent in our callings? *Yes:* Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, Prov. 27. 23. And to keep close to them? *Yes:* Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, 1 Thes. 4. 11. And is that the way to thrive? *Yes:* For the hand of the diligent maketh rich, Prov. 10. 4. Does religion teach us to be prudent in our affairs? *Yes:* The good man will guide his affairs with discretion, Ps. 112. 5. And is that the way to thrive? *Yes:* For through wisdom is a house builded, Prov. 24. 3.

2. Must we serve God with our worldly estate? *Yes:* Honour the Lord with thy substance, Prov. 3. 9. And is that the way to thrive? *Yes:* So shall thy barn be filled with plenty, v. 10. Must we cheerfully use our estates, *Yes:* For, I know no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life, Ecc. 3. 12. And must we cheerfully serve God with them? *Yes:* We must serve the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the abundance of all things, Deut. 28. 47.

3. Must we be just to all we deal with? *Yes:* Render therefore to all their due, Rom. 13. 7. And must we give every body their own? *Yes:* Owe no man any thing, but to love one another, Rom. 13. 8. Must we be true to every trust reposed in us? *Yes:* As the workmen who dealt faithfully, 2 Kings 12. 15. And is honesty the best policy? *Yes:* For a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked, Ps. 37. 16. And shall we have the comfort of it in this world? *Yes:* He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, that despiseth the gain of oppression, and shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be in the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure, Isa. 33. 15, 16. If therefore we have done any wrong, must we make restitution? *Yes:* Zaccheus stood and said, If I have wronged any man, I restore him fourfold, Luke 19. 8.

4. Must we concern ourselves for the welfare of others? *Yes:* Look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others, Phil. 2. 4. And must we do all we can to promote the welfare of others? *Yes:* If thy brother's ox or ass go astray, thou shalt bring them back, Deut. 22. 1.

5. Must we relieve the poor according to our ability? *Yes:* If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him, Lev. 25. 35. Must we be forward to relieve the poor? *Yes:* We must be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, 1 Tim. 6. 18. Is that the way to thrive in this world?

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hould? *Yes:* For he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again, Prov. 19. 17. And shall it be repayed in the other world? *Yes:* Thou shalt be recompenced in the resurrection of the just, Luke 14. 14. And must we make this use of what we have in the world? *Yes:* We must labour that we may have to give to him that needeth, Eph. 4. 28.

Q. 75. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's wealth and outward estate.

1. May we do what we will with our own estates? *No:* For we are but stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Pet. 4. 10. Is it a sin then to waste our estates in prodigality? *Yes:* For the drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty, Prov. 23. 21. Is luxury the way to beggary? *Yes:* He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man, Prov. 21. 17. Is slothfulness a robbing of ourselves? *Yes:* For he that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster, Prov. 18. 9. And is that the way to poverty? *Yes:* For, Drowsiness shall cloath a man with rags, Prov. 23. 21.

2. Is keeping idle company the way to poverty? *Yes:* For, he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough, Prov. 28. 19. Is fraud and injustice the way to poverty? *Yes:* For wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, Prov. 13. 11. Can any expect to prosper in a way of unjust gain? *No:* For, he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool, Jer. 17. 11. Do men rob themselves and their families by foolishness in their affairs? *Yes:* For every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands, Prov. 14. 1. And by rash suretyship? *Yes:* For he that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, Prov. 11. 15.

3. Is it a sin to rob ourselves of the comfort of that which God has given us? *Yes:* If a man hath not power to eat of it, it is vanity, and an evil disease, Ecc. 6. 2. And is it a sin to deny it to our relations? *Yes:* If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. 5. 8.

4. Is it a great sin to steal from any body? *Yes:* For every one that stealeth shall be cut off, Zech. 5. 3. Is it a great sin for children to steal from their parents? *Yes:* Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer, Prov. 28. 24. And for the rich to oppress the poor? *Yes:* Rob not the poor, because he is poor, Prov. 22. 22. Will you therefore keep your hands from picking and stealing? *Yes:* Because of the fear of God, Neh. 5. 15. Must those who have used themselves to it break it off? *Yes:* Let him that stole steal no more, Eph. 4. 28. Must poor people especially watch and pray against this temptation? *Yes:* Lest I be poor, and steal, Prov. 30. 9.

5. Is it a sin to cheat any body in a bargain? *Yes:* Let no man go beyond, or defraud his brother in any matter, 1 Thes. 4. 6. Is it a sin to use false weights and measures? *Yes:* A false balance is abomination to the Lord, Prov. 11. 1. Is it a sin to give assistance or countenance to any fraud? *Yes:* Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul, Prov. 29. 24.

6. Is it a sin to deny relief to the poor? *Yes:* Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in that man? 1 John 3. 17. Is it a sin to deny the payment of a just debt? *Yes:* For the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again, Ps. 37. 21. Or withhold wages that is due? *Yes:* The hire of the labourers kept back by fraud crieth, James 5. 4. And is the love of money the cause of all these sins? *Yes:* The love of money is the root of all evil, 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Q. 76. *What is the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

1. Does this commandment concern our own and our neighbour's good name? *Yes:* For a good name is better than precious ointment, Ecc. 7. 1. Is there need of this commandment? *Yes:* For every neighbour will walk with slanders, Jer. 9. 4.

Q. 77. *What is required in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

1. Is it our duty to govern our tongues? *Yes:* I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, Ps. 39. 1. Is he a good christian that does not? *No:* For if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain, James 1. 26. Must we therefore pray to God to keep us from tongue-sins? *Yes:* Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, Ps. 141. 3.

2. Is it our duty to speak truth? *Yes:* Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, Zech. 8. 16. Is there good reason for it? *Yes:* For we are members one of another, Eph. 4. 25. And is this the character of a good man? *Yes:* That he speaketh the truth in his heart, Ps. 15. 2. Are all truths to be spoken at all times? *No:* For there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, Ecc. 3. 7. But may an untruth be spoken at any time? *No:* For God's people are children that will not lie, Isa. 63. 8.

3. Is it our duty, especially in witness-bearing, to speak truth? *Yes:* For a faithful witness will not lie, Prov. 14. 5. And the whole truth? *Yes:* Samuel told Eli every whit, and hid nothing from him, 1 Sam. 3. 18. And nothing but the truth? *Yes:* For a lying tongue is but for a moment, Prov. 12. 19.

4. Is it our duty to strive to have a good name with God? *Yes:* For not he that commendeth himself is approved,

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approved, but whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. 10. 16. And should we endeavour to have a good name with good people? *Yes:* Let those that fear thee turn unto me, Ps. 119. 79. And if possible a good name with all people? *Yes:* Demetrius hath a good report of all men, 3 John 12. Must we abound in those things that are of good report? *Yes:* If there be any virtue, if there be any praise think on those things, Phil. 4. 8.

5. In order to our getting a good name, must we live by faith? *Yes:* For by it the elders obtained a good report, Heb. 11. 2. Must we walk wisely? *Yes:* For a man's wisdom makes his face to shine, Ecc. 8. 1. Must we do justly? *Yes:* Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, 1 Pet. 2. 12. And be humble? *Yes:* For before honour is humility, Prov. 18. 12. And must we abound in good works? *Yes:* Let your light so shine before men, Mat. 5. 16. But can good people expect to have every one's good word? *No:* Wo unto you when all men speak well of you, Luke 6. 26. May we hazard a good conscience to preserve our reputation? *No:* For our praise is not of men, but of God, Rom. 2. 29.

6. Ought we to be very tender of the good names of others? *Yes:* We must honour all men, 1 Pet. 2. 17. Must we give them the praise of that in them which is good? *Yes:* We also bear record, 3 John 12. But may we flatter them? *No:* He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail, Job 17. 5. Must we charitably conceal their faults? *Yes:* For charity covers a multitude of sins, 1 Pet. 4. 8. Must we discourage slandering and censoriousness? *Yes:* We must with an angry countenance drive away a backbiting tongue, Prov. 25. 23.

Q. 78. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*
A. The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own, or our neighbour's good name.

1. Is lying a great sin? *Yes:* Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man, Col. 3. 9. Is it a sin that God hates? *Yes:* Lying lips are abomination to the Lord, Prov. 12. 22. And is it a sin that all good men hate? *Yes:* I hate and abhor lying, Ps. 119. 163. Does it make men like the devil? *Yes:* For he is a liar, and the father of it, John 8. 44. And will it bring them to hell? *Yes:* For all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21. 8.

2. Is it lawful to tell a lie to make sport? *No:* For as a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is he that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? Prov. 26. 18, 19. Is it lawful to tell a lie to excuse a fault? *No:* For Gehazi for doing so had a leprosy entailed on him and his seed for ever, 2 Kings 5. 27. May we tell a lie with intention to do good? *No:* We must not do evil, that good may come, Rom. 3. 8. Will what is got by lying do us any good? *No:* The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is vanity, tossed to and fro of them that seek death, Prov. 21. 6. Should we therefore pray against this sin? *Yes:* Remove from me the way of lying, Ps. 119. 29.

3. Is it a sin to belie ourselves? *Yes:* As there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches, Prov. 13. 7. May we be careless of our own good name? *No:* If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you, John 8. 55.

4. Is it a sin to belie our neighbour? *Yes:* They laid to my charge things that I know not, Ps. 35. 11. Is it folly? *Yes:* He that utters a slander is a fool, Prov. 10. 18. Is it a sin to speak evil of any? *Yes:* Put them in mind to speak evil of no man, Tit. 3. 1, 2. And to be censorious of our brethren? *Yes:* Judge not that ye be not judged, Mat. 7. 1. Is it a great offence to God to do this? *Yes:* He that speaks evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judgeth the law, James 4. 11. Does it make us like the devil? *Yes:* For he is the accuser of the brethren, Rev. 12. 10.

5. Is it a sin to raise a false report? *Yes:* Thou shalt not raise a false report, Ex. 23. 1. And a sin to spread it? *Yes:* Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer, Lev. 19. 16. May we proclaim our brethren's faults? *No:* For charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, 1 Cor. 13. 6. Is it a sin to speak ill of magistrates? *Yes:* Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people, Acts 23. 5. Is it a sin to be abusive to the poor? *Yes:* For he that mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker, Prov. 17. 5. May we speak ill of those who speak ill of us? *No:* We must not render railing for railing, 1 Pet. 3. 9.

Q. 79. *What is the tenth commandment?*
A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

1. Does this commandment lay a restraint upon the heart? *Yes:* For the law is spiritual, Rom. 7. 14. Does the heart need this restraint? *Yes:* For the inward part is very wickedness, Ps. 5. 9. Does the light of nature discover this? *No:* I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet, Rom. 7. 7.

2. Are we forbidden to covet another man's house? *Yes:* As they that covet houses, and take them away, Mic. 2. 2. Or another man's wife? *Yes:* For her husband is to her a covering of the eyes, Gen. 20. 16. Or another man's goods? *Yes:* I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, Acts 20. 33.

Q. 80. *What is required in the tenth commandment?*
A. The tenth commandment requires a full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.

1. Has God the disposal of our outward condition? *Yes:* My times are in thy hand, Ps. 31. 15. And does he order all events concerning us? *Yes:* He performeth the

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the thing that is appointed for us, Job 23. 14. Ought we therefore to be content with our condition? *Yes:* Be content with such things as you have, Heb. 13. 5. Ought we to be content in every condition? *Yes:* I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, Phil. 4. 11. Must we be content with a little? *Yes:* Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content, 1 Tim. 6. 8.

2. Can we expect that our condition should be in every thing brought to our mind? *No:* For all is vanity, Ecc. 1. 14. Is it therefore our wisdom to bring our mind to our condition? *Yes:* I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, Phil. 4. 12. Is any thing got by this? *Yes:* Godliness with contentment is great gain, 1 Tim. 6. 6. And is this the way to be easy? *Yes:* In your patience possess ye your souls, Luke 21. 19.

3. Is that best which is? *Yes:* It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18. Must we therefore make the best of it? *Yes:* For wherefore should a living man complain? Lam. 3. 39. And must we acknowledge it is better than we deserve? *Yes:* I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, Gen. 32. 10.

4. Ought we to desire the welfare of our neighbours? *Yes:* Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth, 1 Cor. 10. 24. And to pray for it? *Yes:* Supplications and prayers must be made for all men, 1 Tim. 2. 1. And to be well pleased with it? *Yes:* Rejoice with them that do rejoice, Rom. 12. 15. And to lay to heart our neighbour's troubles? *Yes:* Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, Heb. 13. 3. And is this a charitable frame of spirit? *Yes:* For, charity suffers long, and is kind, 1 Cor. 13. 4.

Q. 81. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate desires and affections to any thing that is his.

1. Is it a sin to fret at the disposals of God's providence? *Yes:* For, shall we receive good of the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also? Job 2. 10. Is it a sin to quarrel with them? *Yes:* For they that murmured were destroyed of the destroyer, 1 Cor. 10. 10. Is it an evil thing to undervalue the mercies we have? *Yes:* As the Israelites that said, there is nothing besides this *manna*, Numb. 11. 6. And to aggravate the afflictions we are under? *Yes:* As they that said, We die, we perish, we all perish, Numb. 17. 12. May we in any thing be discontented? *No:* For we must in every thing give thanks, 1 Thes. 5. 18.

2. Is it a sin against this commandment to envy our neighbour's welfare? *Yes:* For, charity envieth not, 1 Cor. 13. 4. Is envy an offence to God? *Yes:* For is our eye evil because his is good? Mat. 20. 15. Is it hurtful to ourselves? *Yes:* For, envy is the rottenness of the bones, Prov. 14. 30. Is it the cause of much mischief? *Yes:* For where envy is, there is confusion, and every evil work, James 3. 16. Is it a sin to be pleased with our neighbour's hurt or loss? *Yes:* He that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished, Prov. 17. 5.

3. Is it a sin to desire to sin? *Yes:* Lust not after evil things, as they also lusted, 1 Cor. 10. 6. Does all sin begin in the lustings of the heart? *Yes:* For lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, James 1. 15. Is it a sin to desire any temporal good inordinately? *Yes:* As Rachel, that said, Give me children, or else I die, Gen. 30. 1. And is it a sin to lust after the delights of sense? *Yes:* As the Israelites who wept again, saying, Who will give us flesh to eat? Numb. 11. 4. Must we therefore suppress all sinful desires? *Yes:* And make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. 13. 14.

4. Is it a sin to set our hearts upon worldly wealth? *Yes:* Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, 1 John 2. 15. Is coveteousnes an offence to God? *Yes:* For it is idolatry, Col. 3. 5. Will it be a vexation to ourselves? *Yes:* For he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, Ecc. 5. 10. Will it be a vexation to our families? *Yes:* For he that is greedy of gain troubles his own house, Prov. 15. 27.

And injurious to our neighbour? *Yes:* For they that lay house to house, and field to field, would be placed alone in the midst of the earth, Isa. 5. 8. Is covetousness the cause of much sin? *Yes:* For, they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, 1 Tim. 6. 9. Must we therefore watch against it? *Yes:* Take heed, and beware of coveteousness, Luke 12. 15. And must we abstain from all the practices of it? *Yes:* Let your conversation be without covetousness, Heb. 13. 5. And must we pray earnestly against it? *Yes:* Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to coveteousness, Ps. 119. 36.

Q. 82. *Is any man able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them in thought, word, or deed.

1. Are any in this world perfectly free from sin? *No:* For there is no man that sinneth not, 2 Chro. 6. 36. Was Christ, who was not a mere man, perfect? *Yes:* He knew no sin, 2 Cor. 5. 21. Was Adam before the fall perfect? *Yes:* For God made man upright, Ecc. 7. 29. Are the saints in the other life perfect? *Yes:* The glorious church is without spot or wrinkle, Eph. 5. 27. But is any mere man since the fall in this life perfect? *No:* For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not, Ecc. 7. 20.

2. Are self-justifiers self-deceivers? *Yes:* If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, 1 John 1. 8. And do they put a great affront upon God? *Yes:* For, if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, 1 John 1. 10.

3. Are not we able to keep God's commandments better

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better than we do? *Yes:* If I have done iniquity, I will do no more, Job 34. 32. But are we able perfectly to keep them? *No:* For when I would do good, evil is present with me, Rom. 7. 21. Though Noah was said to be perfect, yet did not he sin? *Yes:* For he drank of the wine, and was drunk, Gen. 9. 21. And Job? *Yes:* For he cursed his day, Job. 3. 1. And Hezekiah? *Yes:* For his heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. 32. 25. Was St. Paul himself perfect? *No:* Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, Phil. 3. 12.

4. Do we sin daily? *Yes:* In many things we offend all, Jam. 3. 2. Do we daily sin in thought? *Yes:* For, The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. 8. 21. Are we guilty of many tongue-sins? *Yes:* In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, Prov. 10. 19. Are the best guilty of many defects? *Yes:* For when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, Mat. 26. 41. And of many inadvertencies? *Yes:* They are overtaken in a fault, Gal. 6. 1. Can we tell how often we offend? *No:* Who can understand his errors? Ps. 19. 13. Should we not therefore have recourse to Christ daily by faith and repentance? *Yes:* If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, 1 John 2. 1.

Q. 83. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A. Some sins in themselves, and, by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

1. Is every sin done in God's sight? *Yes:* I did this evil in thy sight, Ps. 51. 4. Is it heinous in God's sight? *Yes:* For he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Hab. 1. 13. But is every sin alike heinous? *No:* He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin, John 19. 11. Are some sins in themselves more heinous than others? *Yes:* If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? 1 Sam. 2. 25. Are presumptuous sins more heinous than others? *Yes:* The soul that doeth ought presumptuously, that soul reproacheth the Lord, Numb. 15. 30. Was ever any sin so heinous as not to be forgiven? *Yes:* The Pharisees blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was so, Mat. 12. 32.

2. Are sins against knowledge aggravated sins? *Yes:* That servant that knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke 12. 47. And sins against mercies? *Yes:* Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Deut. 32. 6. Especially against spiritual mercies? *Yes:* As Solomon who turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared unto him twice, 1 Kings 11. 9. Are sins against reproof aggravated sins? *Yes:* He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, Prov. 29. 1. And sins against our vows and covenants? *Yes:* Thou saidst, I will not transgress, Jer. 2. 20.

3. Are the sins of great professors aggravated sins? *Yes:* For the name of God is blasphemed through them, Rom. 2. 24. And the sins of ministers? *Yes:* Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Rom. 2. 21. May the place be an aggravation of the sin? *Yes:* They provoked him at the sea, even at the red sea, Ps. 106. 7. And the time? *Yes:* They turned aside quickly, Ex. 32. 8.

4. Is it an aggravation of sin, if it be done with contrivance? *Yes:* Woe to them that devise iniquity, Mic. 2. 1. And if it be done with delight? *Yes:* They rejoice to do evil, Prov. 2. 14. And without blushing? *Yes:* They declare their sin as Sodom, Isa. 3. 9. And if it be boasted of? *Yes:* Whose glory is in their shame, Phil. 3. 19. And if it be often repeated? *Yes:* They have tempted me now these ten times, Num. 14. 22. Should we take notice of these aggravations in our confessions? *Yes:* Aaron shall confess the iniquity of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, Lev. 16. 21.

Q. 84. *What does every sin deserve?*

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

1. Does sin provoke God? *Yes:* Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly, Hos. 12. 14. Does it deserve his wrath? *Yes:* According to their deserts will I judge them, Ezek. 7. 27. Does that wrath rest upon impenitent sinners? *Yes:* The wrath of God abideth on them, John 3. 36. And is it just it should? *Yes:* For when God renders to every man according to his work, he renders indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. 2. 6. 8.

2. Does sin deserve God's curse? *Yes:* Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. 3. 10. Can any avoid that curse? *No:* For all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, Deut. 28. 15. Can a man bear up under that curse? *No:* For it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, Ps. 109. 18. Can a man fortify himself against that curse? *No:* For it shall consume the house, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, Zech. 5. 4.

3. Does sin deserve God's wrath and curse in this life? *Yes:* For these things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Col. 3. 6. And in the life to come? *Yes:* For wrath is treasured up against the day of wrath, Rom. 2. 5. Does every sin deserve God's wrath? *Yes:* For the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6. 23. Is any sin venial in its own nature? *No:* For the blood of Christ is that which must cleanse from all sin, 1 John 1. 7. Does your sin deserve this wrath and curse? *Yes:* If I be wicked, woe to me, Job. 10. 15.

Q. 85. *What does God require of us, that we may escape the wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and anger of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with a diligent use of all the outward

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ward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

1. Is the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin? *Yes:* We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3. Has God provided a way of escape from that wrath? *Yes:* I have found a ransom, Job. 33. 24. Does the gospel shew us that way? *Yes:* He shall tell the words whereby thou mayest be saved, Acts 11. 14. Is it through Christ that we may escape this wrath? *Yes:* It is Jesus that delivereth us from the wrath to come, 1 Thes. 1. 10. Is any thing to be done by us in order to our escape? *Yes:* Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, Phil. 2. 12, 13.

2. Are we concerned to enquire what is to be done by us in order to our escape? *Yes:* Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord? Mic. 6. 6. Will a convinced conscience put us upon this inquiry? *Yes:* When they were pricked to the heart they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts 2. 37. Must we be serious and solicitous in this inquiry? *Yes:* As the Gaoler that came trembling, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Acts 16. 30. Must we be speedy in this inquiry? *Yes:* The morning cometh, and also the night, if ye will inquire, inquire ye, Isa. 21. 12. Must we make this inquiry with resolution? *Yes:* They shall ask their way to Sion with their faces thitherward, Jer. 50. 5. Must we apply ourselves to Christ with this inquiry? *Yes:* Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Mat. 19. 16.

3. Is that which is to be done by us for our salvation required of us? *Yes:* This is his commandment that we believe, 1 John 3. 23. And are we called upon to do it? *Yes:* Turn ye, turn ye: Why will you die, O house of Israel? Ezek. 33. 11.

4. Is faith in Jesus Christ required that we may escape this wrath? *Yes:* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts 16. 31. Is repentance required? *Yes:* Repent, and be converted, that our sins may be blotted, Acts 3. 19. Did our Lord Jesus preach these as the two great commandments of the gospel? *Yes:* The kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe the gospel, Mark 1. 15. Did the Apostles preach them? *Yes:* Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 20. 21. And is it required that we diligently use the means of grace? *Yes:* Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Mat. 28. 20.

Q. 86. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

1. Are we to believe in Jesus Christ? *Yes:* Ye believe in God, believe also in me, John 14. 1. Is Christ in the word the object of our faith? *Yes:* For, the word is nigh thee, Rom. 10. 8. Is faith in Christ a grace? *Yes:* It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. Is it free grace? *Yes:* To you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe in him, Phil. 1. 29. Is it a saving grace? *Yes:* For, we believe to the saving of the soul, Heb. 10. 39. Is it that by which we live? *Yes:* The just shall live by his faith, Rom. 1. 17. Is unbelief the great damning sin? *Yes:* They could not enter in because of unbelief, Heb. 3. 19.

2. Do we by faith assent to gospel truths? *Yes:* He that has received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true, John 3. 33. Do we by faith consent to gospel terms? *Yes:* Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, Mat. 11. 29. Must both these go together? *Yes:* He said Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him, John 9. 38. Is there good reason for both? *Yes:* For it is both a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, 1 Tim. 1. 15.

3. Is this receiving Christ? *Yes:* Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. 2. 6. Is it applying the righteousness of Christ to ourselves? *Yes:* Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20. And consenting to it? *Yes:* We have now received the atonement, Rom. 5. 11. Must we receive Christ to rule us as well as to save us? *Yes:* For Him hath God exalted to be both a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31. And is it enough only to receive him? *No:* As we have received him, so we must walk in him, Col. 2. 6.

4. Do we by faith rest on Christ alone for salvation? *Yes:* In his name shall the Gentiles trust, Mat. 12. 21. And rely on his righteousness? *Yes:* That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, Phil. 3. 9. And do we rejoice in him? *Yes:* For we are the circumcision that rejoice in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 3.

5. Will faith in Christ produce good affections? *Yes:* For it works by love, Gal. 5. 6. Will it purify the heart? *Yes:* Purifying their hearts by faith, Acts 15. 9. Will it overcome the world? *Yes:* This is the victory, overcoming the world, even your faith, 1 John 5. 4. Will it resist the temptations of Satan? *Yes:* The shield of faith quenches the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. 6. 16. Does it exert itself in obedience? *Yes:* For the gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. 16. 26. And does it subject the soul to the grace and government of the Lord Jesus? *Yes:* My Lord, and my God, John 20. 28.

Q. 87. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

1. Is true repentance, repentance unto life? *Yes:* God hath to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, Acts 11. 18. Is it a grace? *Yes:* If God peradventure will give them repentance, 2 Tim. 2. 25. Is it a saving grace? *Yes:* Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, 2 Cor. 7. 10.

2. Is

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2. Is repentance required of every one of us? *Yes:* God commmandeth all men every where to repent, Acts 17. 30. Is it necessary to our pardon? *Yes:* For repentance and remission of sins are preached to all nations, Luke 24. 47. Is it given to qualify us for pardon? *Yes:* God hath exalted his Son Christ Jesus, to give repentance and remission of sins, Acts 5. 31. Can we be saved without it? *No:* Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish, Luke 13. 3.

3. Is it necessary to repentance, that there be a sense of sin? *Yes:* Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, Ezek. 16. 2. Must there be an acknowledgement of sin? *Yes:* I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me, Ps. 51. 3. Must we acknowledge the fact of sin? *Yes:* Thus and thus have I done, Josh. 7. 20. And the fault? *Yes:* I have done this evil in thy sight, Ps. 51. 4. And the folly of it? *Yes:* O God, thou knowest my foolishness, Ps. 69. 5. Must we acknowledge the original of sin? *Yes:* Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, Ps. 51. 5. Must we acknowledge ourselves odious to God's holiness because of sin? *Yes:* Behold I am vile, Job. 40. 4. And obnoxious to his justice? *Yes:* If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Ps. 130. 3.

4. Must there be an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ? *Yes:* There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, Ps. 130. 4. Must that invite us to repent? *Yes:* The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance, Rom. 2. 4. Is that evangelical repentance which flows from a hope of that mercy? *Yes:* Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Mat. 3. 2. Can there be true repentance where there is a despair of mercy? *No:* Thou saidest there is no hope; no, I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, Jer. 2. 25. Have we reason to hope for that mercy? *Yes:* Turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy, Isa. 55. 7.

5. Must there be contrition for sin? *Yes:* When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, Acts 2. 37. Must we turn from sin? *Yes:* Every one mourning for his iniquities, Ezek. 7. 16. Must we mourn greatly for sin? *Yes:* Peter went out and wept bitterly, Mat. 26. 75. Must we mourn after a godly sort? *Yes:* Ye sorrowed according to God, 2 Cor. 7, 9. Marg. Must we mourn for sin with an eye to Christ? *Yes:* They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. 12. 10.

6. Must we hate sin? *Yes:* I hate every false way, Ps. 119. 128. Must we loath ourselves because of sin? *Yes:* I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes; Job 42. 6. Must we be ashamed of ourselves before God? *Yes:* I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God, Ezra 9. 6. And must we humble ourselves greatly in his presence? *Yes:* As the publican that stood afar off, and would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, Luke 18. 13.

7. Must we confess our sins? *Yes:* For he that covers his sins shall not prosper, Prov. 28. 13. And must we aggravate them? *Yes:* I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, Luke 15. 18. And must we judge ourselves because of them? *Yes:* If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 Cor. 11. 31. And must we cry earnestly to God for pardon in the blood of Christ? *Yes:* God be merciful to me a sinner, Luke 18. 13.

8. Must we turn from sin? *Yes:* Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, Ezek. 18. 30. From our own sin? *Yes:* Return ye now every one from his evil way, Jer. 18. 11. And must we turn to God? *Yes:* If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me, Jer. 4. 1. Are backsliders invited to return? *Yes:* Return ye backsliding children, Jer. 3. 22. And should they accept the invitation? *Yes:* Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord, our Lord, Jer. 3. 22.

9. In repentance must there be a change of the mind? *Yes:* Make ye a new heart, Ezek. 18. 31. Must there be a change of the way? *Yes:* Cease to do evil, learn to do well, Isa. 1. 16, 17. Must there be a full resolution against all sin? *Yes:* Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? Hos. 14. 8. And a full resolution of new obedience? *Yes:* The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey, Josh. 24. 24. And must we be serious in our endeavours accordingly? *Yes:* Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, Mat. 3. 8.

Q. 88. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

1. Does Christ communicate the benefits of redemption? *Yes:* For of his fulness have all we received, John 1. 16. Does he ordinarily communicate them by means? *Yes:* I will for this be inquired of, Ezek. 36. 37. Is he tied to those means? *No:* For the Spirit, as the wind, bloweth where he listeth, John 3. 8. But are we tied to the use of them? *Yes:* Where I record my name, I will come to thee, and will bless thee, Exod. 20. 24. Are the ordinances the outward and ordinary means of grace? *Yes:* I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them, Ezek. 37. 28.

2. Are the word, sacraments and prayer, the great gospel ordinances? *Yes:* Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers, Acts 2. 41, 42. Is singing of psalms, also a gospel ordinance? *Yes:* Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, Eph. 5. 19. Is it appointed for our own consolation? *Yes:* Is any merry, let him sing psalms, Jam. 5. 13. And for mutual instruction? *Yes:* Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, Col. 3. 16. And for God's glory? *Yes:* Singing with grace in your heart to the Lord, Col. 3. 16.

3. Has Christ appointed ministers of the gospel? *Yes:* He hath given pastors and teachers for the edify-

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ing of the body of Christ, Eph. 4. 11, 12. Is the administration of ordinances committed to them? *Yes:* For they are the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. 4. 1. And must they attend that service? *Yes:* We will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word, Acts 6. 4.

4. Are gospel ordinances made effectual to all for salvation? *No:* For with many of them God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. 10. 5. But are they made effectual to the elect? *Yes:* As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts 13. 48.

Q. 89. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

1. Is the word to be read by us? *Yes:* I charge you that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren, 1 Thes. 5. 27. Is it to be read in solemn assemblies? *Yes:* Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, Acts 15. 21. Is it profitable to expound the scriptures? *Yes:* They that read in the law of God, gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading, Neh. 8. 8. Is the word of God to be preached? *Yes:* Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Is it the duty of all to hear the word? *Yes:* He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, Rev. 2. 7. Will the bare reading and hearing of the word profit? *No:* The letter kills, the spirit gives life, 2 Cor. 3. 6.

2. But is the reading and hearing of the word the ordinary means of convincing sinners? *Yes:* For it is mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. 10. 4. And of startling the secure? *Yes:* By them is thy servant warned, Ps. 19. 11. Is it the ordinary means of conversion? *Yes:* If the prophets had stood in my counsel, they should have turned people from their evil way, Jer. 23. 22. And has it been the conversion of many? *Yes:* When the law of truth was in his mouth, he did turn many away from iniquity, Mal. 2. 6. Is it the ordinary means of working faith? *Yes:* For faith comes by hearing, Rom. 10. 17. And of renewing of the heart? *Yes:* For the seed is the word of God, Luke 8. 11. And of reforming the life? *Yes:* By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer, Ps. 17. 4.

3. Is the reading and hearing of the word needful to those who are regenerate? *Yes:* For they are nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 6. Is it a means of building them up in holiness? *Yes:* It is for the perfecting of the saints, Eph. 4. 12. Will it furnish them for all good? *Yes:* That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 17. Will it fortify them against all evil? *Yes:* For the sword of the Spirit is the word of God, Eph. 6. 17. Is it a means of building them up in comfort? *Yes:* That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Rom. 15. 4.

4. Does the Spirit of God make the word effectual for all these good purposes? *Yes:* When the hand of the Lord was with them, a great number believed, and turned to the Lord, Acts 11. 21. Is it effectual through faith unto salvation? *Yes:* It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, Rom. 1. 16. Is it not a great mercy then to have plenty of the word of God? *Yes:* Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, Ps. 89. 15. And should we not welcome those that bring it? *Yes:* Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Ps. 118. 26.

Q. 90. *How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

1. Must we read the word of God with seriousness? *Yes:* We must give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. 4. 13. And not read it as a common book? *No:* It is not a vain thing, for it is your life, Deut. 32. 47.

2. Must we be diligent to hear the word? *Yes:* Watching daily at wisdom's gates, waiting at the posts of her doors, Prov. 8. 34. Must we prepare for hearing it? *Yes:* Lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, 1 Pet. 2. 1. Must we come to it with a spiritual appetite? *Yes:* As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. 2. 2. Must we set ourselves to receive it? *Yes:* As Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear his word, Luke 10. 39. Must we bow our souls before it? *Yes:* Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears, 1 Sam. 3. 9. Must we diligently hearken to it? *Yes:* Be swift to hear, Jam. 1. 19.

3. Must we hear the word with reverence? *Yes:* When Ezra opened the book all the people stood up, Neh. 8. 5. Must we hear it with care? *Yes:* Take heed how ye hear, Luke 8. 18. And with meekness? *Yes:* Receive with meekness the engrafted word, Jam. 1. 21. And with delight? *Yes:* How sweet are thy words unto my taste? Ps. 119. 103. And with a holy fear? *Yes:* We must tremble at the word, Isa. 66. 2. Must we receive it as the word of men? *No:* But as it is in truth the word of God, 1 Thes. 2. 13.

4. Must we take heed of sleeping under the word? *Yes:* Could ye not watch with me one hour? Mat. 26. 40. Must we pray for a blessing upon the word? *Yes:* Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law, Ps. 119. 18. Must we receive the word with faith? *Yes:* For it will not profit if it be not mixed with faith, Heb. 4. 2. Must we receive men's words with an implicit faith? *No:* Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, 1 John 4. 1. But must we receive God's word with an implicit faith? *Yes:* For every word of God is pure, Prov. 30. 5. Must we receive it with love? *Yes:* I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food, Job 23. 12.

5. Must

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5. Must we remember the word we read and hear? *Yes:* Lest at any time we let it slip, Heb. 2. 1. Must we lay it up in our hearts? *Yes:* Thy word have I hid in my heart, Ps. 119. 11. Must we meditate on it? *Yes:* In that law doth he meditate day and night, Ps. 1. 2. Must we practise it in our lives? *Yes:* Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, Jam. 1. 22. Will it suffice to hear, though we do not practise? *No:* If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, John 13. 17.

Q. 91. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him who administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of the Spirit in them who by faith receive them.

1. Do the sacraments certainly save all that partake of them? *No:* They who were rejected of Christ could say, We have eaten and drank in thy presence, Luke 13. 26. Are they then effectual by any virtue in themselves? *No:* For bodily exercise profits little, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Do they of themselves confer grace? *No:* For if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision, Rom. 2. 25. Is the thing signified of greater consequence than the sign? *Yes:* For circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, Rom. 2. 29.

2. Does the efficacy of the sacraments depend upon the minister? *No:* For who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed? 1 Cor. 3. 5. Does the goodness of the minister invigorate the sacrament? *No:* For Philip baptized Simon, who yet was in the gall of bitterness, Acts 8. 13, 23. Does the badness of the minister invalidate the sacrament? *No:* For Judas was numbered with us, and obtained part of this ministry, Acts 1. 17.

3. Does the efficacy of sacraments depend upon the blessing of Christ? *Yes:* Lo, I am with you always, Mat. 28. 20. And upon the working of the Spirit? *Yes:* For it is the Spirit that quickeneth, John 6. 63. And are they effectual to those only who by faith receive them? *Yes:* He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved, Mark 16. 16.

Q. 92. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers.

1. Is a sacrament a holy ordinance? *Yes:* For we minister about holy things, 1 Cor. 9. 13. Must they therefore be holy that attend them? *Yes:* Be ye clean that bear the vessel of the Lord, Isa. 52. 11. Are sacraments instituted by Christ? *Yes:* The Lord himself shall give you a sign, Isa. 7. 14. May men institute sacraments? *No:* Jeroboam, that ordained a feast which he had devised of his own heart, sinned, and made Israel to sin, 1 Kings 12. 33.

2. Is there in a sacrament an outward and visible sign? *Yes:* Behold the blood of the covenant, Ex. 24. 8. Is there an inward and spiritual grace? *Yes:* For that Rock was Christ, 1 Cor. 10. 4. Are outward signs of use to inform our understandings? *Yes:* For in them Christ is evidently set forth crucified among us, Gal. 3. 1. Are they of use to refresh our memories? *Yes:* These stones shall be for a memorial, Josh. 4. 7. And to stir up our affections? *Yes:* They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. 12. 10. Are they of use to transmit the things of God from generation to generation? *Yes:* For your children shall ask you, What mean you by this service? Ex. 12. 26.

3. Is a sacrament a seal? *Yes:* Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, Rom. 4. 11. A seal of the covenant? *Yes:* He gave him the covenant of circumcision, Acts 7. 8. Is a sacrament an oath? *Yes:* They entered into an oath to walk in God's law, Neh. 10. 29. Is it an encouragement to our faith? *Yes:* Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing, John 20. 27. Is it an engagement to obedience? *Yes:* That henceforth we should not serve sin, Rom. 6. 6. Is Christ applied to us in sacraments? *Yes:* As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. 3. 27. Are the benefits of the new covenant applied to us? *Yes:* To be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee, Gen. 17. 7.

Q. 93. *Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Were there sacraments in innocency? *Yes:* The tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. 2. 9. Were there sacraments under the law? *Yes:* For the law had a shadow of good things to come, Heb. 10. 1. Was circumcision a sacrament? *Yes:* He received the sign of circumcision, Rom. 4. 11. Was the passover a sacrament? *Yes:* Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5. 7.

2. Have we sacraments now under the gospel? *Yes:* For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, Heb. 4. 2. Are Baptism and the Lord's Supper our two sacraments? *Yes:* For we are baptized into one body, and all drink into one spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13. May men add any more sacraments? *No:* Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, Prov. 30. 6.

Q. 94. *What is Baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, does signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

1. Is

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1. Is washing with water the outward sign in Baptism? *Yes:* I am come baptizing with water, John 1. 31. Is that well done by sprinkling? *Yes:* For so shall he sprinkle many nations, Isa. 52. 15. Ezek. 30. 25. Is that sign significant? *Yes:* If ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, 1 Cor. 6. 11. But is the outward sign alone sufficient? *No:* Baptism saves us, not as it is the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, 1 Pet. 3. 21.

2. Must Baptism be in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? *Yes:* Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Mat. 28. 19. And not in the minister's name? *No:* Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Cor. 1. 13. Is it therefore one? *Yes:* For there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, Eph. 4. 5.

3. Is Baptism a door of admission into the visible church? *Yes:* There were added to the church daily, Acts 2. 47. Are we thereby entered into Christ's school? *Yes:* Jesus made and baptised disciples, John 4. 1. And listed under his banner? *Yes:* As good soldiers of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. 2. 3.

4. Is Baptism a seal of our engrafting into Christ? *Yes:* For being baptized into Jesus Christ, we are baptized into his death, Rom. 6. 3. And of our partaking of the benefits of the new covenant? *Yes:* Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2. 38. And of our engagement to be the Lord's? *Yes:* I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine, Ezek. 16. 8. Is the covenant sealed in the Baptism a mutual covenant? *Yes:* Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God, Jer. 30. 22.

5. Are we bound by our baptism to renounce the Devil and all his works? *Yes:* For the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John 3. 8. And to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world? *Yes:* For we must not be conformed to this world, Rom. 12. 2. And all the sinful lusts of the flesh? *Yes:* For we are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, Rom. 8. 9. Are we bound to believe all the articles of the christian faith? *Yes:* We must hold fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim. 1. 13. And to keep God's holy will and commandments? *Yes:* That we also should walk in newness of life, Rom. 6. 4. And to walk in the same all the days of our life? *Yes:* If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, John 8. 31.

Q. 95. *To whom is Baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants, of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized.

1. Are Jews and Pagans to be baptized upon their believing? *Yes:* If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest, Acts 8. 37. Will their justifiable profession warrant the administering of Baptism to them? *Yes:* Simon Magus himself believed also, and was baptized, Acts 8. 13.

2. Are the children of believing parents to be baptized in their infancy? *Yes:* For a seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, Ps. 22. 30. Is it possible that they may be in covenant with God? *Yes:* For you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, John 15. 16. Is it probable they should be in covenant? *Yes:* For when Israel was a child then I loved him, Hos. 11. 1. Is it certain they were in covenant? *Yes:* I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed, Gen. 17. 7. Is it therefore certain they are in covenant? *Yes:* For the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles, Gal. 3. 14. Does the seal of the covenant therefore belong to them? *Yes:* Every manchild among you shall be circumcised, Gen. 17. 10.

3. Are the children of christians members of Christ's visible church? *Yes:* For of such is the kingdom of God, Mark 10. 14. Do the promises belong to them? *Yes:* The promise is to you and to your children, Acts 2. 39. Does the promise of the Spirit belong to them? *Yes:* I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, Isa. 44. 3. Are they capable of receiving it? *Yes:* John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, Luke 1. 15. Are they then to be baptized? *Yes:* For who can forbid water to them which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Acts 10. 47.

4. Are the children of believers federally holy? *Yes:* Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy, 1 Cor. 7. 14. Are they so in their parents right? *Yes:* If the root be holy, so are the branches, Rom. 11. 16. Are they disciples? *Yes:* For the yoke of circumcision was put upon the neck of the disciples, Acts 15. 1, 10. Are they to be received in Christ's name? *Yes:* Whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me, Mat. 18. 5. Are they born unto God? *Yes:* Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, Ezek. 16. 20. Are they bound by relation to be his servants? *Yes:* I am thy servant the son of thine handmaid, Ps. 116. 16. Ought they then to be presented to him? *Yes:* The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me, Exod. 22. 29.

5. Do children need to be cleansed from the pollutions of sin? *Yes:* For they are shapen in iniquity, Ps. 51. 5. Is there provision made for their cleansing? *Yes:* For there is a fountain opened to the house of David, Zec. 13. 1.

6. Are the nations to be discipled by Baptism? *Yes:* Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them, Mat. 28. 19. Are children a part of the nations? *Yes:* Your little ones stand here this day, to enter into covenant with God, Deut. 29. 11, 12. And has Christ excepted them? *No:* Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, Mat. 19. 14. Were the families of believers baptized by the apostles? *Yes:* Lydia was baptized, and her houshold, Acts 16. 15. Did Christ himself receive the seal of the covenant in his infancy? *Yes:* When he was eight days old he was circumcised, Luke 2. 21.

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7. Is infant baptism useful for preserving the church? *Yes:* That our children may not cease from fearing the Lord, Jos. 22. 25. Was it a great mercy to you that you were baptized? *Yes:* For we are the children of the covenant, Acts 3. 25.

8. Must we be careful to improve our baptism? *Yes:* Be ye mindful always of his covenant, 1 Chro. 16. 15. Is it a good argument against sin? *Yes:* How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Rom. 6. 2. And for holiness? *Yes:* For we also should walk in newness of life, Rom. 6. 4. Is it a great encouragement to faith? *Yes:* Thou art my God from my mother's belly, Ps. 22. 10. Is it a good plea in prayer? *Yes:* Save the son of thy handmaid, Ps. 86. 16. Is it a strong inducement to brotherly love? *Yes:* For we all are baptized into one body, 1 Cor. 12. 13.

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth, in grace.

1. Was the Lord's Supper instituted by Christ himself? *Yes:* I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you, 1 Cor. 11. 23. Did he leave it as a legacy to his church? *Yes:* It was in the night wherein he was betrayed, 1 Cor. 11. 23. Did he intend it should continue? *Yes:* Till he come, v. 26.

2. Is bread to be used in this sacrament? *Yes:* For he took bread, Mat. 26. 26. And does that signify it to be a strengthening ordinance? *Yes:* For bread strengthens man's heart, Ps. 104. 15. Is the cup to be used in this sacrament? *Yes:* He took the cup when he had supped, 1 Cor. 11. 25. Does that signify it to be a refreshing ordinance? *Yes:* For wine makes glad the heart, Ps. 104. 15. Must these be given and received? *Yes:* Jesus took bread, and gave to them,—took the cup, and gave it to them, Mat. 14. 22, 23. Are the people to partake of the cup? *Yes:* Drink ye all of it, Mat. 26. 27. Is the ordinance doubled? *Yes:* Because the thing is established, Gen. 41. 32.

3. Does the bread signify the body of Christ? *Yes:* This is my body which is broken for you, 1 Cor. 11. 24. Does the wine signify the blood of Christ? *Yes:* This cup is the New Testament in my blood, Luke 22. 20. Are they turned into the very body and blood of Christ? *No:* For it is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing, John 6. 63. But is the doctrine of Christ crucified meat and drink to a believing soul? *Yes:* My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, John 6. 55. And are we to feed upon that doctrine? *Yes:* He that eateth me, even he shall live by me, John 6. 57.

4. Is the Lord's supper a commemorating ordinance? *Yes:* Do this in remembrance of me, Luke 22. 19. Is it a confessing ordinance? *Yes:* Ye do shew the Lord's death, 1 Cor. 11. 26. Is it a communicating ordinance? *Yes:* The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Cor. 10. 16. Is it a covenanting ordinance? *Yes:* For it is the New Testament, 1 Cor. 11. 25. Is it a confirming ordinance? *Yes:* For Christ in it is evidently set forth, Gal. 3. 1. Is it an ordinance of communion with all christians? *Yes:* For we have been all made to drink into one spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13.

5. Is the pardon of sin sealed to believers in this sacrament? *Yes:* It is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins, Mat. 26. 28. Is the gift of the Holy Ghost sealed to them? *Yes:* Receive ye the Holy Ghost, John 20. 22. Is the promise of eternal life sealed to them? *Yes:* That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, Luke 22. 30. Mat. 26. 29. Do we, by receiving this sacrament, bind ourselves out from all sin? *Yes:* For we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, Rom. 6. 11. And do we bind ourselves up to all duty? *Yes:* For being made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness, Rom. 6. 18.

6. Is the Lord's Supper a spiritual feast? *Yes:* A feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, Isa. 26. 6. Is it a marriage feast? *Yes:* A certain king made a marriage for his son, Mat. 22. 2. Is it a feast upon a sacrifice? *Yes:* Christ is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. Is it a feast upon a covenant? *Yes:* As Isaac made a feast for Abimelech when they sware one to another, Gen. 26. 30, 31. Are all good christians invited to this feast? *Yes:* Come, for all things are now ready, Luke 14. 17. Are they often to partake of it? *Yes:* As often as ye eat this bread, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Q. 97. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is required of them who would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

1. Are the ignorant to be admitted to the Lord's Supper? *No:* For they discern not the Lord's body, 1 Cor. 11. 29. Are those to be admitted to it who are openly profane? *No:* For what concord hath Christ with Belial? 2 Cor. 6. 15. But must all visible adult believers be admitted to it? *Yes:* All the congregation of Israel shall keep the passover, Ex. 12. 47.

2. Must those who come to the Lord's Supper prepare for it? *Yes:* We must prepare our heart to seek God, the Lord God of our Fathers, 2 Chr. 13. 18. Must we put away every sin? *Yes:* Purge out the old leaven, 1 Cor. 5. 7. And must we cleanse ourselves from all pollutions? *Yes:* I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, Ps. 26. 6. Must we sequester ourselves from the world? *Yes:* Tarry ye here, while I go yonder and worship, Gen.

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Gen. 22. 5. And must we apply ourselves seriously to this service? *Yes:* We must engage the heart to approach unto God, Jer. 30. 21.

3. When we come to this ordinance must we examine ourselves? *Yes:* Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, 1 Cor. 11. 28. Must we examine our spiritual state? *Yes:* Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Must we examine our particular ways? *Yes:* Let us search and try our ways, Lam. 3. 40. Must we renew our repentance for sin? *Yes:* For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 Cor. 11. 31. And our faith in Christ crucified? *Yes:* Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20. Must we stedfastly purpose to lead a new life? *Yes:* I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments, Ps. 110. 106. And must we be in charity with all men? *Yes:* First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift, Mat. 5. 24. And must we stir up desires towards Christ? *Yes:* Let him that is athirst come, Rev. 22. 17.

4. Must we receive this sacrament with great reverence? *Yes:* In thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple, Ps. 5. 7. And with fixedness of thought? *Yes:* Bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar, Ps. 118. 27. Must we receive it with godly sorrow for sin? *Yes:* They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zec. 12. 10. And with holy joy in the Lord? *Yes:* They did eat their meat and gladness, praising God, Acts 2. 46, 47. Must we receive it with an affectionate remembrance of the love of Christ? *Yes:* We will remember thy love more than wine, Cant. 1. 4. And with an earnest desire of mercy from God? *Yes:* I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, Ps. 116. 13.

5. Must those who have received this sacrament be very watchful against all sin? *Yes:* He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly, Ps. 85. 8. Must they abound in all duty? *Yes:* I will pay my vows unto the Lord, Ps. 116. 14. And must they ever preserve a sense of their engagements? *Yes:* Thy vows are upon me, O God, Ps. 56. 12.

6. Do those who wilfully resolve to continue in sin receive unworthily? *Yes:* For what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, Ps. 50. 16, 17. And do those receive unworthily who have no regard to Christ in what they do? *Yes:* For they say the table of the Lord is contemptible, Mal. 1. 7. Are they that do so guilty of a great sin? *Yes:* They are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 27. And are they in great danger? *Yes:* For they eat and drink judgment to themselves, 1 Cor. 11. 29. But shall weak believers, who bewail their unworthiness, be encouraged: *Yes:* For he will not break the bruised reed, Mat. 12. 20.

Q. 98. *What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

1. Is it every one's duty to pray? *Yes:* Men ought always to pray, Luke 18. 1. Can a man be a good man who lives without prayer? *No:* Every one that is godly shall pray, Ps. 32. 6. Are we to pray daily? *Yes:* Morning, and evening, and at noon, will I pray, Ps. 55. 17. Are we to pray continually? *Yes:* Pray without ceasing, 1 Thes. 5. 17. Are we to pray in secret? *Yes:* Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, Mat. 6. 6. Are we to pray when we are in affliction? *Yes:* Is any among you afflicted, let him pray, James 5. 13.

2. Are we to pray to God only? *Yes:* For he only knows the hearts of all the children of men, 1 Kings 8. 39. May we pray to departed saints to pray for us? *No:* For Abraham is ignorant of us, Is. 63. 16. Is prayer the soul's ascent to God? *Yes:* Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Ps. 25. 1. Is it the soul's converse with God? *Yes:* Pour out your hearts before him, Ps. 62. 8. Are we in prayer to ascribe glory to God? *Yes:* Give unto the Lord glory and strength, Ps. 96. 7. And to ask mercy of God? *Yes:* Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, Mat. 7. 7.

3. Are we to pray to God for things agreeable to his will? *Yes:* If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, 1 John 5. 14. Must we pray for pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace? *Yes:* Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 16. Are God's promises to be the guide of our desires in prayer? *Yes:* Remember thy word unto thy servant, Ps. 119. 49. And the ground of our faith? *Yes:* For I hope in thy word, v. 81.

4. Must we pray in the name of Christ? *Yes:* Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, John 14. 13. Relying on his righteousness alone? *Yes:* For we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. 10. 19. Must we pray in faith? *Yes:* Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, Jam. 1. 6. Depending on the assistance of the Holy Spirit? *Yes:* For the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, Rom. 8. 26.

5. Must we in prayer make confession of sin? *Yes:* I prayed to the Lord my God, and made my confession, Dan. 9. 4. And must we give thanks for mercies received? *Yes:* Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, Ps. 100. 4.

6. Must we be constant in prayer? *Yes:* I give myself unto prayer, Ps. 109. 4. And humble in prayer? *Yes:* For we are but dust and ashes, Gen. 18. 27. And earnest in prayer? *Yes:* Always labouring fervently in prayer, Col. 4. 12. Must we in sincerity set God before us in prayer? *Yes:* Let us draw near with a true heart, Heb. 10. 22. Must we pray in charity? *Yes:* Lifting up pure hands without wrath, 1 Tim. 2. 8.

7. Will God hear, and accept those who thus pray to him? *Yes:* He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain, Isa. 45. 19. But will the love of sin spoil the success of prayer? *Yes:* If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me Ps. 66. 18.

Q. 99.

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Q. 99. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, The Lord's Prayer.

1. Do we need direction in prayer? *Yes:* For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, Rom. 8. 26. Should we pray to God for direction? *Yes:* Lord, teach us to pray, Luke 11. 1. Hath he given us direction in prayer? *Yes:* Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, Hos. 14. 2.

2. Is the whole word of God of use to direct us? *Yes:* I will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth, Dan. 10. 21. compare Chron. 9. 23. Is the Lord's Prayer to be used as a directory for prayer? *Yes:* After this manner therefore pray ye, Mat. 6. 9. And is it to be used as a form of prayer? *Yes:* When ye pray, say, Our Father, Luke 11. 2.

Q. 100. *What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven,* teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with, and for others.

1. Is God our Father? *Yes:* Doubtless thou art our Father, Isa. 63. 16. Does he appoint us to call him so? *Yes:* Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth, Jer. 3. 4. Is he our Father by creation? *Yes:* Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Mal. 2. 10. And by redemption? *Yes:* Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Deut. 32. 6. And by adoption? *Yes:* I will be a Father to them, 2 Cor. 6. 18.

2. Is God a wise Father? *Yes:* The Father of lights, Jam. 1. 17. Is he a gracious Father? *Yes:* The Father of mercies, 2 Cor. 1. 3. Is he our soul's Father? *Yes:* The Father of spirits, Heb. 12. 9. Is he the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? *Yes:* I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 14. Is he in him our Father? *Yes:* I ascend to my Father, and your Father, John 20. 17.

3. Are we in prayer to call God Father? *Yes:* Crying, Abba, Father, Gal. 4. 6. And to esteem him as a Father? *Yes:* I will arise, and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father, Luke 15. 18. And is this comfortable in prayer? *Yes:* For with thee the fatherless findeth mercy, Hos. 14. 3.

4. Is God our Father in heaven? *Yes:* For the Lord's throne is in heaven, Ps. 11. 4. Is heaven a high place? *Yes:* And we must lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens, Lam. 3. 41. Is it a holy place? *Yes:* And we must lift up holy hands, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Is it a place of prospect? *Yes:* And therefore our Father sees in secret, Mat. 6. 6. Is it a place of power? *Yes:* And therefore he is able to do above all that we ask or think, Eph. 3. 20.

5. Ought we therefore to pray with reverence? *Yes:* For God is in heaven, and we upon earth, Ecc. 5. 2. And with holy confidence? *Yes:* For we have boldness and access with confidence, Eph. 3. 12. For is God a Father who is able to help us? *Yes:* My Father is greater than all, John 10. 29. Does he know our wants? *Yes:* Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things, Mat. 6. 32. Is he willing to help? *Yes:* For the Father himself loveth you, John 16. 27.

6. Must we pray with others? *Yes:* There were many gathered together praying, Acts 12. 12. Must we pray for others? *Yes:* We must make supplication for all saints, Eph. 6. 18.

Q. 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?*

A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy name,* we pray, That God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

1. Ought we to desire the glory of God in the first place? *Yes:* That God in all things may be glorified, 1 Pet. 4. 11. Is God glorified when his name is glorified? *Yes:* They shall worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name, Ps. 86. 9. Is God's name glorified when it is sanctified or hallowed? *Yes:* For he is glorious in holiness, Ex. 15. 11. Ought we therefore to sanctify it? *Yes:* Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, 1 Pet. 3. 15.

2. Are we to pray that we ourselves may be enabled to glorify God? *Yes:* Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise, Ps. 51. 15. And that we may live for that end? *Yes:* Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, Ps. 119. 175. And be delivered for that end? *Yes:* Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name, Ps. 142. 7. And are we to pray that others also may be enabled to glorify him? *Yes:* That they may glorify our Father which is in heaven, Mat. 5. 16.

3. Do we here pray for the propagating of the knowledge of God? *Yes:* That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations, Ps. 67. 2. And for the conversion of souls to him? *Yes:* Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee, Ps. 67. 3. And for the success of the gospel? *Yes:* That the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, 2 Thes. 3. 1. Do we pray for the fruitfulness of christians? *Yes:* That they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God, Phil. 1. 11. And for the flourishing of the churches of Christ? *Yes:* That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified, Isa. 61. 3.

4. Do we pray that God would glorify himself? *Yes:* Father, glorify thy name, John 12. 28. And are we sure he will do it? *Yes:* For, there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again, John 12. 28. Do we pray that

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that he would exalt his own name? *Yes:* Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength, Ps. 21. 13. And are we sure he will do it? *Yes:* I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth, Ps. 46. 10. May we plead this with him? *Yes:* What wilt thou do to thy great name? Josh. 7. 9.

5. Do we pray that God would bring glory to himself out of all events? *Yes:* To thy name give glory, Ps. 115. 1. Even out of those events that seem contrary? *Yes:* That the wrath of man may praise him, Ps. 76. 10. Must we desire it concerning ourselves? *Yes:* That we may be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory, Jer. 13. 11. And concerning all our affairs? *Yes:* That Christ may be magnified in my body both by life and death, Phil. 1. 20.

Q. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?*

A. In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come,* we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

1. Must we acknowledge our heavenly Father's kingdom? *Yes:* The Lord is king for ever and ever, Ps. 10. 16. And must we admire it? *Yes:* We must speak of the glory of his kingdom, Ps. 145. 11. Must we own him to be our king? *Yes:* Thou art my king, O God, Ps. 44. 4. Must we heartily wish well to his kingdom? *Yes:* Seek ye first the kingdom of God, Mat. 6. 33.

2. Has Satan a kingdom in opposition to God's kingdom? *Yes:* For he is the Prince of this world, John 12. 31. Does he rule where sin rules? *Yes:* For he works in the children of disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. Must we pray that that kingdom may be destroyed? *Yes:* The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, Zech. 3. 2. Must we pray that the dominion of sin may be broken? *Yes:* O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, Ps. 7. 9. And that the power of the Church's enemies may be crushed? *Yes:* So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, Judg. 5. 31. And their policies blasted? *Yes:* Lord, turn the counsel of Ahitophel into foolishness, 2 Sam. 15. 31. And their projects defeated? *Yes:* O my God, make them like a wheel, Ps. 83. 13.

3. Have we reason to hope that Satan's kingdom shall be destroyed in the hearts of believers? *Yes:* For the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly, Rom. 16. 20. And that it shall be destroyed in the world? *Yes:* For, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, Luke 10. 18. So destroyed that it shall not destroy the Church? *Yes:* For the Church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Mat. 16. 18.

4. Is the kingdom of Christ our Father's kingdom? *Yes:* I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, Ps. 2. 6. Must we pray that that may be advanced? *Yes:* Prayer shall be made for him continually, Ps. 72. 15. That we and others may be brought into it? *Yes:* That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith, Eph. 3. 17. And kept in it? *Yes:* That we may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thes. 5. 23.

5. Are we to pray for converting grace? *Yes:* Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, Jer. 31. 18. And that others may partake of that grace? *Yes:* That sinners may be converted unto thee, Ps. 51. 13. Are we to pray for confirming grace? *Yes:* That God would comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work, 2 Thes. 2. 17. Are we to pray for the strengthening of faith? *Yes:* Lord, increase our faith, Luke 17. 5. And the increase of love? *Yes:* This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, Phil. 1. 9.

6. Are we to pray for the advancement of the kingdom of light? *Yes:* O send out thy light, and thy truth, Ps. 43. 3. And the kingdom of holiness? *Yes:* The God of peace sanctify you wholly, 1 Thes. 5. 23. And the kingdom of love? *Yes:* That they all may be one, John 17. 21. Must we pray for the sending forth of ministers in order hereunto? *Yes:* Pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest, Mat. 9. 38. And for the presence of God with them? *Yes:* That utterance may be given to them, Eph. 6. 19.

7. Are we to pray for the prosperity of the church? *Yes:* Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, Ps. 122. 6. And for the welfare of all who belong to it? *Yes:* Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee, Ps. 70. 4. And for the comfort of all good christians? *Yes:* Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Eph. 6. 24. Must we pray for the enlargement of the church? *Yes:* My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved, Rom. 10. 1. And for the reformation of it? *Yes:* Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, Ps. 80. 19. And for the defence of it? *Yes:* Build thou the walls of thy Jerusalem, Ps. 51. 18. And for the deliverance of it? *Yes:* Command deliverances for Jacob, Ps. 44. 4.

8. May we pray in faith for the advancement and continuance of Christ's kingdom? *Yes:* For of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, Isa. 9. 7. And have we reason to triumph in this? *Yes:* Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Rev. 19. 6.

9. Is the kingdom of glory yet to come? *Yes:* When the mystery of God shall be finished, Rev. 10. 7. Are we to pray that that may be hastened? *Yes:* Looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, 2 Pet. 3. 12. Are we to desire our own removal to that glory at death? *Yes:* Desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 2. Are we to pray that we may be ready for it? *Yes:* Watch therefore, and pray always, Luke 21. 36. And then that it may be hastened? *Yes:* Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, Luke 2. 29. Are we to pray for Christ's second coming at the end of time? *Yes:* Amen, even so come Lord Jesus, Rev. 22. 20.

Q. 103.

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Q. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?*
A. In the third petition, which is, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,* we pray that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

1. Is the will of God's commands the rule of our action? *Yes:* We must understand what the will of the Lord is, Eph 5. 17. Are we to pray that we may conform to this rule? *Yes:* That we may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. 12. 2. Must we pray that God would give us to know his will? *Yes:* Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, Ps. 119. 34. And to know it fully? *Yes:* That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, Col. 1. 9. And to know it in doubtful cases? *Yes:* Teach me thy way, O Lord, lead me in a plain path, Ps. 27. 11. Do all who are sanctified truly desire to know God's will? *Yes:* What saith my Lord unto his servant, Josh. 5. 14.

2. When we know God's will, are we able of ourselves to do it? *No:* We are not sufficient of ourselves, 2. Cor. 3. 5. Must we therefore pray to God to make us able? *Yes:* Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands, Neh. 6. 9. And must we depend upon his grace? *Yes:* I will go in the strength of the Lord God, Ps. 71. 16. Must we pray to God to make us willing? *Yes:* Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, Ps. 119. 36. And to make us entirely willing? *Yes:* Unite my heart to fear thy name, Ps. 86. 11.

3. Must we pray that we may be sincere in our obedience? *Yes:* Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, Ps. 119. 80. And that we may be exact in our obedience? *Yes:* O that my ways were directed to keep thy commandments! Ps. 119. 5. And that we may be universal in our obedience? *Yes:* That we may stand complete in all the will of God, Col. 4. 12. And that we may be armed against that which would divert us from our obedience? *Yes:* Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way, Ps. 119. 37. And must we pray that others also may do God's will? *Yes:* That they may be perfect in every good work, to do his will, Heb. 13. 21.

4. Is the will of God's counsel the rule of his actions? *Yes:* For he worketh all according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. 1. 11. Must we desire that this may be done? *Yes:* The will of the Lord be done, Acts 21. 14. Rather than our own will? *Yes:* Not as I will, but as thou wilt, Mat. 26. 39. And must we acquiesce in it? *Yes:* It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18. And must we pray that he will enable us to do so? *Yes:* That we may be strengthened with all might, unto all patience and long suffering, with joyfulness, Col. 1. 11.

5. Do the angels in heaven do the will of God? *Yes:* They do his commandments hearkening to the voice of his word, Ps. 103. 20. Do they do it readily? *Yes:* They fly swiftly, Dan. 9. 21. Do they do it zealously? *Yes:* For they are a flaming fire, Ps. 104. 4. Do they do it with an eye to God? *Yes:* For they always behold the face of our Father, Mat. 18. 10. And are we to pray that God's will may so be done on earth? *Yes:* That the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, Rev. 11. 15.

Q. 104. *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*
A. In the fourth petition, which is, *Give us this day our daily bread,* we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

1. Are we to pray for the good things of this life? *Yes:* For the Lord is for the body, 1 Cor. 6. 13. Must we go to God for them? *Yes:* For he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, Acts 17. 25. Must we go to him for the comfort of them? *Yes:* For he gives us richly all things to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6. 17. Do we deserve the good things of this life? *No:* We are less than the least of all God's mercies, Gen. 32. 10. Must we therefore beg them of God as a free gift? *Yes:* God gives thee the dew of heaven, Gen. 27. 28.

2. Are we to pray for riches? *No:* Lest we be full, and say, Who is the Lord? Prov. 30. 9. Are we to pray for dainties? *No:* Be not desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat, Prov. 23. 3. Are we to be content with such a competent portion of these things as God sees fit for us? *Yes:* Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content, 1 Tim. 6. 8. Are we to pray for that? *Yes:* Feed me with food convenient for me, Prov. 30. 8. And need we desire any more? *No:* If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come to my heavenly Father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, Gen. 28. 20, 21.

3. Are we to pray each day for the bread of the day? *Yes:* For the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, Mat. 6. 34. And must we pray for our bread honestly gotten? *Yes:* For with quietness we must work, and eat our own bread, 2 Thess. 3. 12. And have we encouragement to pray for this? *Yes:* For godliness has the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. 4. 8.

4. Do we herein pray for health? *Yes:* For God is our life, and the length of our days, Deut. 30. 20. And for success in our callings? *Yes:* Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, Ps. 90. 17. And for sleep? *Yes:* For so he giveth his beloved sleep, Ps. 127. 2. And for seasonable weather? *Yes:* Ask ye of the Lord rain, Zech. 10. 1.

5. Must we pray for God's blessing on what we have? *Yes:* For man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Mat. 4. 4. And is it then comfortable to us? *Yes:* For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, 1. Tim. 4. 5. Must we pray most earnestly for bread for our souls? *Yes:* Lord, evermore give us that bread, John 6. 34. Are we to pray for others' prosperity, as well as for our own? *Yes:* I wish that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul

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prospereth, 3 John 2. And for the supply of the poor and needy? *Yes:* That he will abundantly bless our provision, and satisfy our poor with bread, Ps. 132. 15.

Q. 105. *What do we pray for in the fifth petition?*
A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,* we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

1. Are our sins our debts to God? *Yes:* There was a certain creditor that had two debtors, &c. Luke 7. 41. Are they great debts? *Yes:* Ten thousand talents, Mat. 18. 24. Can we discharge these debts ourselves? *No:* We have nothing to pay, Luke 7. 42. Are we liable to the prison of hell then? *Yes:* Not to depart thence till we have payed the last mite, Luke 12. 58, 59. Is it possible to obtain the forgiveness of this debt? *Yes:* There is forgiveness with thee, Ps. 130. 4.

2. Are we to pray for the forgiveness of these debts? *Yes:* Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, Ps. 143. 2. And to pray earnestly for it? *Yes:* For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, Ps. 25. 11. Must we plead God's mercies? *Yes:* According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions, Ps. 51. 1. And Christ's merits? *Yes:* Through the redemption that is in Jesus, Rom. 3. 24. Must we pray for it every day? *Yes:* When we pray, give us our daily bread, we must pray, forgive us our debts.

3. Must we pray that God would ease us of the burthen of sin? *Yes:* Take away all iniquity, Hos. 14. 2. And that he would cleanse us from the filth of sin? *Yes:* Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, Ps. 51. 2. And cure us of the wounds of sin? *Yes:* Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee, Ps. 41. 4. And save us from the punishment of sin? *Yes:* I will say unto God, do not condemn me, Job. 10. 2.

4. Must we pray to God to give us that grace which will qualify us for pardon? *Yes:* For Christ is exalted to give repentance and remission, Acts 5. 31. And that he would give us the comfort of our pardon? *Yes:* Make me to hear joy and gladness, Ps. 51. 8. And must we, in order hereunto, be particular in confessing sin? *Yes:* Declare, that thou mayest be justified, Isa. 43. 26.

5. Must we forgive those who have provoked us? *Yes:* Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, Col. 3. 13. Must we bear them no malice? *No:* Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned, Jam. 5. 9. Must we be ready to be reconciled to them? *Yes:* When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any, Mark 11. 25. Should we be merciful to those that we have advantage against? *Yes:* Thou shouldest have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, as I had pity on thee, Mat. 18. 33. Is this required to qualify us for the pardon of sin? *Yes:* If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, Mat. 6. 14. Will God forgive those that do not forgive? *No:* If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours, v. 15.

Q. 106. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*
A. In the sixth petition, which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,* we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

1. Must we pray that we may not be tempted? *Yes:* Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, Mat. 26. 41. And that temptations may be removed? *Yes:* I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me, 2 Cor. 12. 8. And that we may not be overcome, by them? *Yes:* Let no iniquity have dominion over me, Ps. 119. 133.

2. Must we pray that God would not leave us to ourselves? *Yes:* Incline not my heart to any evil thing, Ps. 141. 4. And that he would not withdraw the assistance of his grace? *Yes:* Take not thy Holy Spirit away from me, Ps. 51. 11. But that he would strengthen us against every temptation? *Yes:* Uphold me with thy free spirit, Ps. 51. 12. And that he would preserve us through it? *Yes:* That our faith fail not, Luke 22. 32. Have we encouragement to pray against temptation? *Yes:* For God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, 1 Cor. 10. 13. And is prayer a part of our spiritual armour? *Yes:* Praying always, Eph. 6. 13. 18.

3. Must we dread sin as the worst evil? *Yes:* That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, Neh. 6. 13. And must we pray to be kept from it? *Yes:* To be delivered from every evil work, 2 Tim. 4. 18. And from all occasions of it? *Yes:* Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, Ps. 119. 37.

4. Must we pray against pride? *Yes:* That he may hide pride from man, Job 33. 17. And against lying? *Yes:* Remove from me the way of lying, Ps. 119. 29. And against sensuality? *Yes:* Let me not eat of their dainties, Ps. 141. 4. And against uncleanness? *Yes:* Create in me a clean heart, O God, Ps. 51. 10. And against covetousness? *Yes:* Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness, Ps. 119. 36. And against all tongue-sins? *Yes:* Set a watch, O Lord, before the door of my mouth, keep the door of my lips, Ps. 141. 3. Must we pray especially against wilful sin? *Yes:* Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, Ps. 19. 13. Must we pray that others also may be kept from sin? *Yes:* I pray to God that ye do no evil, 2 Cor. 13. 7.

5. Must we pray to be delivered from other evil? *Yes:* Keep me from evil that it may not grieve me, 1 Chron. 4. 10. Must our eye be to God for our preservation? *Yes:* Hide me under the shadow of thy wings, Ps. 17. 8. May we take encouragement in this prayer from God's power? *Yes:* For he is able to keep that which we have committed to him, 2 Tim. 1. 12. And from his promise? *Yes:* There shall no evil befal thee, Ps. 91. 10. And from our own experience? *Yes:* He that

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that has delivered, does deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver, 2 Cor. 1. 10.

Q. 107. *What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen,* teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*

1. Are we in prayer to plead with God? *Yes:* I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments, Job 23. 4. Are our pleadings to move God? *No:* For he is in one mind, and who can turn him, Job 23. 13. Are they to move ourselves? *Yes:* That we may stir up ourselves to take hold on God, Isa. 64. 7.

2. Can we in prayer plead any merit of our own? *No:* We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, Dan. 9. 18. Must we therefore take our encouragement from God only? *Yes:* Defer not for thine own sake, O my God, v. 19. And must we depend on that encouragement? *Yes:* Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee, Ps. 39. 7.

3. May we plead that his is the kingdom? *Yes:* Art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? 2 Chron. 20. 6. And that his is the power? *Yes:* There is nothing too hard for thee, Jer. 32. 17. And that his is the glory? *Yes:* Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, Ps. 79. 9.

4. May we also plead his mercy? *Yes:* Save me for thy mercy's sake, Ps. 6. 4. And his promise? *Yes:* Remember thy word unto thy servant? Ps. 119. 49. And our own experience of his goodness? *Yes:* Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling? Ps. 56. 13. But must we especially plead the mediation of his Son? *Yes:* Look upon the face of thine anointed, Ps. 84. 9. And may we hope to prevail in these pleadings? *Yes:* For the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Jam. 5. 16. Is it God's grace in us which alone qualifies us for his favour? *Yes:* Thou wilt prepare their heart, and then thou wilt cause thine ear to hear, Ps. 10. 17.

5. Are we in prayer to praise God? *Yes:* Every day will I bless thee, Ps. 145. 2. Are we to ascribe kingdom, power, and glory to him? *Yes:* Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, Rev. 5. 13. Must we acknowledge them to be his? *Yes:* Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, 1 Chron. 29. 11. Must we acknowledge them to be his for ever? *Yes:* Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, Ps. 145. 13. And must we desire to be for ever praising him? *Yes:* I will sing praise to my God, while I have any being, Ps. 104. 33. Is the work of praise good work? *Yes:* It is pleasant, and praise is comely, Ps. 147. 1.

6. Does Amen signify our desire to be heard? *Yes:* So be it, O Lord, Jer. 11. 5. And our hope that we shall be heard? *Yes:* We know that we have the petitions that we desired of him, 1 John 5. 15. Is it therefore proper to conclude our prayers and praises with Amen? *Yes:* Let all the people say, Amen, Hallelujah, Ps. 106. 48.

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CHRIST'S FAVOUR TO LITTLE CHILDREN DISPLAYED,

IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED MARCH 6, 1713.

MARK x. 16.

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

APPLICATION was made to our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth, on a great variety of occasions: some we find imploring his favour upon one account, and some upon another; some for themselves, and some for their relations; some for the body and some for the soul: thus was fulfilled the prediction of the dying patriarch concerning Shiloh, that *to him shall the gathering of the people be.*[a] And be it observed, for the encouragement of all who humbly, and in faith, apply themselves to him—of the *multitudes* that spread their complaints before him, he never sent *any* away from him, ashamed of their hope in him: he gave them all an answer of peace; and they had what they came for.

But here in this paragraph—of which my text is the close—we have application made to Christ, upon an errand different from any other, but such a one as those who knew the heart of a parent, of a Christian parent, will be glad to be encouraged and directed to come to him upon, and will therefore bless God that it is here upon record. There were those who brought *young children to him, that he should touch them,* v. 13. In St. Matthew's gospel it is said, *they desired that he would put his hands upon them, and pray.*[b]

Who they were that brought these children, we are not told; whether their parents—or no—it is most likely they were, for who should shew so much concern for them as they? Nor are we told what number of children were brought; nor whether they were all of one family; nor just *of what age* they were, but as to that, St. Luke tells us they were τὰ βρέφη,[c] it is the word which in the story of Christ's birth we translate the *babe,* in swadling clothes, and in the manger;[d] and it is put for *new born babes* that desire the breast.[e] The critics say it signifies a *child at nurse.** They are said to be brought to Christ, which intimates, that they could not go themselves; and it is plain that they were very little, for he took them up in his arms; so little, that he could easily hold them in one arm, for so he did when he put his hands upon them to bless them.

[a] Gen. 49. 10. [b] Mat. 19. 13. [c] Luke 18. 15. [d] Luke 2. 12. [e] 1 Pet. 2. 2.

* See Dr. Whitby.

Christ came to teach; and heal; and bless,—to teach a world that sat in darkness; to heal a world that was sick and dying; and to bless a world that lay under the curse.

Now, 1. These children were not brought to Christ, to be *taught,* for they were not yet capable of receiving instruction; nor could they profit by his preaching, or put any questions to him. Those who are grown up to years of understanding, have need to be busy in *getting knowledge now,* that they may redeem the time they lost, through the invincible incapacities of their infancy.

Nor 2. Were they brought to Christ to be *cured,* for it does not appear that they needed it. Little children are indeed liable to many distempers, painful, mortal ones. The physicians have a book among them *De Morbis Infantum—on the diseases of infants.* Death and its harbingers reign even over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,[a] but these children were strong and healthful, and we do not find that any thing ailed them.

But 3. They were brought to Christ to be *blessed;* so they meant when they desired that he would touch them; the sign is put for the thing signified: the laying on of hands, was a ceremony anciently used in blessing; when Joseph brought his two sons to Israel, and put one to his left hand, and the other to his right, that he might *touch* them, that which he desired was, that he would *bless* them:[b] so these brought their children to Christ, not that he might touch and *heal* them, but that he might touch and *bless* them, with the saving strength of his right hand.

They looked upon Christ as a prophet, as a great prophet, as *that prophet which should come into the world,* as one who had a great interest in heaven, and, consequently a great influence upon this earth. Now if he be *a Prophet,* he shall *pray for thee*;[c] but then thou must pay him so much respect as to desire his prayers,—this honour they here give to Christ, (as it is fit those should do, who expect to receive favour from him,) in their humble request that he would lift up a prayer for their children; which they believe will avail much, as the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man.[d]

It is good to have an interest in the prayers of those who are of the spiritual seed of Jacob, who seek God, and know how to wrestle with him. And to improve that interest for ourselves and our children; we should

[a] Rom. 5. 14. [b] Gen. 48. 13. [c] Gen. 20. 7. [d] Jam. 5. 16.

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not only pray with, and for, our families, ourselves—but engage the prayers of our friends for them, that we may hereby not only put an honour upon prayer, but put an honour upon our brethren; and upon the communion of saints, not only the communion of Churches, but the communion of religious families,—who all meet in him, in whom all the families, all the praying families of the earth are blessed.[a] A treasury of prayers laid up for our children, may stand them in better stead, than thousands of gold and silver laid up for them. But if we desire this kindness of our friends, and brethren, and ministers,—we must remember that one good turn requires another, and must, therefore, make conscience of praying for them and their families, as for ourselves, and for our own. St. Paul, who prays so earnestly for his friends, does as earnestly desire their prayers for him.[b] *The Lord give mercy to the households*[c] of our acquaintance, is a petition which (or something like it) should have a place in our daily prayers.

Now the text tells us, how they succeeded, who brought their little children to Christ, to be blessed and prayed for; how well they succeeded.

And it is recorded by *three* of the evangelists; because it was a manifest indication of the design of Christ, to continue to the children of believers under the New Testament dispensation, the same covenant right, and visible Church membership, that they had under the Old Testament dispensation, by virtue of God's promise to Abraham and his seed, that blessing of Abraham, which comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;[d] and because it gives us great encouragement—when we come to Christ ourselves—to bring our children with us, and present them also to him.

They who brought these infants to Christ, were frowned upon and discountenanced by the disciples; they rebuked them, because they would not have such a needless trouble (so they thought it) given to their Master, who had other work enough upon his hands; if this be encouraged, they shall see no end of it; was it not enough that he cured the sick, which none but he could do, but he must bless the healthy too, which others might do? How well is it for us, that our Master has more tenderness and compassion than the best of his ministers have; and is touched more nearly than they are, or can be, with the feeling of our infirmities,[e] and an inclination to gratify those innocent desires of humble and believing supplicants, which those who think themselves polite and refined, look upon with a slight as not worthy taking notice of. In grace and goodness he is God and not man;[f] nay, he is both God and Man; as Man, he has himself suffered, being tempted, and is therefore able with the greater sympathy, to succour then who are tempted;[g] and as God—in doing good—his thoughts and ways are infinitely above our's, the best of our's, above those of the best of us.[h]

[a] Gen. 12. 3. [b] Rom. 15. 30. [c] 2 Tim. 1. 16. [d] Gal. 3. 14. [e] Heb. 4. 15. [f] Hos. 11. 9. [g] Heb. 2. 18. [h] Isa. 55. 9.

As, when God promised to shew Moses his *glory* he proclaimed all his *goodness*, and caused that to pass before him;[a] so our Lord Jesus, when he would let his chosen ones *see his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*, he shewed himself upon all occasions *full of grace*.[b] Among men it is looked upon, to be the symptom of a sweet and loving disposition, to take notice of little children, and to be familiar with them:[c] by this, among many other instances, our Lord Jesus shewed himself to be kind and benign, meek and lowly in heart: that, upon all occasions, he discovered a particular kindness for little children, and never more than upon this occasion: when he gave a severe reprimand to his disciples for prohibiting those who brought their children to him; he was ἠγανάκτησε—*much displeased at it*; he was both *sorry* and *angry* that his own disciples did not better know his mind, and that they should be adversaries to those for whom they ought to have been advocates: and he gave orders immediately that *they* should be called to him, *who brought the children*, (who, perhaps, upon the disciple's check, were going off,) and that room should be made for them to come to him: by all means *suffer the little children to come to me*, and *do not forbid them*; for they belong to the Church, *still; as much as ever*; the *kingdom of God* which I come to set up includes them. They are within the allegiance of Messiah the Prince, and he will own them as his subjects.

And—not only for the satisfaction of those who brought them, and to please them, but for the benefit and advantage of the children—he took them up, with a great deal of endearing tenderness, in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them; did not only *pray* for a blessing, as they desired,—but *commanded the blessing*, as one having authority, even *life for evermore*,[d] which is inclusive of all blessings.

But what encouragement (you will say) does this give to us? Christ is not, now, among us as he was then; and we cannot either make such addresses to him, or receive such favours from him, as they then might. It is true we cannot in such a sensible manner, but we may as really in a spiritual way make our applications to him, and expect communications from him; for in him all fulness dwells, to him all judgment is committed, and the knee of every supplicant must bow to him: and we are sure he has blessings as much at command now as ever he had; and therefore from the kind entertainment he gave to these children who were *brought* to him, we are warranted to infer his readiness to receive our children that are *offered up to him*, for it is certain never any one was the worse for going to heaven.

From hence observe then, That our Lord Jesus has given us great encouragement to hope, that he will favourably accept our little children, when, in a right manner, we bring them to him for a blessing.

I shall endeavour to shew (I.) How we must, now, bring our little children to Christ. (II.) What entertainment we may promise ourselves they shall find with

[a] Ex. 33. 18, 19. [b] John 1. 14. [c] 1 Pet. 2. 3. [d] Ps. 133. 3.

him;

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him; according to this instance in the text. And then (III.) make application.

Those who are truly ambitious of this honour for their children—and covetous of this wealth for them—to have them blessed of Christ, cannot but wish to know, how they may bring their children to him, so that they may hope to obtain his favour. *Say not in thine heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven,*[a] where Christ sits at God's right hand, and take my children with him thither to receive his blessing:"—No: *the word* of God is nigh to thee; and Christ, in the word; and his blessings; to be received by faith, applying the word to ourselves. The tabernacle of God is among us; the priests, the spiritual sacrifices, the Israel of God,—where two or three of them are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them,[b] both to receive their homage, and to give out his favours. Where his ordinances are administered according to his institution, and those things which he has commanded, observed and taught; there will he be all the days even *to the end of the world*;[c] there he records his name, and there will meet his people, and *bless them:* nay, wherever a true Christian is, there is a living temple; in which God is served and honoured, and his blessings and favours communicated, by his Spirit dwelling in the heart. There is still a way of access to Christ, a new and living way: by which we may not only come to Christ ourselves, but bring others to him; bring our's to him, our children who are pieces of ourselves.

Four ways we must bring our children to Christ:

1. By surrendering them to him. When by a deliberate and solemn act of our souls, we resign and give up with ourselves, the children also which God has graciously given us, to the Lord Jesus, to be to him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory;[d] to be Christians, devoted to his honour, and employed in his service; to be members of that body whereof he is the head; servants in that family whereof he is the master; and subjects in that kingdom of his among men, which is incorporated by that great gospel charter, *Disciple all nations into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:*[e]—then we may bring our children to Christ: We present them to him,[f] (a poor present to him who has a world of angels at command, yet such as he requires and will accept of,) as living sacrifices, which we desire may be holy and acceptable; it is our reasonable service.

Parents are invested by nature in a right to their children, and an authority over them for their good. A daughter in her father's house, was accounted by the law not *sui juris—her own right;* he could disanul her vows.[g] Now this right in our children—we must not only acknowledge to be subordinate to that prior superior title God has to them; for we are only the fathers of their flesh, he is the father of their spirits;[h] But we must also transfer to our Lord Jesus, whom the father has constituted the great trustee, both of all the powers with which he intended mankind should be ruled, and of all the *favours* with which he intended mankind should be blessed.

Our children are God's children; (they are *my sons* and *my daughters*, saith God, *which thou hast born unto me;*)[a] and, therefore it is sacrilege to alienate them from him, and to devote them to the service of the world, and the flesh; it is prophaning the holy things of the Lord our God. And it is our duty to dedicate them, and dispose of them as he directs. Now he directs us to give them up to Christ; to enrol them among his disciples; to enter their names among his servants,[b] who being born in his house, belong to his family, and are entitled to the protection and provisions of it, and taken under the order and discipline of it.

That is a great word, and speaks much of the dignity and power of our Lord Jesus; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.*[c] All the things that concern his honour and government, all his part of the matters in varianee between himself and fallen man, he has put into the hands of the Mediator, as referee of the controversy, the blessed Day'sman, who has laid his hand upon us both. Now that which he requires of us (and with good reason) is, that we love the Son, and give all things into his hand; all our interests and concerns; and particularly our children, who were made and born for immortality, who are entered into a state of probation and preparation for eternity, whom therefore we commit to him as to their guardian: by whose gospel, life and immortality are brought to light,[d] and brought to hand.

Hereby, we do honour to the exalted Redeemer, and recognize his authority; as one to whom the Father has therefore given power over all flesh, especially over the spirits of all flesh, that he should *give eternal life to as many as he had given him,*[e] as many of them. We own his dominion both in heaven and on earth, by owning his indisputable title to our children; both to their bodies, by which they are allied to the earth; and to their souls, by which they are allied to heaven and the world of spirits.

Hereby, we confess, that as we ourselves so our children are more his than our own; and therefore we desire that both we and ours may live to him. And in thus honouring the Son we honour the Father also; for Christ came to bring us to himself, that he might bring us to God.[f] Our children are therefore brought to Christ, the mediator of the covenant, that through him they may be brought to God, as their God in covenant. When Israel was taken into covenant with God, express notice is taken not only of their captains, and elders, and officers, but of their little ones, as parties to the covenant which the Lord their God made with them.[g]

Hereby, we do *well* for our children, the *best* we can do for them; for we give them up to him who is able

[a] Rom. 10. 6. 8. [b] Mat. 18. 20. [c] Mat. 28. 19. 20. [d] Jer. 13. 11. [e] Mat. 28. 19. [f] Rom. 12. 1. [g] Num. 30. 5. [h] Heb. 12. 9.

[a] Ezek. 16. 20. [b] Ps. 116. 16. [c] John 3. 35. [d] 2 Tim. 1. 10. [e] John 17. 2. [f] 1 Pet. 3. 18. [g] Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12.

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to do that for them which we cannot do, and which must be done for them, or they are undone. We know they derive through our loins sinful and corrupt natures; we know they are shapen in iniquity, they are called, and not miscalled, *Transgressors from the womb:*[a] what therefore can we do for them, but bring them to him who came to save sinners, to save them from their sins? They are born polluted; and by presenting them to Christ, we bring them to the fountain that was opened for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in from sin, which is uncleanness.[b] They are born distempered; and we thus bring them to the great Physician to have their temperament corrected, to have their very constitution altered; to have not the mass of their blood, but of their minds, changed for the better, that *as they have born the image of the earthy, they may also bear the image of the heavenly.*[c]

Now this solemn surrender of our children to God as theirs in covenant, if we ourselves be in covenant with God, I think ought to be done by the ordinance of Baptism; an ordinance peculiar to the Redeemer's kingdom; and a seal as circumcision was, of the righteousness which is by faith,[d] and therefore, like it, belonging both to believers, and to their infant seed. Our Saviour when he instituted that ordinance, gave a double intimation concerning his gospel-kingdom which was then to be set up: One was, that it must not be *confined to the Jews,* but, *spread to the Gentiles;* therefore go and *make all nations disciples:* The other was, that it should not be *confined to that generation,* and live and die with the apostles. It must not be (as the historian says of the Roman Commonwealth) *Res unius ætatis—a thing confined to one age:* no, it must continue—for Christ *will* continue at the head of it, and in the midst of it—always, even to the end of the world. Now, as baptism did subserve the former design, and attended the progress of the gospel to the most distant regions of the earth; so we have reason to think it was instituted equally to subserve the latter design, and to attend the propagating of the gospel to the latest ages of time, that by taking early hold of the seed of the faithful, and giving their parents, and ministers, and consciences, early hold of them, provision might be made (as was by the altar, *Erd.)* that nothing might make them cease from fearing the Lord:[e] that thus a seed might serve the Lord Jesus, which should be accounted to him for a generation:[f] and by keeping up the entail, and as it were by a continual claim, the name of Christ might endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.[g]

But waving this dispute: I insist upon that, in which I am sure we are all agreed, that our children are to be given up to the Lord Jesus; (and *of his own* do we give him, for he has *bought them with a price*;)[h] that they may glorify him in body and spirit, and he may be honoured even by *their* Hosannas. We lend them to the Lord as Hannah did Samuel,[i] that they may be his all the days of their life; and if they be so, they shall be his to the endless ages of eternity.

2. We must bring them to Christ, by seeking to him *for* them, as those who are surrendered to him: They are to be but once baptized,—but they are to be daily prayed for, and the promise sealed to them in their baptism put in suit and pleaded with God in their behalf. These brought their children to Christ, when they begged his blessing on them, and thus we must bring ours to him; bring their case to him, the case of their souls, their precious souls, which ought to be laid nearer our hearts than any thing else that concerns them.

When Christ was here upon earth, we read of many who applied themselves to him for mercy for their children: *Lord have mercy upon my son,*[a] saith one, *Lord have mercy upon my daughter,*[b] saith another: and the children fared the better for the faith and prayers of the parents. And we may, as easily, come to him now he is in heaven, and more easily; and with the same petition: Lord have mercy on my son, on my daughter, who is foolish, and vain, and carnally minded, (which is death)[c] and much under the power of Satan. Even our little children's souls are to be prayed for; for we believe they are born in sin, and foolishness is bound in their hearts: And we see how soon corrupt nature appears and works in them, and how the tares spring up with the wheat: let us therefore be earnest with God for the operation of his grace upon their hearts betimes; that Christ be formed in their souls when they are young, and they may be sanctified from their infancy. *They are thine, save them.*[d] Ishmael was very young when Abraham prayed so affectionately, *O that Ishmael might live before thee!*[e]

Our children are capable of being prayed for, and of receiving benefit by prayer, before they are capable of being taught, and of receiving benefit by instruction: and as their being baptized lays us under an engagement to teach them, so it gives us an encouragement to pray for them; and we should begin early to do it. Look up to Christ, and beg of him to bless them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, which will be the best provision, and the best portion for them.

Be *constant* in praying for your children; pray for them as duly as for yourselves,—as St. Paul for his friends, making mention of them always in every prayer. Be *particular* in praying for them; pray for each particular child, as holy Job offered burnt-offerings for his sons, according to the number of them all;[f] that you may be able to say as Hannah, *For this child I prayed:*[g] pray for particular blessings for your children, according as you see their case requires, for *that* grace which you observe their natural temper (or distemper rather) calls for.

Let us take heed lest our prayers degenefate into formality, and we pray for them only from custom, and

[a] Isa. 48. 8. [b] Zec. 13. 1. [c] 1 Cor. 15. 49. [d] Rom. 4. 11. [e] Josh. 22. 25, 34. [f] Ps. 22. 29, 30. [g] Ps. 89. 28. [h] 1 Cor. 6. 20. [i] 1 Sam. 1. 28.

[a] Mat. 17. 15. [b] Mat. 15. 22. [c] Rom. 8. 6. [d] Ps. 119. 94. [e] Gen. 17. 18. [f] Job 1. 5. [g] 1 Sam. 1. 27.

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in no better manner than we can soon teach them to pray for themselves, and for us too, by rote: but let us pray for them, from a principle of concern for their precious souls; in the prosperity and welfare of which *their* happiness, and *our* comfort in them, is bound up. When a child is born, there is a candle lighted that must burn to eternity, either in heaven or hell: the consideration whereof, should awaken us to pray with all possible earnestness for the salvation of their souls, next to that of our own.

When they are *little*,—they cannot pray for themselves: and if you *do not* pray for them, who *should?* When they are *grown up*,—it may be they are careless, and will not pray for themselves to any purpose, and then their case is the more piteous; it may be they are wicked and profane, and hate prayer,—yet continue to pray for them, for while there is life, there is hope, and while there is hope, there is room for prayer: and who knows but he who waits to be gracious, may at length be gracious to you, and your child that is dead, may be alive again.[a]

Have an eye to Christ in all your prayers for your children; let the prayer be directed to *Him*, as it was here. It was in his name particularly that they were baptized, and therefore in his name they must be prayed for, and into his hands all our petitions to God must be put. We may with him plead their baptism: "Lord, they are given up to thee to be thine; make them thine own; then own them as thine." Plead his interest in them as the children of his family, the lambs of his flock, the pets of his school; plead your dedication of them to him, and his acceptance of them; and resolve to leave them with him.

It is by prayer that we *cast our care* upon God; cast it upon the Lord Jesus, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, and who is entrusted with the administration of the providential kingdom, in subserviency to the mediatorial kingdom. Our children are a considerable part of our care: what they will prove, and what will become of them: we must by prayer, cast this care upon Christ; and believe that the children of the greatest, are not above the need of his care, nor those of the meanest, beneath the cognizance of it.

3. We must bring them to Christ, by submitting them to the disposal of his providence. When we have by prayer sought to him *for* them, we must by a cheerful acquiescence in his wisdom and goodness, make ourselves easy concerning them; believing, that Christ knows what is fit for them and us, better than we do. We bring them to Christ, when we bring our will, concerning them, into an entire submission to his will; believing that he will be sanctified, and resolving that then we will be satisfied.[b]

Let us make Christ guardian to our children, not only when we are dead, but while we live; trust them with him, and put them under his protection; as Jacob did his children when he was parting with them: *God Almighty give you mercy!*[c] And when he was parting from them—*The Angel that redeemed me from all evil*[a] (and that can be no other than the Lord Jesus, the angel of the covenant) *bless the lads!*

When we can refer it to the divine will, whether our children shall be healthful or sickly, high or low, rich or poor, prosperous or crossed, thriving or declining in the world:—whether they shall live to be old, or die young; provided it may but go well with their precious souls, and they may be happy to eternity; then we bring them to Christ, as a skilful, faithful Physician; willing he should take what method he pleases with them, so he will but cure them, and save them. I have read of a good man, whose son being disposed of in the world, met with great affliction, which he once very feelingly complained of to his good father, who answered: (according to the principle I am now upon:) "Any thing child, to bring thee to heaven."

4. We must bring them to Christ, by subjecting them, as far as we can, to the government of his grace. Having laid their necks under the yoke of Christ in their baptism; we must teach them to draw in it, and use our interest in them, and authority over them, to keep them under that easy yoke,—and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of our Lord Jesus.[b]

Having got them enrolled among his servants; we must teach them, betimes, to know their master, and to own his dominion over them, and their obligations to him; bring them into their master's presence,—bring them to see him, bring them to hear him,—by bringing them to his word and ordinances. Feed your kids beside the shepherds' tents;[c] let them have family instruction, as soon as they are capable of receiving it; and, be brought to sit under the public ministry, as soon as they are capable of not being a disturbance to it.

Bring them to Christ's feet; by taking pains to impress upon their minds—the indispensable necessity of their being taught, and ruled, by Jesus Christ; of their believing his truths, and obeying his laws; in order to their present and eternal welfare. We brought them to Christ, by an instituted *sign* of their being his in their baptism; we bring them to Christ, by the instituted *means* of their being his, in their religious education: both those we second with prayer, that they may be his: thus far we must go, and further we cannot.

II. You see how you may bring your little children to Christ.—I come next to shew you, for your encouragement, how you may hope he will receive those who are thus brought to him, and what entertainment they may expect; surely, something like the kind entertainment he here gave to these little ones: He took them up in his arms, put his hand upon them, and blessed them. Such visible, sensible signs of his favour we are not now to expect,—but *that* which is more than equivalent in spiritual blessings.

Only let me premise, that we cannot be so confident

[a] 2 Sam. 12. 22. [b] Lev. 10. 3. [c] Gen. 43. 14.

[a] Gen. 48. 16. [b] Eph. 6. 4. [c] Cant. 1. 8.

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of God's giving his grace to our children, if we in sincerity pray to him for it, and use the means, as we may be of his giving it to ourselves, if we do so. Many a godly parent no doubt has brought his children to Christ, as before directed, who, yet, have proved wicked and vile, and strangers to Christ, and come short of his blessing, but it has been through their own default; many are sacramentally regenerated, and born again of water, by which they have been partakers of the christian name, who, yet, are never really regenerated, and born again of the Spirit,[a] but live and die destitute of the nature of christians: all we can say is: that if we thus bring our children to Christ,—they stand much fairer for, and nearer to his blessing, than if they be not brought to him. There are promises and precedents which we may take encouragements from, and upon which we are caused to hope, that Christ will give them his grace; will work his *good work* in them, both as a token of, and as a qualification for his *good will* towards them; and if He do, it will be an addition to our comfort, that it is an answer to our prayers, and the fruit of our labours; if he does not, it will be a support to us under our grief, to have the testimony of our conscience that, by the grace of God, we have in some measure done our duty, and then left the event with God, whose grace is his own.

Let us now observe the instance of Christ's favour to these children; and inquire what we may expect that has some resemblance of it.

1. *He took them up in his arms.* See how Christ does more for humble believing supplicants than they can ask or think: it was only desired he would touch them, but he did more, he embraced them; and it speaks not only his wonderful condescension, but his compassion and affection. A little while previously, when he had occasion to set a little child before his disciples as a pattern of humility, he not only set the child in the midst of them, which was sufficient to answer his intention; but he took him in his arms,[b] to shew his tender love to those who are as little children. (*When Israel was a child then I loved him.*[c]) This spake the kindness our Saviour[d] had for the human nature and race; his φιλανθρωπια—*his joy* in the *habitable part of the earth,* and his *delight in the sons of men.*[e]

Christ took up these children in his arms as one well pleased with them, and concerned for them; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said concerning him—*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather his lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.*[f] Time was, when he himself was taken up in old Simeon's arms.[g] And he did himself pass through the age of infancy, to make it honourable and comfortable to the *children* of his people; and the expressions of his favour afterwards to *little children,* make it much more so: when their mothers and nurses carry them in their arms, and are almost tired with the load, let them refresh themselves with this thought; that the Holy Child Jesus was carried in arms, and did himself take up little children in his arms. When Moses was charged thus to bear Israel, he found himself aggrieved, *Have I conceived all this people?*[a] *Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father bears the sucking child:* But what Moses complained of, Christ had complacency in; he took them up in his arms: it is but one word in the original, ἐναγκαλισάμενος—*he in-armed* them, he *took them into his embraces;* as he did his spouse, who said with satisfaction, *His left-hand is under my head, and his right-hand doth embrace me.*[b]

But *how* may we hope he will take our children in his arms, when we bring them to him? Surely we may promise ourselves no less than what David promised himself, *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*[c] We may hope:

(1.) That he will take them up in the arms of his *power,* and providence; that he will *hold their souls* in life, and protect them from, or carry them through, the weaknesses and perils of the infant age: that he will give *his angels,*[d] the *little ones'*[e] angels, *a charge concerning them,* to bear them in *their arms*;[d] and *their* arms are *his* arms, the arms of his power. The name of the Lord is a strong tower,[f] into which the righteous are not only welcome to run themselves, but to bring their children, and where they and theirs may hope to be safe: so safe, as that no real evil, no evil shall befal them. The arm of the Lord is revealed in favour of the little ones, even of a sinful race, witness those of unbelieving murmuring Israel: But your little ones, though living in a barren wilderness, and likely to be made a prey, them will I bring into that land which I have promised, and you have despised:[g] Much more shall it be stretched out for the relief and preservation of the faithful seed, whose refuge the Eternal God[h] is, and will be. And underneath them are the everlasting arms; such are the arms of the Lord Jesus,—which cannot faint or be weary,—and by which all things are upheld, else they would sink.

That Divine Providence which supports children in their childhood, and carries them through that helpless age; which puts it into the hearts of parents to provide for them; which preserves to them their limbs and senses, of which they might, by a thousand accidents, be deprived in a moment; by which they grow in strength and stature; is to be mentioned to the honour of the Redeemer, to whom it is owing that the race of mankind continues *in being* upon the face of the earth, though guilty and obnoxious. It is in the Redeemer's arms, by whom all things consist,[i] that children are borne up, and carried on *to* full age; for to him are owing all the reprieves *of* God's patience,[k] and all the gifts of his common providence. This we have all experienced ourselves, and must acknowledge it with thankfulness to the Redeemer's praise; as the royal psalmist does, *Thou art he that took me out of the*

[a] John 3. 5. [b] Mark 9. 36. [c] Hos. 11. 1. [d] Tit. 3. 4. [e] Prov. 8. 31. [f] Isa. 40. 11. [g] Luke 2. 28.

[a] Numb. 11. 12. [b] Cant. 2. 6. [c] Ps. 27. 10. [d] Mat. 18. 10. [e] Ps. 91. 12. [f] Prov. 18. 10. [g] Num. 14. 31. [h] Deut. 33. 27. [i] Col. 1. 16. [k] 2 Pet. 3. 15.

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womb; thou didst make me hope, and keepest me in safety when I was upon my mother's breast: I was cast upon thee from the womb, thou art my God from my mother's belly[a]—*By thee have I been holden up*—and therefore *my praise shall be continually of thee.*[b] And what we have experienced ourselves, we may humbly expect for our children—if we bring them to Christ, to whom we have brought ourselves.

(2.) That he will take them up in the arms of his *pity* and *grace*; that he will in compassion to their precious souls, the case of which by nature is very piteous, undertake to cleanse and cure them; to sanctify and save them; that—as in his love and pity he has shed his blood to wash from sin, and so prepared the laver—he will, in love *to them*, and pity *to them*, sprinkle that purifying healing blood upon them, that they may by it be washed from their sin, and sanctified for God, as *their* God.

The loveliest sweetest babe we ever saw, though like Moses in the ark of bullrushes, exceeding fair, to admiration; yet, like him, it is born in a land of Egypt, in a house of bondage; like him, marked for the sword as soon as born; nay, it is like the infant in Ezekiel's parable, *polluted in its own blood*, and cast out *to the loathing of its person*;[c] it is shapen in iniquity, it is born in sin, and its precious soul is defiled and deformed, and an object of pity: That this is a melancholy thought and a damp to the pleasure we take in our children. But this is a comfort: that Christ has compassion on them, has arms to gather them up in, and has given us hopes that he will say unto them *Live*, yea, he will say unto them *Live*;[d] will wash them from their filth, will cloath them with his grace: (and the *time* will be a *time of love* indeed, both to *them* and *us*:) that he will embrace them, as the father of the prodigal did his returning son, when he fell on his neck and kissed him;[e] will receive them into the arms of a covenant of grace, out of which they shall never be plucked, and in which they shall be for ever easy and happy.

2. He put his hands upon them:[f] they desired he would *touch them*, one touch from Christ has done wonders; but he did more, he *put his hands on them*, as he did on John when he said, Fear not; and as he did on many whom he cured; to intimate that virtue went out of him—for the purpose to which he intended it.

But *how* may we hope that Jesus Christ will now put his hands upon us and our's?

(1.) If he set us and our's apart for himself,[g] as his own peculiar people—we may say he puts his hand upon us and our's: as the buyer lays his hand on the goods he has agreed for, they are now his own: as Jacob put his hand on the head of Joseph's sons, to signify not only his blessing them, but his adopting them, and taking them for his own, *Let my name be named upon them.*[h] This we hope Christ does for our children, when we bring them to him; he owns them for his; and we may say they do in some degree belong to Christ, are retainers to his family.

It is an honour and comfort to have our little children called christians, called by Christ's name, to have them numbered among his peculiar ones; among the servants born in his house, distinguished from the children of heathens, who have not the knowledge of God and Christ; to have them added to the church, which is God's treasure in the world; planted in his vineyard, sown in his field, to be a holy seed, a seed for God—especially if we have some good hopes, through grace, that they are not only admitted to a place in the courts of God's house now, but are designed for his holy place above, for the congregation of the righteous there. If Christ will but put his hand upon them, and say, They shall be mine in that day when, I make up my jewels[a]—we have enough, we have all we wished for in bringing them to him.

(2.) If he give his Holy Spirit to us and our's, it may truly be said, He puts his hand upon us and them. The Spirit is sometimes called the *finger of God*, and sometimes the *hand of God*;[b] so that Christ's putting his hand upon us,[c] not only puts us into a relation to him, but works a real change in us; lays hold on the soul for him; and puts his *image*, as well as *superscription*, upon it. The laying on of hands was a ceremony used in conferring the Holy Ghost; and this we pray for, and hope for—from Christ—for our children, when we bring them to him.

And there are *words* upon which he has encouraged us to hope for this. We find it possible that children may be sanctified from their birth,[d] that they may be filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb;[e] nay, we find it promised: That God will pour his Spirit upon our seed,—and his blessing, that blessing, that blessing of blessings upon our off-spring:[f] that *his Spirit upon thee* shall *not depart from thy seed*:[g] that his Spirit shall be poured out upon our sons and daughters:[h] that our children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace:[i] the *New Testament* promise is to us and to our children; not only *that* of the forgiveness of sins, but *that* of the gift of the Holy Ghost.[k] These are the true sayings of God: and we may put them in suit, and expect the performance of them—for our children—when we bring them to Christ: And O that he would thus *put his hand upon them.*

3. He blessed them. He was desired to pray for a blessing for them, but he did more, he commanded[l] the blessing, blessed with authority; he pronounced them blessed, and thereby made them so; for those whom he blessed, are blessed indeed. Christ is the great High-Priest, whose office it is to bless the people of God and all their's. When he parted from his disciples at his ascension, he blessed them;[m] he left blessings behind him for his Church on earth, and all the members of it—the little ones not excepted.

[a] Ps. 22. 9, 10. [b] Ps. 71. 5, 6. [c] Ezek. 16. 5, 6. [d] Ezek. 16. 9. 10. [e] Luke 15. 20. [f] Rev. 1. 17. [g] Ps. 4. 3. [h] Gen. 48. 16.

[a] Mal. 3. 17. [b] Luke 11. 20. [c] Ezek. 3. 14. [d] Jer. 1. 5. [e] Luke 1. 15. [f] Isa. 44. 3. [g] Isa. 59. 21. [h] Joel 2. 28. [i] Isa. 54. 13. [k] Acts 2. 38, 39. [l] Ps. 133. 3. [m] Luke 24. 50.

When

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When God took Abraham into covenant, he promised to bless him: and the blessing wherewith he blessed him was, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed:*[a] but that was not all, he promised that in the Messiah, who should descend from his loins, all the nations of the earth should be blessed;[b] not only blessed *by* him, but blessed *in* him,—in that righteousness and salvation which should be wrought out, and brought in by him. The transferring of this blessing was the great care and business of the Patriarchs; Jacob and Esau strove for it; and Jacob got it,—the Jews sinned it away, for themselves, but not for the world; and therefore, by the gospel, this blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles,[c] that comprehensive blessing, that God will be a God to them who believe, and to their seed: this blessing Christ has the conferring of; for he is the Mediator of the covenant, and Trustee of the blessings of it. Now if we, in faith, bring our children to him, as Mediator,—we may hope he will bestow this blessing upon *them* with other the children of the church; for St. Peter gives the *Jews* this reason why God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless *them*, because they were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant.[d] Now if we and our's be children of the prophets, and of the covenant,—*of* the prophets, by our assent to gospel truths; and of the covenant, by our consent to gospel terms,—we may hope to inherit (and our seed after us) that blessing which Christ was sent to bestow.

The prayers made by the Israel of God—for all its members, from the *least* to the greatest, are encouraging to our hopes that they shall share in the blessing: Our children are, not only, prayed for by us—as parts of our family—but they are prayed for by all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ,[e] their Lord and our's, as belonging to Christ's family, to the *nursery* in that family; the welfare and prosperity of which, all who are concerned for the perpetuating of Christ's name and throne, cannot but have a particular and tender concern for. In bringing them to Christ, we bring them within the prayers of all good christians; which we hope may obtain a blessing for them.

The promises made to the Israel of God are yet more encouraging; especially since Christ came to *confirm the promises* made to the fathers,[f] that in him they might be—*Yea* and *Amen*. Now it is promised, that the *generation of the upright shall be blessed;*[g] that the *seed of God's servants* shall be *established before him:*[h] That they shall be so remarkably pious and prosperous, that *all who see them shall acknowledge them,*[i] *that they are the seed which the Lord has blessed.* Lord be it unto thy servants according to the word which thou hast spoken.

III. The Application.

1. Let me hence address myself to children, to little children, to the lambs of the flock, to the youngest who can hear with understanding:[k]—will not you be glad to hear this,—that the Lord Jesus Christ has a tender concern and affection for you; and that he has blessings in store for you, if you apply yourselves to him, according to your capacity? Shall I speak to you in the words of David? *Come ye children, hearken to me, and I will teach you,*[a] as young as you are, *the fear of the Lord:* nay, I would teach you not only the fear of God, but the faith of Christ; and therefore address myself to you, in the words of St. Paul, *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you,*[b] till his image be renewed upon you, and he live in you.[c]

You hear, dear little ones, what Christ has done for you, what favour he has shewed to those of *your age:* and will not you put in for an interest in his favour, and the provisions he has made for the entertainment of children? Has he thus loved you, and will not you love him? Has he such kind thoughts toward you, and will not you have dutiful thoughts toward him? Does he invite you to him, and will not you accept of his invitation? He says here: *Suffer little children* not only to be brought to me, but *to come to me;* to come as they can themselves, to make it their own act and deed; and do not forbid them, for it is possible, that of those of their age may be of the kingdom of God, that they may get to heaven.

You love those who take notice of you, and play with you, and give you toys: and will you not love those who pray for you, and instruct you, and would bring you to be acquainted with the best things? Will you not reckon them your friends indeed, who seek the welfare of your souls, your eternal welfare?

Be sensible betimes of the corruption of your nature, that *foolishness is bound in your heart:* and give all diligence to get a change wrought in you. Begin betimes to put a difference between God's name and other names; God's book and other books; God's day and other days. Be dutiful to your parents; and labour to be a comfort to them. Love prayer, learn to pray, and be much in it. Mortify your passions; keep them under, and do not indulge them. Hate and abhor lying, and make conscience of speaking truth.

There are little books, both of counsels and examples, suited to your age: "*The Token for children*" by Mr. Janeway, and Mr. White's *Little book for little children:* which you should not be strangers to. Love your *catechism*, and hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard; but above all, see to it that from your childhood you know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation.

Lay yourselves at Christ's feet: and he will take you up in his arms. Give yourselves to him: and he will give himself in his graces and comforts to you. Lie in his way, by a diligent attendance on his ordinances; and he will not pass by without putting his hand on you. And if you value his blessings aright, and be earnest with him for a blessing,—he will bless you with the best of blessings, such as will make you eternally blessed,

[a] Gen. 17. 7. [b] Gen. 12. 2, 3. [c] Gal. 3. 14. [d] Acts 3. 25, 26. [e] 1 Cor. 1. 2. [f] Rom. 15. 8. [g] Ps. 112. 2. [h] Ps. 102. 28. [i] Isa. 6. 9. [k] Neh. 8. 2.

[a] Ps. 34. 11. [b] Gal. 4. 19. [c] Gal. 2. 20.

2. This

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2. This passage affords both direction and encouragement to Christian parents: *I write unto you fathers*, and unto you mothers, who have a tender concern for your children, and desire they may do well, and would fain do well for them: observe the entertainment Christ gave to the children who were brought to him; and see it written *for your learning*.

(1.) Let this direct us, who are parents, concerning our children. We have seen *how* we are to bring them to Christ: and have we *thus* brought them to him? We brought them to baptism: but did we thereupon bring them to Christ? Was it done as unto the Lord? If it was, let us now make it to appear. Have we brought our children to Christ, with hopes that they have been accepted of him?

[1.] Let us then, still, *bring them to him*—by faith and prayer, according as their case requires; be, daily, *laying them at his feet*, by resigning them, to his conduct, and referring all events concerning them, to his wise and gracious disposal; be, daily, *putting them in his arms*, by intreating his favour towards them, as that which is the life of their souls, and better than the life of the body.

You see here *what* to desire and pray for, for your children: *that the Mediator's blessing may be their portion*; for that is a portion for the soul and eternity, a good part that shall never be taken away from those who have it. Covet not *great things in the world* for them, a little will serve to bear their charges through it: but be earnest with God for blessings for them *in heavenly things by Christ Jesus*; let them have these, and they have enough.

When you bless your children, (and it is good sometimes to do it solemnly,) let your eye be to Christ; in whom alone it is that blessings are entailed on us and our's; and through whose hand they are derived. The patriarchs in blessing their sons had an eye to a Christ to come; and to Him, now he is come, much more ought *we* to have an eye.

Pray daily with your children, and servants; that they may hear you pray for them, and may thereby be taught and quickened to pray for themselves. I hope none of you dare live in the neglect of family prayer; dare omit it, either morning or evening; when you know that—instead of the blessing of Christ—the wrath and curse of God is poured out on the families that call not on his name.[a] While you and your families live without prayer, you live without God; you make no joint-acknowledgment of him, and can expect no joint-receiving from him. It may justly be feared that those who throw aside so necessary, so comfortable, so advantageous a duty as family prayer is, do not make conscience of secret prayer neither, but frequently omit it, or at least do not make a business of it, but suffer it to degenerate into a formality. And how can you expect *daily blessings* upon your children, if you do not *daily* ask for them? or to have an interest in the intercession which Jesus Christ is continually making for us in heaven, if you do not pray continually morning and evening, in the virtue of that intercession. Have you settled a correspondence between Christ and your families, by devoting your children to him in their Baptism? and will you not keep up that correspondence? How can you expect the benefit of it, if you do not on your part keep it up?

You who have the charge of families, remember that you are Christians, and ought, in that capacity, to confess Christ, and to own and honour him before your families. There is such a general disuse of Christian conference, that most are ashamed—by that, to acknowledge Christ before their neighbours: but they cannot have that pretence to decline it before their own children and servants. If therefore with the heart you believe unto righteousness,[a] think how necessary it is, that thus with the mouth you make confession unto salvation. Remember that your family is a family of *Christians*, not a herd of *Negroes*; I should say a herd of *brute beasts*; (for those who have charge of Negroes, ought to pray for them, and to have them prayed with:) and you look upon them as no better than brute beasts, if you do not pray with them,—nay and worse; for the ox knows his *owner*, and the ass his *master's crib*,[b] but you go not before them in acknowledging their *great Owner*, nor lead them to the footstool of *their Master's throne of grace*. But I hope better things of you.

Use the Baptism of your children, as an argument with yourselves to pray with them: and then you may use it as a plea with God, for the mercies you ask of him for them. "Lord Jesus, I have presented my children to thee; and thou hast accepted them. I still present them to thee, and wilt not thou still accept them? Thou hast blessed them: wilt thou not say they shall be blessed? and then they are blessed indeed."

[2.] Let us then bring them up for him. Have we any good hope through grace, that Christ has owned our dedication of our's to him, has taken them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them?—let us then receive each of them from him again, as given to us, with the same charge that Pharaoh's daughter gave to Moses's mother, *Take this child, and nurse it for me*. You are to look upon your children as given up to Christ, and to manage them accordingly.

Has Christ shewed such a tender affection to your little children? be not you then hardened against them, do not rule them with rigour; provoke them not to wrath,[c] lest they be discouraged. Be gentle among them, for so the nurse cherishes her children.[d] Study to make your children love you; and then every thing you enjoin them will be easy. When you are angry at them,—let it be for that only, for which you know Christ would angry at them; and that is for their sins, which must be restrained by the rod and reproof—not for their weaknesses and childish infirmities, which time will wear off. Has Christ blessed your children, and put honour upon them? Do not you curse them,

[a] Jer. 10. 25.

[a] Rom. 10. 10. [b] Isa. 1. 3. [c] Eph. 6. 4. [d] 1 Thes. 2. 7.

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and give them such scurrilous language as Saul gave to his son Jonathan,[a] lest you teach them to give the like to their inferiors. *Bless; and curse not.*

Have you given up your children to Christ? bring them up then in his nurture and admonition. It is not enough that you pray with them and for them daily, but you must daily instruct them in the things of God, and in all those things that will be profitable to them. It is observable, that—immediately after the laying down of that great truth, *That the Lord our God is one Lord,* and of that great law, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart*—it follows, as an indispensable duty, and a means of keeping up religion in the world, *Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children:* and look upon it to be one of the most needful pieces of work thou hast to do; more needful to get the knowledge of God for them, than to get estates for them, nay than to get bread for them. Thou shalt therefore not only hear them their catechism once a week, but thou shalt talk freely and familiarly of the truths and laws of God among them, with all gravity and seriousness, *when thou sittest* with them in thine house, and *when thou walkest* with them by the way.[b] At night *when thou liest down,* read a portion of Scripture to them, and oblige them to take notice of it; and again in the morning *when thou risest up;* that thus the word of Christ might dwell in them richly. You know they cannot learn Latin, but they must go to school every day; nor learn a trade, but must go to shop every day; and ought they not to have daily instructions out of the word of God, in order to their getting the knowledge of Christ, which is infinitely more excellent?

Take particular care to bring your children acquainted with Jesus Christ, the true treasure hid in the field of the Scriptures; Christ and him crucified; Christ and him glorified. You call the baptizing of your children, the *christening* of them. I wish you would consider it; and think, how little it will avail them to have been christened, if they do not learn Christ, if they be not taught the truth as it is in Jesus.[c] Let not your children rest in a mere Natural Religion; that is *good,* it is necessary: but it is not enough. You must make them sensible of their need of Christ, of their lost and undone condition without him; must endeavour to lead them into the mysteries of our reconciliation to God, and our redemption from sin and wrath, by a Mediator; and O that they may experimentally know him, and the power of his resurrection!

In teaching children the knowledge of God, both the parents are concerned to do their part. Solomon speaks both of the instruction of the father, and the law of the mother;[d] but when they are little, the mother has a greater opportunity of instilling into them that which is good, and ought to improve it. Timothy got to know the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, by being brought up under a good mother and grandmother;[e] and King Lemuel, when he is come to the throne, forgets not the prophecy that his mother taught him.[a]

And as in other accomplishments of your children; so in the business of religion, which is their best and true accomplishment,—you must, as they come to be capable, put them on to advance. When they have gone through their learning, you put them into business; when they have served their apprenticeship, you set them up for themselves; and thus when you have brought them to some competent knowledge of Christ, and have some reason to hope, that the Spirit of grace has begun a good work in their souls,—persuade them to take the covenant of Baptism upon themselves, in the use of the other seal, that of the Lord's Supper, and so by their own act and deed, to join themselves to the Lord. Tell them, "You brought them to Christ, when they were infants; you have been ever since shewing them the way to him; and now they must come themselves to him. Though they be weak,—if they be willing," you may assure them, "they shall be welcome; for those who come unto him he will not, no he will not cast them out.[b] If they sit down at his feet to hear his words; he will take them up in his arms, and bless them."

And there is one thing more, in which I must be a monitor, particularly: else I should not be a faithful monitor to parents, who have brought their children to Christ, and who hope that he has blessed them: and that is, that they be careful how they dispose of them in the world when they are grown up—lest by an error here, they undo all that they have been doing for them. In putting them apprentices, placing them in callings, and in marrying them; let Christ be consulted about it; let the interests of the better part be consulted in it; that is best for them which is best for their souls, against which you should not be swayed by any worldly interests or regards whatsoever. If you have laid a good foundation, let it be your care and endeavour that it may be built upon.

(2.) Let this encourage us, who are parents, concerning our children; and enable us to think of them with comfort and hope, in the midst of our cares about them:—They are dear to us, we look with pleasure upon these olive plants round about our tables, yet not without a mixture of pain, because children are (as we commonly say) "certain cares, but uncertain comforts;" these arrows in the hand, may prove arrows in the heart;[c] Absalom, whose name signifies *The peace of his father,* lived to be his greatest trouble:—But when we consider that we have brought them to Christ, and he has received them,—we cannot but thank God and take courage. When we *wish* well to them, we would willingly *hope* well: and this is ground of hope,—*that our Lord Jesus has expressed so much favour to little children.*

[1.] *This* may comfort and encourage the tender careful mothers in nursing them: *that they are carrying those in their arms whom Christ has taken up in his.* Not

[a] 1 Sam. 20. 30. [b] Deut. 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. [c] Eph. 4. 20, 21. [d] Pro. 1. 8. [e] 2 Tim. 1. 5.

[a] Pro. 31. 1. [b] John 6. 37. ὁ μή, a double negative. [c] Ps. 127. 4.

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only their *natural affection* to them, as pieces of themselves, may sweeten and ease the pains they take about them; *that* makes even the *sea monsters draw out their breasts and give suck to their young:*[a] but their *gracious affection* to them as members of Christ, as beloved of him, and partakers of benefit[b] by him, may much more do it. You are *careful for them with all this care;* they require a constant attendance, and many a time, it may be, break your *sleep;* but if you do it as unto the Lord, if you have an eye to Christ in it,—"This I do for a child that is adopted into his family, as well as born into mine;"—you may depend upon him to pay you your wages,[c] though it be your own child. Your care about your little ones keeps you from church, it may be, many a time; and keeps you, that you cannot spend so much time in your closets as you used to do: but if thus it be sanctified by an eye to our Lord Jesus, and by your prayers to God for them as his, more than as your own, you are therein truly serving the Lord Christ yourselves, and not only so, but are breeding up servants for him, that you hope will be vessels of grace and glory.

[2.] *This* may comfort and encourage us if our children labour under *any* bodily weaknesses and infirmities, if they be unhealthful and often ailing, which is an allay to our comfort in them: let this serve to balance that: *If they belong to Christ, and be blessed of him, they are blessed indeed;* and nothing amiss of that kind shall be any prejudice to their blessedness, or diminution of it, but may, being sanctified, become rather a friend and furtherance to it. Many have been the wiser and better, the more humble and heavenly, for their having borne the yoke of affliction in their youth.[d] You see what an affection Christ discovered for these children; and may conclude, by reflecting upon yourselves, that he has a particular tenderness for children in affliction: those are commonly most indulged by their parents that are *sickly;* and like as a father pities *those* children,[e] so does the Lord Jesus much more, as he often evidenced when he was upon earth. As the abiding illnesses of the children are the parents continual affliction, it is a cross they are to take up daily; so the abiding compassions of Christ toward them, ought to be their continual consolation, and a cordial they may have recourse to daily.

[3.] *This* may comfort and encourage us—in teaching and catechizing our children; in giving them a pious education; and in praying with them and for them: *that we are doing it for Christ; that we are workers together with him.* And we may hope he will work together with us, and then our labour shall not be in vain. If we have given them to Christ,—they shall be taught by his Spirit, and are within the reach of that precious promise, that all shall know God, from the least even to the greatest.[f] It may be they are dull and slow, and not so apt to learn as we could wish: Christ's own disciples were so, yet he bore with them, and brought them at last to a *full assurance of understanding;* and therefore despair not concerning your children who are but of a small capacity. It may be your children are hopeful and forward, and very promising: and it is your joy to see it in hopes they will be ornaments to your families,—but it ought to be much more so, in hopes they will be, in their day, faithful servants to the interest of God's kingdom among men. And what prospect can be more pleasing—next to that of our own everlasting bliss—than to have good hope through grace, that our children shall be praising God on earth, when we are praising him in heaven; and that we and they shall be, together, for ever praising him. *I have no greater joy,* says the apostle, *than to hear that my children walk in the truth.*

[4.] *This* may comfort and encourage us—in all our cares concerning our children when they grow up, in providing for them, and disposing of them. If we have in sincerity given them up to Christ, and he has accepted of them,—*we may hope, he will dispose of every thing that concerns them for the best,* and they shall in this world reap the benefit of the promises made *to* the faithful *and* their seed,[a] and the prayers made *by* the faithful *for* their seed. If they be not feasted, yet verily they shall be fed; if we have but little to give them, yet the blessing of Christ upon that little, will make it every way better to them than the riches of many wicked.[b] Many, no doubt, have had reason to acknowledge, that their comfortable passage through this world has been very much owing—to the blessing of Christ, upon their early dedication to him, and education for him. If Christ has taken up our little ones into his arms,—provided they do not by their wickedness throw themselves out of his arms, we may be sure, he is able to keep what we have committed[c] to him, through all the attempts of an ensnaring world; that he will never drop them, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands.

[5.] *This* may comfort and encourage us, if our children be removed from us by death in their childhood: (this is a common case; that which came forth like a flower, is soon cut down; and the gourd which came up one night, and which we were exceeding glad of, withers the next night, and leaves us in tears: now it is enough to SILENCE us in such a case,—that it is the Lord that gave, and the Lord that taketh away, and if he takes away who can hinder him? May he not do what he will with his own? Let Aaron therefore hold his peace,[d] for God is glorified: But *this* goes further, and may SATISFY us:) *that if Christ has owned them in the kingdom of his grace, he will receive them into the kingdom of his glory.* We are indeed kept in the dark concerning the state of those that die in infancy, they are left to the mercy of God: but the children who are given up to Christ by their believing parents, are not left to uncovenanted mercy. *The Lord knows them that are his,* though we do not: but we may hope that it shall go well with those whom Christ has taken up in his arms, and blessed; and, that he who was so well pleased with the children's Hosannas,

[a] Lam. 4. 3. [b] 1 Tim. 6. 1. [c] Exod. 2. 9. [d] Lam. 3. 27. [e] Ps. 103. 13. [f] Heb. 8. 11.

[a] Ps. 37. 25, 26. [b] Ps. 37. 3, 16. [c] John 10. 28. [d] Lev. 10. 3.

even

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even in the Old Jerusalem, will reckon himself glorified by their *Hallelujahs* in the New Jerusalem.[a]

[6.] *This* may comfort and encourage us if we should be taken away from our children by death, while they are little: (this also is a common case, and a mournful one; we know not how soon we may fall under the arrests of death, and may see the day, that awful day approaching, which will cut off the number of our months in the midst. In such a case, as to our own souls—we may perhaps be able to say, as our Master did, with an air of triumph, "Now we are no more in this world."[b]—O that we may be able, at such a time, with this cheerfulness, to say so!—But though we should; yet, like him concerning his disciples, we must say concerning our children, *But* THESE *are in the world:)* How shall we leave them? Where and with whom shall we leave them? With whom, but with him who has said, *Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me;*[c] who has taken it among the titles of his honour to be a *Father of the fatherless*, and *a Judge of the widows.*[d] If we have made Christ guardian to our children, let us make it appear we are entirely well satisfied in his wisdom and faithfulness.

But [7. *& ult.*] *What* may we have to comfort and encourage us, if our children should prove wicked and vile; if they should forsake their God, and the God of their fathers, and walk in the paths of the destroyer, notwithstanding our utmost endeavours to engage them for Christ? It is very often a case in fact; we cannot deny it; it is possible the best parents may have the worst children: yet if we SHOULD SUPPOSE a falling from *grace and holiness adherent*, which, through the divine condescension and compassion, might have availed to the salvation of such as die in infancy,—that WILL NOT INFER a falling from *grace and holiness inherent*; what Christ does *herein*, we know not now, but we shall know hereafter.[e] But disputes in this case are cold comforts to the poor parents; whose hearts bleed and break to see the destructive courses which their children take,—whom they thought they had lodged safe in the hands of the mediator,—for whom they have prayed many a prayer, and shed many a tear: They thought Christ had taken them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, but it does not prove so: What shall we say to comfort such?

It may be some satisfaction to them, that however it goes with their children, Christ will be glorified; if they do not give honour to him, he will get him honour upon them. And if God be sanctified, we ought to be satisfied, and with reverence to behold both the goodness and severity of God; on them which fall, severity,—but towards them who stand, goodness—if they continue in his goodness.[a]

But it will be yet *more* satisfaction to them,—if they have the testimony of their consciences for them, that they have done their duty; which they did, with a resolution to leave the event with God. They knew they could not give grace to their children: but their hearts can witness for them, that, to the best of their power, they digged about these barren trees, and dunged them,[b] as the dresser of the vineyard did; and if they bring forth fruit well, they shall have the comfort, and God the glory,—but if not, they must be content to see them cut down, and though they cannot have comfort in that, yet God will have glory, and they acquiesce.

But the greatest comfort of all in such a case is, that the unbelief and disobedience of their children shall not make void God's promise to them, and therefore ought not to make void their comfort in God. *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious.*[c] Abraham is happy in heaven, though there be those in hell who can call Abraham father. It was the comfort of holy David, though he saw a great deal of sin and trouble in his family—*Although my house be not so with God* as I could wish it, yet I am sure of this, *he has made with me an everlasting covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure, and that is all my salvation,* and therefore shall be *all my desire.*[d]

[a] Mat. 21. 15, 16. [b] John 17. 11. [c] Jer. 49. 11. [d] Ps. 68. 5. [e] John 13. 7.

[a] Rom. 11. 22. [b] Luke 13. 8, 9. [c] Isa. 49. 5. [d] 2 Sam. 23. 5.

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A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. ATKINSON:

IN LONDON, JANUARY 7, 1712-13.

ISAIAH 6. 8.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me.

IT is no absurdity at all, at the ordination of a gospel minister, to borrow instructions from the mission of an Evangelical Prophet; for the treasure, is for substance the same, which is lodged in both these earthen vessels. And though there are diversities of gifts,[a] and administrations, various degrees of light, and methods of revelation, yet in all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit; the very same Spirit of the Lord, that, both, came upon the Old Testament Prophets, and remains with the New Testament ministry.[b] In allusion to the Old Testament way of revelation, gospel preaching is called prophesying, let us *prophesy according to the proportion of faith.*[c] And the Prophets are called the brethren of gospel ministers. The angel says to John, *I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the Prophets.*[d] The *ordinary* influences and operations of the Spirit, and its plentiful effusion, in *Gospel times*,—in the prediction and promise of it, is represented by the *peculiar and extraordinary* ways of discovery of the divine will *then* in use: *I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,*[e] they shall have a *clear insight* into the things of God, and be able to *speak clearly* of them to one another.

None perhaps of all the Old Testament Prophets, had a more awful and solemn mission than the Prophet Isaiah; who spake so plainly and fully of Christ, and the grace of the Gospel. Ezekiel's mission was likewise very awful; whose errand chiefly was to reprove and threaten, and display the terrors of the law: but the vision that introduced his mission, was more dark and mystical.

We dispute not, whether this was Isaiah's first mission; it is likely it was not; the sermons in the foregoing chapters being placed before it. He had, if I may so say, prophesied for some time as a candidate,—that he might, first, be tried, and might himself make trial of his work; in that he was owned of God; and yet he had this solemn mission afterwards. He was, before, sent of God, spake in his name, and knew he did; but his commission was then virtual and implicit, but was now more expressly recognized, when his work grew more upon his hands, and the difficulties and oppositions he met with in it increased. Now this ambassador made his *public entry.*

If we look back to the preparatives for this solemnity, (which we have an account of, in the foregoing verses of this chapter,) we shall find the prophet very deeply touched with a humbling sense of his own sinfulness, and a comfortable sense of the pardon of sin, and his acceptance with God. I take notice of these —for instruction to you, brother! who are this day dedicating yourself to the service of God in the Gospel of his Son, that you may walk in the same Spirit.

1. He was much affected with a sight and sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness. See how he cries out: upon a sight of God in his glory, and hearing his holiness praised: *Wo is me, for I am undone*;[a] I am *cut off*,—so the word is; I deserve to be cut off from all my privileges and hopes as an Israelite; for *I am a man of unclean lips*, unfit, unable to be employed in speaking for God:—I dwell, indeed, *in the midst of a people of unclean lips*, who deserve to be reproved, and need to be reformed—but how unfit am I to be made use of as an instrument herein, who am myself a man of unclean lips; and never saw so much of it, nor so much of the evil of it, as now that mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

God looks upon those as *fittest* to be honoured by him, and employed for him, who are humble and low in their own eyes. When a soul is brought to cry out, Woe is me, for I am undone, it is then in a fair way to be saved for ever. As Christ, so christians—are first humbled, and then exalted; like a corn of wheat, die first, and then revive.

And as to particular services: "Before honour is humility." When we see ourselves utterly unworthy of the honour, and unfit for the service we are called to,—then free grace will be the more magnified in passing by our unworthiness, and making us strong out of weakness. They who abase themselves under strong convictions of their own sinfulness and vileness, into an entire subjection to God's grace and government, and a cheerful condescension to the meanest services,—these are they whom the King of Kings delights to honour. *They* stand fairest for preferment in the Messiah's kingdom, and are likely to be great

[a] 1 Cor. 12. 4, 11. [b] John 14. 16. [c] Rom. 12. 6. [d] Rev. 22. 9. [e] Joel 2. 28.

[a] Isa. 6. 5.

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in it, who humble themselves like little children;[a] who do it naturally, and with sincerity, not artfully, affectedly, and with design.

2. He was likewise impressed with a comfortable assurance of the pardon of his sin, and his reconciliation to God. A coal from the altar was laid upon his mouth:[b] not to burn it, but to purify it, to take away the uncleanness of his lips which he complained of, for the sin that truly humbles us, shall not ruin us: and it was said to him, *Lo, this has touched thy lips, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* And *blessed is the man,* thrice-blessed is the minister, *whose iniquity is forgiven,*[c] and who knows it, by the witness of God's Spirit with his spirit. They who are thus sprinkled from an evil conscience are best prepared to serve the living God,[d] and can come boldly to and from the throne of his grace.

None are so fit to display to others the riches of gospel-grace, as those who have themselves received the comfort of it. They can best preach Christ crucified, who have known experimentally the power of his death, and are themselves clothed with that everlasting righteousness, which by it he brought in. And how feelingly may they preach repentance and remission of sins to others; who have themselves tasted the bitterness of discovered guilt, and the sweetness of a sealed pardon. And this is one reason, why the ministry of reconciliation is committed to men like ourselves, who labour under the same burthens, and lie open to the same dangers with the rest of mankind. The great Prophet cries out, *Wo is me, I am undone,*—the great Apostle cries out, *O wretched man that I am,*[e]—that others, who make the same complaints with them, may be encouraged to hope for the same relief that they found; and that they may recommend to others the same foundation which they have themselves built upon, and comfort others with the same comforts wherewith they themselves were comforted of God.

The Prophet being thus prepared to have so great a work, and so great a trust put into his hand,—we have, in the text and the following verses, the committing of that *work,* and that *trust* to him; for as God sends none but those whom he has first prepared, so those whom he has by his grace prepared, he will some time or other find an opportunity to send,—for God makes nothing in vain. Jeremiah who is *formed* for a Prophet, shall be *ordained* a Prophet.[f]

Now observe in my text the solemn treaty and transaction between God and Isaiah upon this matter. Behold a communion between God and man; as, of old, God talked with Abraham.[g] *Be astonished, O heavens at this, and wonder, O earth,* the Lord of life and glory converses familiarly with poor sinful dying worms of the earth, as one friend converseth with another. Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord, and understands it, returns a direct answer to it, and receives a reply; and thus a correspondence is settled between him and heaven, in order to the carrying on of the work that was before him.

This communion with God, is that which all christians must keep up by faith; both in receiving the word from God, and in lifting up their prayers to him. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my Face,* I heard what thou saidst; understood the meaning of it, applied it to myself, and complied with it; my heart presently answered, *Thy Face, Lord, will I seek.*[a] *Return ye backsliding children—Behold we come unto thee.*[b]

And it is that which ministers particularly, are concerned to acquaint themselves with; for an *experimental* knowledge of the mystery of communion with God, which the greatest part of the world are such utter strangers to, is, without doubt, a very *necessary* qualification for that office and work, which was instituted, on purpose for the maintaining and carrying on of that communion. How can we expect that God should speak *by* us, if we never heard him speaking *to* us; or that we should be accepted as the *mouth of others* to God, if we never spoke to him intelligibly and sincerely *for* ourselves? How can we carry on the treaty of peace between God and man, if we have not, by searching the Scriptures, come to know something of the mind of God,—nor, by searching into our own hearts, come to know something of the case of man? Moses was first well acquainted with God himself; inquired concerning his name, and heard it proclaimed; before he was employed as a mediator between God and Israel. And Samuel was, first, brought to know the Lord and his word,—and then was established a Prophet.[c]

Now, in the text we have two things concerning Isaiah's mission:

I. The counsel of God concerning it. *Whom shall I send?*

II. The consent of Isaiah to it. *Here am I, send me.* Each of these will furnish us with some useful observations, proper to the present occasion.

1. We have, here, *the counsel of God concerning it.* And it is good to trace all divine things to the divine counsels; the streams, to the springs. God is here introduced, as it were, deliberating and advising with himself whom he should send—To shew the house of Jacob their sins, and their misery and danger because of sin; as if he were considering and consulting about it, *Whom shall I send?* We have a like representation to Micaiah: when he saw the Lord sitting on his throne, surrounded with the host of Heaven, and heard him saying, *Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead?*[d] Now this is spoken ἀνθρωποπαθῶς,—*after the manner of men,* and therefore according to our rule we must take care to understand it θεοπρεπῶς,—*so as becomes God,* so as not to derogate from the glory of any of his infinite perfections.

As God needs not to be counselled by others; for *who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his*

[a] Matt. 18. 4. [b] Matt. 6. 7. [c] Ps. 32. 1. [d] Heb. 9. 14. [e] Rom. 7. 24. [f] Jer. 1. 5. [g] Gen. 17. 3.

[a] Ps. 27. 8. [b] Jer. 3. 22. [c] 1 Sam. 3. 7, 20. [d] 1 Kings 22. 19, 20.

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councellor hath taught him:[a]—So he need not consult with himself; For deliberating supposes something of hesitation, which is not to be supposed in the eternal mind; as God never varies from himself, so he never wavers in himself. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world;* when Christ asked Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* he said it, only to prove him, for he himself knew *well* enough what he would do.[b]

But sometimes the wisdom of God, though never at a loss, is expressed by a solemn consultation; to shew that what God does is the result of an eternal counsel. And some have observed that God is never represented consulting with himself, but in cases wherein man was concerned, who is the particular care of the divine providence. As—About the creation of man, *Let us make man;*[c] and after the fall, *The man is become as one of us;*[d] and when the nations were to be dispersed, *Let us go and confound their languages.*[e] God would hereby shew that there is a counsel in his whole will;[f] and would teach us to ponder the path of our feet,[g] and to consider our ways,[h] and to do nothing rashly, but to make use of our own wisdom, by communing with our own hearts; and of the wisdom of others, by asking advice of them,—for in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

And God's being introduced here, *considering* whom he should send, intimates that the sending forth of ministers, is a work not to be done but upon very mature deliberation, and with good advice. Christ did not send out his Apostles to preach, till he had kept them some time with him as his pupils; and our rule is to lay hands suddenly on no man, lest we be partakers of other men's sins.[i]

Now we may here observe:

1. WHO *it is that is here consulting?* "I heard the voice of the LORD," proposing the question; and it is GOD "*in his glory.*" And it is GOD in *Three Persons.*

(1.) It is God *in his glory,* the Same that he saw in the first verse, *upon his throne, high and lifted up.* Not that he saw his essence, no man has seen that or can see it, but such a display of his glory in vision, as he was pleased at this time to manifest himself by, as to Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai.

When God thus appeared in his glory and majesty, attended with a glorious retinue of holy angels, and their adorations; then, was he considering whom to send upon an embassy to man: And it tends very much to set off the condescension of God's grace to us, that he is so highly exalted, and yet so kindly takes cognizance and care of us. His goodness is his glory, and adds lustre to his greatness. And, among men, those are truly the greatest who are the best, and do most good; *as* it magnifies HIS goodness, that though he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself; was so from eternity,—and would have been so to eternity, if we had never been, or had been miserable,—yet he has an eye to man, and a concern for him. Though he be infinitely *above* the possibility of *being* benefited by us, yet thus he *visits and regards us;*[a] thus God's *Majesty* makes his *Mercy* shine the brighter; as where he says, that the same God who rides upon the Heavens by his name JAH, is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows.[b] Though God be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly; and though it be condescension to behold the things done *in Heaven,* yet his regards stoop much lower, and he dwells *with men upon the earth.*[c]

And methinks it puts a great honour upon the work of the ministry, that when God was about to send a Prophet to speak to his people in his name, he would thus appear in the glories of the upper world, upon a throne high and lifted up, as one who is God over all, blessed for evermore; higher than the highest. Though ministers are, themselves, men upon a level with you; despicable, and despised; the *foolish things of the world,* and the *weak:* yet He that *sends* them is enthroned, is greatly exalted. Though their original is mean; their character is truly great, they are the embassadors of the King of Kings.

Let this support and encourage faithful ministers under all the contempts that are put upon them, and the reproaches they are loaded with: that how much soever they are trampled upon and run down, he that sent them—and will bear them out; whose messengers they are, and whose messages they bring; who does protect them, and will reward them—is the Lord, high and lifted up. Such an honour does it put upon the gospel ministry, and such encouragement does it give to gospel ministers,—that our Lord Jesus gave these gifts unto men, when he ascended on high, when he entered upon the glories of his exaltation, and rode in triumph, leading captivity captive.[d] Embassadors have respect paid them according to the dignity—not of their private families, but of the Prince who sends them.

(2.) It is God *in three Persons;* which is plainly intimated in the plural number here used, *Who will go for* US? It is *one God:* who says whom shall I send: And yet this ONE is *Three Persons,* the very Same who said, let US make man; and it is intimated in the *plural* termination of "*Elohim,*" yet joined with words of the *singular* number; as *In the beginning* בראשית אלהים *DII creavIT.* As sometime "*Eloah,*" which is *singular,* is joined with a word *plural, Where is God my Maker,*—אלוה עשי *God my makers.*[e] *Remember now thy Creator,*—בוראיך *thy Creators*; which (says Coccejus) though they are not full proofs of the doctrine of the trinity, yet they are memorials of it, intimations of it for the present, till it should be more fully revealed in the New Testament.

The adversaries of this truth seek to avoid the force of the argument from this text, and the like; by saying:—That when God says, *Let* US *make man,* and

[a] Isa. 40. 13, 14. [b] John 6. 5, 6. [c] Gen. 1. 26. [d] Gen. 3. 22. [e] Gen. 11. 17. [f] Eph. 1. 11. [g] Prov. 4. 26. [h] Hag. 1. 5. [i] 1 Tim. 5. 22.

[a] Ps. 8. 1, 4. [b] Ps. 68. 4, 5. [c] Ps. 113. 5, 6. [d] Eph. 4. 8. [e] Job 35. 10.

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Who will go for us, he speaks *more Regio—in the Style of Kings.* "*We* will and command;" *so, the Socinians:*—but it was not so used in the Hebrew language:—that it is God consulting with his *house of judgment*; so, the Jews; but they know not, nor can tell us, what they mean by it;—with the angels; so says Grotius: but do Prophets go on the service of angels? Or are they sent on their errands?—No, these are mere evasions: It is the SAME that says, *Whom shall I send?* in the singular number: and, *Who will go for us?* in the plural number.

And to throw more light upon, and add greater weight to this, it is observable, that the *words* which follow in the two next verses; *which* the LORD said: *Go make the heart of this people fat:*[a]—are, in the New Testament, applied both to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST. They are applied to the SON: where Esaias, *when* he said these things, is said to have seen HIS *glory*, the glory of CHRIST, (for of Him the evangelist is there writing,) and to have spoken *of* HIM.[b] And, to the BLESSED SPIRIT: where it is said, *Well spake the* HOLY GHOST, *by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers; saying, Go unto this people, and say, hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand.*[c]

The Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity gloriously concur—as in the creating of man; so in the redeeming and governing of man, and particularly in sending messengers to the children of men, to bring them revelations of the will of God. Ministers are ordained, in the same name into which christians are baptized; *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*;[d] nor could they baptize in *that* name, if they were not commissioned by the authority, and devoted to the glory, of *that* name. The *Three* that *bear record on earth; the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood,*[e] that is, the Scriptures, and the Two Sacraments:—are derived from the *Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.* And the *last-named* of the Three that bear record in Heaven, is the Same with the *first-named* of the three that bear record on earth; as the *nexus* or bond of union between them. And the Spirit speaking to the churches:[f] by ministers, as expositors of the Scripture, and stewards of the mysteries of God,—they may therefore be justly looked upon as sent by, and going for, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. *What the consultation is, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Some think *this* refers to the particular message of wrath against Israel, which we have in the next verses: Who will be willing to go upon such a melancholy errand? Who can be prevailed with to carry a message which they cannot but carry—as the prophet Ezekiel did—in the bitterness of their souls?[g] And—as St. Paul,—with great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart.[h]

But I rather take it, more largely, for all the messages which he was intrusted to deliver in God's name to that people; the *secondary* EFFECT of which was, the making of their "heart fat, and their ear heavy," but it was by no means the *primary* INTENTION; the proper tendency of the word, was to be a savour of life unto life: but—if it prove a savour of death unto death,[a] that is their fault who make an ill use of it.

"*Whom* shall I send?" Some one must be sent, this perishing self-destroying people must have fair warning given them, but it was hard to find a proper messenger. Not that God was in doubt whom to send: When he has work to do, he will not want instruments to do it by; for he can either find men fit, or make them so; but it intimates, that the business was such as required a well accomplished messenger, beyond those whom he had hitherto employed; he must exalt to this honour one *chosen* out of the people,[b] and qualified with uncommon abilities. "*Who* is a chosen man," a choice man, "that I may appoint over her, and who is that Shepherd, that will stand before me?"[c]

God now appeared attended with holy angels; bright and blessed seraphims; who had each of them six wings, and could make more haste, and deliver a message better than any of the sons of men could: and yet he asks, *Whom shall I send?* For he would send by a man like themselves. When Ahab's *false* prophets were to deceive him to his destruction, it was done by a lying-spirit who went forth from before the Lord.[d] But when gospel grace was to be prophesied of by a *true* prophet,—no created spirit is employed, but God's own Spirit comes upon the prophets.

Now hence we may gather three observations:

(1.) It is the unspeakable favour of God to us, that he is pleased to communicate his mind to us, and to make it known by men like ourselves. Divine revelation is a signal token of the divine good will, and ought so to be accounted. Man, by reaching at forbidden knowledge, forfeited all that which would be saving and serviceable. And how well did he deserve to be deprived of all the LIGHT of divine revelation, who had hid his *light* of human reason under a bushel, and had almost buried it in darkness; and by his ignorance had wilfully *alienated himself from the life of God.*[e] Justly, might God have said, that he would never *speak any more* to such a rebel: and then his case had been as desperate as that of fallen angels, and he must have wandered endlesly, had not God been his guide.

But in pity to poor man, and in order to his recovery and redemption, beams of divine light are afresh darted from Heaven; the great Shepherd sends after this stray sheep to fetch it home; *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;*[f] *unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;*[g] *unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.*[h] Notice is given us of the displeasure of God against us, that we may avoid it; of the kindness and good-will of God to us, that we may improve it; and of the duty God re-

[a] Job 9. 15. [b] John 12. 40, 41. [c] Acts 28. 25, 26. [d] Matt. 28. 19. [e] 1 John 5. 7, 8. [f] Rev. 2. 7. [g] Ezek. 3. 14. [h] Rom. 9. 2.

[a] 2 Cor. 2. 16. [b] Ps. 89. 19. [c] Jer. 49. 19. Jer. 50. 44. [d] 1 Kings 22. 20, 23. [e] Eph. 4. 18. [f] Mic. 6. 8. [g] Job 28. 28. [h] Prov. 8. 4.

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quires of us, that we may perform it. He has not hid from our eyes, the things that belong to our peace and welfare; but has at sundry times, and in divers manners, given us to understand them, and put us in mind of them.

These notices he sends to us by those of the same nature with us. The people of Israel were so frightened at the terrors of Sinai, that they desired thenceforward God would speak to them by Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*[a] Herein they spoke the sense of all mankind, and God agreed to it: and though since then, angels have been often sent upon particular errands, yet the ordinary instructions of the church have been by *men formed out of the clay*, whose *terror shall not make us afraid*, nor *their hand be heavy upon us*, and they are *according to our wish, in God's stead.*[b] And this is very agreeable to a state of probation; in which, it were not a fair trial—if, by the appearance of angels, those things were made sensible, which are now the objects of faith. The Scriptures were not written by angels, but by holy men of God, and the dispensing of the gospel is committed to faithful men.

How ungrateful are those to God, who, instead of giving him thanks for the favour of divine revelation, ridicule it, and asperse it; and, under pretence of free-thinking, shake of all the sacred obligations of it, and thereby forfeit and renounce all the advantages of it. It is the greatest indignity that can be done to God, and the greatest injury to mankind. God has in tenderness to us, sent us his mind by *men like ourselves*, and they abuse this favour, by making *themselves* equal with those who spake by divine authority. But if they believe not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.[c]

(2.) It is a rare thing to find one that is fit to go for God to carry his messages to the children of men. God here asks, *Whom shall I send?* Where is the person who may be intrusted with such an errand; *Who is sufficient for these things?*[d] A skilful, faithful interpreter of the mind of God, who shall shew unto man his uprightness, is one of a thousand.[e] He must be an able man indeed, who is fit to be a minister of the New Testament.[f]

Such a complication of gifts and graces, as are requisite to the right discharge of this great trust, is very seldom found. Such a degree of insight into the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, as is necessary to make a man skilful; and such a degree of courage for God, and concern for souls, as is necessary to make a man faithful; is hardly to be met with. Many are willing enough to go, who yet are not fit to be sent; as there are some fit to be sent, who are not willing to go. Solomon speaks of the inconvenience of sending messages by the hand of fools, they who do so, he says, *cut off the feet and drink damage*; and though men have talents, it is little better if they have not application; for *As vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to him that sends him:*[a] of what ill consequence is it then, to have God's messages sent by the hand of fools or sluggards; so that considering how much folly and sloth prevail, we may well ask, as those at a loss, Who shall be sent, and who will go on God's errands?

(3.) None are allowed to go for God, but those who are sent by him. He will own none, but such as he himself appoints. As the ordinances must be only such as are of his institution; so the ministers of the ordinances must be of his designation, else they cannot expect that his presence should be with them, or that his power should accompany their administrations. It is fit the master should nominate his own servants; he *knows whom he hath chosen*. When Christ would send forth Apostles, he *called unto him whom he would.*[b]

We are not now to expect *immediate* calls, such as the Prophets and Apostles had, called *not of men or by men.* Ministers have no extraordinary commissions to produce, nor any miraculous ratifications; they undertake not to foretel things to come, by the accomplishment of which to prove their mission; those were requisite to set the wheels in motion, both in the Old Testament and in the New; but they cease when the thing is settled. Nor do we think that the mission of a minister depends upon the uncertain thread of a lineal succession from the Apostles, which we cannot believe to be either requisite on the one hand, or sufficient on the other. But there is some resemblance between God's calling of ministers now, and his calling of prophets of old: prophets *were* called when they were qualified for the office, when the word of the Lord came to them; and there were schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in preparatory exercises; so, *now*, those whom God has by his Spirit qualified for the work of the ministry, have ONE considerable step toward a divine call;—to which was, *then*, added a strong inclination to this work, purely for its own sake; Jeremiah says, that God's word was as a burning fire shut up in his bones;[c] and that is, *still*, the OTHER step toward a divine call,—a sincere desire to glorify God, and serve the interests of Christ's kingdom, and promote the salvation of precious souls, without regard to any secular advantage whatsoever. They in whom such qualifications for the work, and such dispositions to it meet, may be accounted sent of God. And on these two the Church of England seems, to lay the stress of a *due call* to the ministry, in the question—put to all who offer themselves to be ordained—whether they think themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office of the ministry? For it is certain, none are moved to it by the Holy Ghost, who are not in some measure fit for it, or who desire it for the sake of secular advantages. But those who are thus "called of God," ought to have their qualifications examined by proper judges: And, then—by the word and prayer—(in which they will have to be employed, whose office it is to give themselves

[a] Exod. 20. 19. [b] Job 33. 6, 7. [c] Luke 16. 31. [d] 2 Cor. 2. 16. [e] Job 33. 23. [f] 2 Cor. 3. 6.

[a] Prov. 10. 26. [b] Mark 3. 13. [c] Jer. 20. 9.

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to the word and prayer) they must be solemnly recommended to God, and to the word of his grace: and their dedication of themselves, to God and the service of his Church, must be recognized. They who by office *ministered unto the Lord, as prophets* and *teachers*, were *ordered*, by fasting and prayer and the *imposition of hands*, to separate Barnabas and Saul to the work *whereunto God had called them.*[a]

This is entering in by the door; as all who will approve themselves good shepherds must. *How shall men preach except they be* thus *sent?*[b] God complained of those who ran, and he did not send them;[c] and he tells them (which is threatening enough) that therefore they should not profit the people at all: those who go without *sending*, will come back without *speeding*. God will own his own work, and his own appointments, but not men's usurpations. Both the external and internal call are necessary; and neither must be set up exclusive of the other. There must be an *internal* call; for God will be served with the spirit in the gospel of his Son: and there must be likewise an *external* call; for God is the God of order, and will have his own work done in his own way. And those in whom both these meet, may, with St. Paul, thank Christ Jesus for putting them into the ministry, and may expect that he will own them, and stand by them.

II. We have here the consent of Isaiah to this mission. When he heard God ask, *Whom shall I send?* He readily answered, *Here am I, send me.* How well does it become all who love God, and have a zeal for his honour, to step in to the service of his kingdom and interest, when there is most occasion, and when the necessity of its affairs calls most, for it; to be ready to go on God's errand, when none else will, and there is a failure of messengers, "Do you as you will, *I will serve the Lord.*" It is an honour—(though it cannot but be a grief)—to be singular, in appearing for God; and to appear active for him, when multitudes decline his service as mean and perilous; to make offers to work for him, when others seek, by excuses and evasions, to shift it off.

O what backwardness is there in many to a good work, when it has any thing of difficulty or disgrace attending it; or to any service for God, when other employments are more gainful and creditable in the world. Jonah is called, to go to Nineveh: but he has no liking to the errand, and therefore flees to Tarshish. The tribes of Israel are summoned to appear in defence of the public liberty and property, against Jabin King of Canaan, to come in to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty; and—while *Gilead abides beyond* Jordan; and Dan cautiously *remains in ships*[d]—for the Princes of Issachar, that intelligent,[e] as well as industrious tribe, bravely to appear with Deborah, even Issachar and Barak; for Zebulun and Naphthali to *jeopard their lives to the death in the high places of the field*,[f] in the common cause, this is thankworthy. He is the truly Christian hero, who dares lay his hand to a despised plough, and a deserted one, who has courage to submit to a yoke, which so many, like the nobles of Tekoa, are ashamed and afraid to put their necks under.[a] Those who thus boldly appear for the keeping up of religion's interest, are worthy of double honour. This was it that gained Levi the honour of being God's tribe, the holy tribe: that when Moses made proclamation in the gate of the camp, *Who is on the Lord's side* to *avenge the quarrel of his covenant* upon the makers of the golden calf,[b] that tribe distinguished themselves, and came in to Moses. Thus did Isaiah here; when every one was shy of the office, he was eager to receive it.

The errand on which Isaiah was to go, was a very melancholy errand, *Go make the heart of this people fat:* and yet he offered himself to the service. When we are called to act or speak for God, we must not say, "We would go, if we were sure we should have good success, and our message would be acceptable:" but we must *go*, and leave the success to God. Lord, make what use thou pleasest of me, I will not murmur or dispute. Though in the *event* our ministry should prove, contrary to what it is in the *intention*,—to harden people instead of softening them, and to aggravate their condemnation instead of preventing it, which is a very uncomfortable discouraging consideration,—yet we must go on in it, knowing that in the issue God will be glorified.

Isaiah had been himself in a very melancholy frame in the 5th verse, *Woe is me, for I am undone*, much indisposed and burthened: yet now he has courage enough to offer himself to the work, which then he could not think of without terror; for he had been assured that his sins were pardoned, his iniquity taken away, and then his fears are silenced, the clouds are blown over, and all is well. Many have come to be eminently serviceable to God and his Church in their day, that at first were low-spirited, and laboured under great discouragements. When God by his Spirit speaks to the heart good words and comfortable words,—those, who like Daniel were fallen with their faces to the ground, are wonderfully lifted up and encouraged, and are ready to say, as he did, *Now, let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me*[c]

Isaiah's saying, *Here am I, send me*, speaks three things, for direction, to those who are setting out in the work of the ministry. His readiness; his resolution; and his referring himself to God.

1. His *readiness*. He does not make objections: as Moses did: *O my Lord, I am not eloquent*,—or, *Send by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*,[d] any body but me: but, Behold me; I present myself to thee, to be employed as thou pleasest: *Here I am, send me.* He was a volunteer in the service; not pressed into it, but willing in this day of power:[e] in this as in other things God loves a cheerful giver,[f] a cheerful offerer. *My heart* (says Deborah) *is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly.*[g] It is recommended

[a] Acts 13. 1, 2, 3. [b] Rom. 10. 15. [c] Jer. 23. 21. [d] Judges 5. 17. [e] 1 Chron. 12. 3. [f] Judges 5. 15, 18.

[a] Neh. 3. 5. [b] Exod. 32. 26. [c] Dan. 10. 19. [d] Exod. 4. 10, 13. [e] Ps. 110. 3. [f] 2 Cor. 9. 7. [g] Judges 5. 9.

to

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to the elders to feed the flock of God, not of constraint, but willingly, and of a ready mind.[a] In all acts of obedience to the calls of God, and assistance to the work of God, we must be free and forward as those who know that we serve a good master, whose work—not only his for us, but our's for him—is honourable and glorious; it is its own wages. Let us be brought under the yoke of Christ, by the constraining power of his love to us, drawing out our hearts in love to him again; and *that* is the acceptable sacrifice, that which is bound to the horns of the altar, with these cords of a man, these bonds of love.

How ready is God to hear and answer our calls; he says, *Behold me, Behold me,*[b] even to those who were not *called by his name.* Much more ready is he to say, *Here I am,*[c] to those that *call upon him;* and should not we then be ready to answer his calls, though the service we are called to be never so difficult and hazardous? Desire not to be excused, when God has work for you to do, nor let any thing keep you back from that honour.

2. His *resolution.* He gives not only a free consent, but he is firm and fixed in it; does not hesitate or waver, but is ready both to swear to it, and to perform it; and he will not be beaten off it, no more than the people of Israel, when they said, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord;*[d] or Ruth, when she said, *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to turn from following after thee.*

Here am I, not only ready to go, but resolved in the strength of divine grace, to encounter the greatest difficulties, and to abide by the service to the end. Send me, and I will adhere to it whatever it cost me, and will never draw back. Thus Christians, thus ministers, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, should war the good warfare with courage and constancy; *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?*[e] What an acceptable servant is this, that binds his soul with a bond to the work of God, and is willing to have his ear bored to God's door-posts, to serve him for ever. And good reason have we, *thus,* to serve Christ, for with *such a steady and unshaken resolution* did he undertake to save us; when it was asked, who will be man's Redeemer? *Who will take the book, and open the seals?*[f] And there was found none who would venture upon it, then said Christ, *Lo I come;* and finding it written of him in the volume of the book, he determines, he delights to do the will of God;[g] and shall not fail or be discouraged.[h]

We find this prophet, long after, reflecting with abundant satisfaction, upon that steadiness of resolution, with which he entered upon his prophetical office; and in it he was both a type of Christ, and a pattern to Christians. *The Lord God,* says he, *hath given me the tongue of the learned,* which he did by touching his lips with a coal from the altar; *He hath opened mine ear, he* has promised to *help me,* and *he is near that justifieth me,* and therefore *I have set my face like a flint, I know that I shall not be ashamed.*[a] Those who thus set out with resolution, may depend upon God to bear them out.

3. His *referring himself to God.* His expressing himself thus generally, *Here am I, send me,* intimates this; Lord, employ me as thou thinkest fit; cut out what work thou pleasest for me. I will never PREscribe, but ever SUBscribe. Here am I, ready to go to whom, and on what errand thou wilt, whatever objections may be made against it. Lord, I am at thy service, entirely at thy disposal. Let the will of God be done *by* me, and done *concerning* me.

Thus we should address ourselves to the work of the Lord; with an entire resignation of ourselves to his wisdom and sovereignty. The heart must be *Tabula rasa,—white paper to his pen,*—soft wax to his seal: let him write upon me what he pleases, and make what impressions *he* pleases upon me. We must enter upon the service of God, with Joshua's question, *What saith my Lord unto his servant?*[b] And with St. Paul's, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And with the implicit faith and obedience of the child Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears.* I desire nothing more but the honour of receiving thy commands, and a heart to comply with them.

The mind thus entirely referred to God, is most easy and quiet to itself, as waiting to know His mind; in dependance upon his promise, that the meek he will guide in judgment, and teach his way. If we impartially search the Scriptures, we may thence learn, what, in *general,* God will have us to say and do for him; and and if we keep our eye upon his Providence, we may by that be assisted in the application of the general rules of the word, for in it God guides us with his eye; and thus by committing our way and works to the Lord, with, *Here am I, send me,* we may find a leading star in all our counsels, and firm footing for all our resolves; thus we stand in an even place.[c] And certainly, we are most *our own possessors,* when we are least *our own masters;* and have the greatest enjoyment of ourselves, when we are most cheerfully and unreservedly devoted to God, with, *Here am I, send me.*

APPLICATION.

1. Of the many observable useful hints we have given you from these words, I shall only resume two, upon which to ground a word of exhortation; which I trust may be profitable to all of us who are ministers, and particularly to you, brother, who are now devoting yourself to the service of our great Master in this high and holy calling, for the advancing of the common interests of his kingdom among men, and the common salvation of precious souls. We are here taught, 1. WHOM we are sent by, it is God who says, *Whom shall I send?* And to Him the prophet addresses himself: *Send me.* And, 2. whom we go for; We go for God, *Who will go for* US.

[a] 1 Pet. 5. 2. [b] Isa. 65. 1. [c] Isa. 58. 9. [d] Josh. 24. 21. [e] Jer. 30. 21. [f] Rev. 5. 2. [g] Ps. 40. 7, 8. [h] Isa. 42. 4.

[a] Isa. 50. 4, 5, 7, 8. [b] Josh. 5. 14. [c] Ps. 26. 12.

1. Going

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1. Going forth into the ministry, we must look up to God to be sent by him. It is the work of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, to send ministers, the ambassadors of reconciliation: and therefore to him our eye must be: "Lord, send me, when thou art sending abroad thy messengers, let me be one; for unless thou send me, I cannot go." At our first setting out in the service of God, and when we go forth upon any particular errand, this must be our prayer, *Lord, send me.*

We who have been many years engaged in this work, are concerned to inquire, what manner of entering in we had,[a] and whether we looked up to God at our setting out; whether we had our eye up unto him, and a single eye; whether our desire was toward him, and our dependance upon him? Whether we took our ministry from *his* hand, and devoted it to *his* praise? I hope we did; and we have had the comfort of it many a time, with reference to the infirmities we have laboured under, and the many difficulties we have struggled with. I am weak, I am forgetful, and meet with much discouragement from without, and from within, but, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant.* Let us still look up to him, and derive fresh encouragements from day to day, from his promise to be with his ministers always to the end of their day, and to the end of the world.[b] If God sent us, he will stand by us, will own us, will carry us on, and bear us out, and will never leave us. Our master often speaks of God, as of him that sent him, and for that reason doubted not but that he was with him. So that when all his disciples fled and left him alone, yet he was not alone; and as the Father sent him, so he sends his ministers, who, therefore, ought to have an eye to his hand, as he had to his Father's, which upheld him.

And you, brother, who are now to be listed under the banner of Christ, may from hence take direction; it is by prayer that you are to be set apart, not only by our's for you, but by your's for yourself: That you may therefore take God along with you, and have him with you in this great undertaking,—lift up your heart to God in this short but comprehensive petition, *Lord, send me; Lord Jesus, send me;* for it is the Son of Man, that holds the *stars* in his right hand.[c]

Lord, *Send me,* that is,

(1.) Lord, give me a *commission.* The Gospel we are to preach is not our own, or of our own framing, but it is the Gospel of God, *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God,*[d] it is the contrivance of his wisdom, it is the proposal of his grace; and, therefore, from him we must receive our warrant to publish the covenant, to apply the seals to it, and take in subscriptions. All who are duly qualified for the work, and inclined to it, and enter regularly upon it, and obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful in the discharge of it, may look upon themselves as sent of God; and the honour of being of that number, is what you should be ambitious of.

[a] 1 Thess. 1. 9. [b] Mat. 28. 20. [c] Rev. 2. 1. [d] 1 Tim. 1. 11.

Lord, send me, is, Lord, let me know that thou sendest me, and that I am a minister not *of man, or by man,* but *by Jesus Christ, and God the Father.*[a] Let me know it by Christ's powerful, gracious, *breathing on me,* and saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost.* Lord, let me have my credentials under the broad seal of heaven, and know myself authorized to be an ambassador, or resident, to carry on the treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and man; let me know it by the working of the Spirit upon my heart, as an enlightening, quickening, sanctifying Spirit, and that shall be the witness of the Spirit with my heart, that I have not taken this honour to myself, nor am an intruder, but am called of God to it.

We may not now ask for sensible signs, as Gideon did, who once and again proved God with the Fleece: but we may and must ask to have more abundant satisfaction concerning our call, by the bestowing of spiritual gifts upon us, and the enriching of us with divine graces, and with strength in our soul. That the *ministry* is a divine institution, appears from the Spirit in the word; that *such a minister is of divine designation,* appears by the Spirit in the heart, which, yet sometimes, is such a new name, as *no man knows, saving he that receives it.*[b]

(2.) Lord, give me the necessary *qualifications* for this service; *Send me,* that is, fit me for this work, and enable me to do it, as it should be done. God never sends any but such, as he gives to be in some measure well apprised of the errand they go upon; his ambassadors never have credentials without instructions: when the apostles were sent forth to *preach,* they were told *what to preach,* and were filled with the knowledge of the Gospel mysteries. When therefore we beg of God to send us, we beg of him full instructions what to say and do in pursuance of our commission, that we may give a good account of our stewardship, when we must be no longer stewards.

Lord, send me, is, Lord, give me a mouth; and wisdom,—a door of utterance, that I may speak the word boldly; a spirit of wisdom, that I may know the things which are freely given us of God. Teach me what I shall say. Put that word into my mouth, which shall reach the consciences of those who hear me. The Hebrew phrase for consecration is *filling the hand;* which intimates—not only the greatness of the work of the ministry, for they who are called to it have their hands full, but its dependance upon divine aids and supplies; we have nothing to give out to God's people, but what he gives in to us; nothing wherewith to fill their hearts, unless he fill our hands; as, in Ezekiel's vision, the man clothed with linen had his hands filled with coals of fire from between the cherubim.[c]

God gives ministers their *commission* by his Son, who, when he ascended on high, conferred those gifts upon men; but he gives them their *instructions* by his Spirit,[d]—who is given to make up the want of Christ's bodily presence, and to carry on his undertaking;

[a] Gal. 1. 1. [b] Rev. 2. 17. [c] Ezek. 10. 2, 7. [d] John 14. 26.

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taking; and of whom Christ has said, *He shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.*[a] We must therefore pray for the Spirit; all christians must, and are encouraged to do so by that promise. *He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him:*[b] ministers have special need of the Spirit, as a spirit of revelation, that they may know the things of God; and, as a spirit of truth, to rectify their mistakes, and to lead them into all truth.

And ministers' work being to speak not only *from* God *to* his people, but *to* God *for* his people; they have as much need of the Spirit to assist them in prayer, as in preaching,—and to be in them a spirit of supplication, as a spirit of illumination. And for this, also, God will be *inquired of*; to him we must go with this request, Lord, teach me what I shall say, both in the word and in prayer, for I cannot in either of them, order my speech by reason of darkness.[c] Lord, give me the heart of the upright, and the tongue of the learned, and thus *Lord, send me.* Ministers are stars that shine by a borrowed light, to the fountain of light, they must therefore apply themselves; and he having said to us, *from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away*, will not turn away from us, if we come to borrow of him; especially when it is to borrow a stock wherewith to trade, in his service, for his glory.

It is a very proper sign which some churches use in the investing of ministers in their office, to put the New Testament, or Bible, into their hands; not only to signify, that they have authority to preach the word of God, but that they must fetch all their furniture for their work from the scriptures; those they must consult, those they must study. That is the rule they must go by, the model they must build by; there is the pattern shewed them in the mount; that is the card and compass they must steer by. *Lord, send me:* is, Lord, put the Bible into my heart; Lord make me ready and mighty in the Scriptures, that thence I may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.

(3.) Lord, give me *opportunity.* This door also God has the key of, as well as the door of the heart, and of the lips; and our eye must be to him for the opening of it, and the making of it a wide door, and an effectual one, though there be ever so many adversaries.[d] *Lord, send me:* is: Lord, having hired me into thy service, find me but something to do for thee; having sent me into thy vineyard, cut out work for me there, that I may not stand all the day idle, because no man has hired me.[e] Place me in what sphere thou pleasest, higher or lower, larger or narrower, only let me be some way serviceable to thy glory, and not thrown by as a despised broken vessel.

And in *this*, we must refer ourselves to God: Lord, send me whither thou pleasest, order me into what circumstances thou thinkest fit; make any use of me, so that thou wilt but make some use of me; let me have a place in the body, though it should not be a place of honour. Send me, with Jonah, to Nineveh; with St. Paul to Macedonia, to *help there;* to the highways and hedges, to pick up guests for the marriage, and I will cheerfully go. You must set out in the ministry, with an entire resignation of yourself to God: "He shall *chuse my inheritance*, my employment for me." Send me whither thou wilt; send me to a pulpit; send me to a prison, (and it is good to think of that; and to provide accordingly; we are not better than our fathers, nor know we what trying times may yet be before us) I am ready to go, as St. Paul, bound in the spirit to Jerusalem: send me on what errand thou wilt, though ever so unpleasing to myself, ever so displeasing to others. Servants must go whither they are ordered, and do as they are bidden, and say what is put into their mouths, without murmuring or disputing, and so must we, as those who have no will of our own, but what is swallowed up in the will of our master, in all which we desire to stand complete.

And it is a great satisfaction to a minister in all his settlements and removals, to see God going before him, and leading him in a plain path; as it is his duty to pray for direction, and his wisdom to follow providence, and not to force it; to do the work of the present day and place, and leave to God what is to come. *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.* And if we see him setting before us an open door, we may comfort ourselves in this, that no man shall shut it.

(4.) Lord, give me *success. Send me;* and the message by me, as the rain and snow from heaven, which returneth not thither, but accomplisheth that for which it was sent.[a] Send me; and let the Spirit go along with me to make the word effectual, that it may not be as water spilt upon the ground; that I may not labour in vain, or spend my strength for nought. Those whom God sends, he sends armed with such weapons as are mighty through him, to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds.[b] O let me be furnished with those weapons! that I may see of the travail of my soul to my satisfaction.

Lord, send me to their hearts; let the word be quick and powerful for that purpose; send it between the joints of the harness; send it between the joints and the marrow;[c] send it, and let a divine power go along with it; send the report, and with it let the arm of the Lord be revealed;[d] that many may be brought to believe it; for it is the *power of God to salvation to every one that believes.*[e] O that it might now appear so as it appeared, when the *word of the Lord*, at first, *grew and prevailed* so *mightily.* How can we expect that our labours should be successful, and that we should profit the people we preach to, if we do not sincerely design it, and earnestly desire it.

But we must go forth in the strength of the Lord

[a] John 16. 14. [b] Luke 11. 13. [c] Job 37. 19. [d] 1 Cor. 16. 9. [e] Mat. 20. 6, 7.

[a] Isa. 55. 10, 11. [b] 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. [c] Heb. 4. 12. [d] Isa. 53. 1. [e] Rom. 1. 16.

God,

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God,[a] or we shall go to no purpose. If we think to succeed in the strength of our own parts, or resolution, by our own wisdom or importunity,—we do but deceive ourselves; for St. Paul himself owns he can do nothing of himself, but *all things through Christ* strengthening him;[b] this divine strength we must pray for and depend upon, and by faith must fetch it in, whenever we have any work to do for God. And this is our comfort, that God's strength is often perfected, and most praised in our weakness, for it is ordained *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings.*

Pray thus, pray daily thus; and you shall not seek in vain. If, when God calls to you to appear and act for him, you cheerfully say, *Here am I;* you may be sure, when you call to him to appear with you, and act by you, he also will say, *Here am I.* If you say, *Lord, send me;* He will say, *Go, and I will be with thee.* If you say, as Peter, *Lord, bid me come to thee upon the water;*[c] He will say, *Come,* and will keep you from sinking.

2. Going on in the ministry, we must remember WHOM we go for. *Who will go for us?* As agent for God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; not that God has need of us, or of our services, he has angels at command ready to go on his errands, and to fly swiftly. But he is pleased to employ us, to bid us go for him: we go for God the Father, to bring the souls which he has made to him, as their chief good, and highest end; for God the Son, to bring the souls to him he has redeemed, as their Prophet, Priest, and King; for God the Holy Ghost, to bring the souls he has the charge of under his conduct, and his sanctifying power and influence.

Let us see how improveable this consideration is. (1.) If we go for God, then we have no reason to be *ashamed* of our office, but to *magnify* it. Work for God cannot but be great work, and put honour upon them who are called to it. The preachers of a Gospel, which, *to all that believe, is the power of God unto salvation;*[d] how much reason soever they have to think meanly of themselves, as unworthy of the honour, yet have a great deal of reason to think highly of their work. St. Paul, who went for God to the Gentile world, though for that he was reproached by the Jews, yet magnified his office.[e] The messengers of the Churches, are the glory of Christ;[f] how scornfully soever they are looked upon by the children of men. If we be not a shame to our office, it is well. We have no reason to be ashamed of IT.

Ministers are not common messengers; they are ambassadors for Christ,[g] for the King of Kings,—and that is a high post of honour: in which though we pretend not, as ambassadors, to the title of *Excellency,* yet we ought to approve ourselves of an excellent spirit, and labour to excel in gifts and graces. And let not any think themselves too good to be thus employed, as if the lowest of the people were as fit to be messengers for Christ, as Jeroboam thought them to be priests to the calves; no, it is no disparagement, to the greatest, to go for God. King Solomon valued himself upon his being a preacher.

(2.) If we go for God, then we must *faithfully deliver his* MIND, *in his name;* and when we do *so,* we may speak as having authority. If we go on his errand, THAT, the whole of THAT, and THAT only we must deliver. Ezekiel must speak *God's words* to the people, and speak them *as His;* whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.[a] We must deliver that which we have *received of the Lord,* and our doctrine must be *not ours,* but *his that sent us.*

Let this therefore embolden us in our work, and give us a holy, humble assurance. *We* pretend to no dominion over you, we are your fellow-servants: but *He* who sends us, and whose mouth we are to you, claims dominion over you, and commands your obedience. He is the God who gave you your being; and therefore has authority to give you law, and will not suffer his authority to be slighted, or his crown profaned.

If we obtrude that message in God's name which is not his, and say, *Thus saith the Lord,*[b] when it is a false dream, fancy or forgery of our own, we cannot speak with any confidence; (What is the chaff to the wheat?) But as long as we keep close to our instructions, we may rely upon our commission; and as far as what we say agrees with the law and the testimony, it demands acceptance, *not as the word of man,* a poor frail dying man like yourselves, but *as the word of God,*[c] for so indeed it is; the word of a living God; a living word that abides for ever.

(3.) If we go for God, then far be it from us, that we should seek ourselves, and our own things. One of the first lessons Christ will have his disciples to learn, is to deny themselves, that they may make him all in all. Self will be apt insensibly to steal into the study to us, and into the pulpit with us, and as far as it is indulged, the ends of our office are perverted, and our work spoiled, and stript of its dignity and power. We are ministers of Christ; and therefore must not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,—and [declare] ourselves your servants for *His* sake:[d] that the Lord alone may be exalted in our ministry, that he may be *all in all.*

We must not seek our own praise and applause, but must humble and abase ourselves; must not aim at the making and maintaining of any secular interest for ourselves,—that is prostituting what is honourable, and profaning what is sacred. It is a sad complaint which Paul makes even of the ministers of his time, that all sought their own, not the things that were Jesus Christ's;[e] I wish we have not all of us too much reason to charge the same upon ourselves; I am sure, we have all of us need to watch and pray against this sin. Ministers, of all people, must not live to themselves, nor please themselves, nor aim to enrich themselves; for thereby they contradict, and so depreciate

[a] Ps. 71. 16. [b] Phil. 4. 13. [c] Mat. 14. 28, 29. [d] Rom. 1. 16. [e] Rom. 11. 13. [f] 2 Cor. 8. 23. [g] 2 Cor. 5. 20.

[a] Ezek. 2. 7. [b] Jer. 23. 31, 32. [c] 1 Thess. 2. 13. [d] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [e] Phil. 2. 21.

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their office, which is intended to bring souls from self to God. None of us, if he lives like himself, lives to *himself*, but to the *Lord*.[a] Let self therefore be abased, and annihilated, that to us to live may be Christ,[b] nothing but Christ. We are friends of the bridegroom, and are unworthy the honour, if—we speak one word for him, and ten for ourselves, when we ought to be entirely devoted to him.

(4.) If we go for God, then to him we must give account of our negociation; if you send your servant on an errand, you expect when he comes back, he should tell you how he has done his errand, and how he sped. The Lord of those servants that are sent for him, will come and reckon with them, what they have done, and what they have gained by trading with the talents committed to them. Angels give account of their messages; they run and return; descend and ascend; and ministers are hastening towards their day of account.

We must give an account of ourselves to God; it will be inquired into, whether we have faithfully delivered our message, whether we have declared the whole counsel of God, and whether we have not pulled down with one hand, what we built up with the other. It concerns us therefore to do our work, as those who know it will be reviewed.

We must give an account likewise of those to whom we have been sent; and a heavy account it will be if they perished through our ignorance, carelessness, or treachery. If the watchman warn not the sinner of his danger, the sinner shall die in his iniquity, but his blood shall be required at the watchman's hands. How pathetically did Augustus Cæsar upbraid the general, who, by his ill conduct, had lost him a brave army, *Quintili Vare, Redde Legiones—Quintilius Varus! restore my legions.* Much more terribly will they be reckoned with, who by their treachery have been the ruin of precious souls. But how *comfortable* will the account be—of those who are the seals of our ministry, whom we have been instrumental to bring to Christ; as it was to this prophet, concerning some, of whom he said, *Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me;*[c] though the generality believed not his report.

If we are sent for God, we must consider as the prophet did, what answer we shall return to him who sent us;[d] as the servant who was sent to invite to the wedding feast, when he met with repulses and slights, came and shewed his Lord all these things.[e] O that this thought might quicken us to the utmost care and diligence in our work, and that we might be found watching for souls, to win them over to Christ, as those who must give account, and who know not how soon.

(5.) If we go for God, then he will certainly bear us out, and stand by us, in all we do according to our commission. If we go for God, he will go with us; as he promised to go with Moses, when he sent him to Pharoah. Those who are God's servants he will uphold; he will strengthen, according to their day;[a] he will plead their cause, and not suffer them to be wronged. Kings shall be made to know, that it is at their peril, if they do his prophets any harm.[b] Princes take injuries done to their ambassadors, as done to themselves, and will resent and revenge them accordingly; and so does our Lord Jesus. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Mocking God's messengers and misusing them, was once and again Jerusalem's measure-filling sin.

Ambassadors have their charges borne. God has provided, that as those who served at the altar might live, and live comfortably, upon the altar; so those who as his messengers preach the gospel, should be suitably maintained, that they may live of the gospel.[c] Yet sometimes the case is such, that ministers lose by their ministry: (the disciples left all to follow Christ, and preach the gospel:) but in that case, confide it to him to indemnify them; one way or other it shall be made up to them.

(6.) If we go for God, and approve ourselves true to the trust lodged in our hands, he will abundantly recompense all our services and sufferings. We shall not only be saved harmless, and have our losses made up, but we shall have God himself to be our bountiful rewarder, and our exceeding great reward. St. Peter encourages ministers, the under-shepherds, to feed the flock of God, and to do it willingly, with this,—that when *the chief Shepherd shall appear*, they shall *appear with him in glory*.

The labours of a few days shall be rewarded with everlasting pleasures and riches; God will be sure to pay his messengers well; nor will he keep back the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down his cornfields;[d] nor shall it *abide with him all night, until the morning*[e] of the resurrection; but when the sun of their life goes down, and the day of their service is ended, the labourers are immediately called to receive their penny; even those who came in at the eleventh hour, who died young, and so did but an hour's work, as well as those whose labours were long, and who bore the burthen and heat of the day.[f] St. Paul doubts not but that when he departs, he shall immediately be with Christ;[g] and in the assurance of it pleases himself with the thought, That he was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand; and thenceforth was laid up for him an abundant recompence.[h]

Encourage yourselves, brethren, and one another with this word: you *go for God*. You aim at his glory, and make his work your business; you lay out yourselves in sincerity to advance his name, and honour, and interest, and his kingdom among men. And do you so indeed? *Though* Israel *be not gathered, yet shall you be glorious,*[i] and *a sweet savour to God, not only in them that are saved, but in them that perish.*[k]

[a] Rom. 14. 6, 7. [b] Phil. 1. 21. [c] Isa. 8. 18. [d] 2 Sam. 24. 13. [e] Luke 14. 21.

[a] 1 Cor. 10. 13. [b] Psa. 105. 15. [c] 1 Cor. 9. 14. [d] Jam. 5. 4. [e] Lev. 19. 13. [f] Mat. 20. 8, 9. [g] Phil. 1. 23. [h] 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. [i] Isa. 49. 5. [k] 2 Cor. 2. 15.

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And therefore be of good courage, and lift up the hands that hang down; a particular account is kept of all your travels, toils, and tears in Christ's work, and they shall all be abundantly recompensed. *Indue season you shall reap, if you faint not, be not weary* then *in well-doing.*[a] Hold out faith and patience yet a little while, and your warfare will soon be accomplished; only be faithful unto death,[b] and the crown of life is as sure to you, as if it were already upon your heads.

[a] Gal. 6. 9. [b] Rev. 2. 10.

THE

EXHORTATION;

AT

Mr. SAMUEL CLARK's ORDINATION,

At St. ALBAN's. (Somewhat enlarged.)

THAT which yet remains, before we part, is to address an exhortation—give me leave to call it a charge in Christ's name—to you, my dear brother, who have now dedicated yourself, and have been very solemnly dedicated to the service of Christ in the work of the ministry: which I trust has left such a truly indelible character and impression upon you, that you will remember this day by a good token as long as you live; as the day in which your heart was more than ever fixed for God, as the master you love, and resolve by his grace to live and die with; and your *ear bored to his door-post, to serve him for ever;* never to go out free *from* his service, but to go on more and more free *in* it.

Think you hear Christ saying to you: as he did to his disciples, when he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again: *Know ye not what I have done to you?*[a] I say, what Christ has done to you, for it is he who puts you into the ministry,[b] not we. Do you know, do you consider, what an honour he has put upon your head, what a trust he has lodged in your hand, and what a bond he has laid upon your soul? And will you not next consider, what he expects and requires from you, in consideration of this which he has done to you?

I hope you have such a sense of the excellency of the work to which Christ has called you; and its direct tendency to advance the honour of your Creator and Redeemer, and the true welfare of your fellow creatures and fellow christians; that if we should now say to you, as Elijah said to Elisha, when he had cast his mantle over him, *Go, return; for what have I done to thee?*[c] you would reply as Ruth to Naomi, *Intreat me not to leave thee,* or to *turn from following after thee;*[d] for from the plough, to which I have this day laid my hand, I trust I shall never so much as look back.[a] *The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thought of your heart, and establish your way before him!*[b] You have, as Jephthah, opened your mouth unto the Lord; and you cannot go back.[c] Go forward then in God's name; go on and prosper, and the Lord be with you.

You have this day received a commission from the Lord Jesus, according to the true intent, and full extent, of the institution of the gospel ministry. To be an officer in his *army,* to train up his soldiers to, and lead them on, in all the services of the christian warfare; to be an officer in his *kingdom,* to see that his laws be observed, his ordinances kept, and the peace and order of his kingdom preserved, for the honour of the prince, and the protection and welfare of all his loving subjects.

The apostles, prophets, and evangelists, were extraordinary embassadors, employed to set the treaty on foot between God and fallen man: to them first was committed the *ministry of reconciliation;*[d] pastors and teachers are, as residents or consuls, to carry on the treaty of peace, and to maintain all the branches of that commerce and communication between heaven and earth, which is founded upon it; their business is to negociate affairs between Christ and his Church; they are *taken from among men,* and *ordained for men in things pertaining to God,*[e] as the priests under the law were; that Christ may have the rents, honours and services, which he was to receive from his Church,—and the Church may have the favours and benefits which it is to receive from Christ.

Now, as the officers in a kingdom or corporation are commonly sworn to execute the office they are put into according to law; so you are this day sworn, as

[a] John 18. 12. [b] 1 Tim. 1. 12. [c] 1 Kings 19. 20. [d] Ruth 1. 17.

[a] Luke 9. 62. [b] 1 Chron. 29. 18. [c] Judg. 11. 35. [d] 2 Cor. 5. 20. [e] Heb. 5. 1.

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it were, to do the work of a gospel minister, according to Christ's institution.

It is therefore requisite that you rightly understand what the business of your office is, and what is the work that you are called to; that you may both prepare and apply yourself accordingly. I doubt not but you know it, and have considered it, yet I hope you will now give me leave to put you in mind of it, and myself too. This charge is given you: *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust,*[a] it is a great trust that is committed to you, and which you must shortly give an account of, and therefore it concerns you to be *faithful, by mercy obtained from the Lord.* You have accepted the trust; acquaint yourself with it, and be faithful to it, that you may in the great day give a good account of it.

I. There is a *trust committed to you, in common with all christians,* and that is, your own precious soul. This charge therefore we are to give you, in the first place, which St. Paul gives to Timothy: *Take heed to thyself,* that thou mayest *save thyself*;[b] and to the elders of Ephesus, *Take heed therefore to yourselves.*[c] Those are very unfit—to take care of other people's souls who are careless of their own; and to guide others in the way to heaven, who appear not at all solicitous to find the way thither themselves, or seem as if they had found some other way than that of strict and serious godliness, which the Scripture directs all to, and to which they direct others to; who—in another sense—must join with the spouse in her confession, *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*[d]

Look well to the state of your own soul, and the terms on which it stands with God, and there make sure work about your calling and election; make it more and more sure to yourself, more and more evident,—that you may be able to speak by experience, and then you will speak best, of regeneration, and the new birth; of union with Christ, and of reconciliation to God, and communion with God through him; may be able to say in some measure with the apostle, *That which I have seen and heard, looked upon,* tasted, *and handled of the word of life, that declare I unto you, that you may have fellowship with us.*[e]

Look well to the frame of your own spirit; that you not only approve yourself a christian indeed, but that you always maintain a christian temper, and evidence it. You have made it appear to us at this time, that your judgment is rightly informed concerning the things of God: Now, make it appear that there is a divine *heat* accompanying the divine *light*; for wherever the sun of righteousness arises upon any soul, he brings both along with him, and our Lord Jesus, in those two remarkable operations of his, upon the minds of his disciples, after his resurrection—his opening their understandings to understand the Scriptures; and his making their hearts to burn within them[f]—gave a specimen of what he would do for and in all his faithful ministers.

[a] 1 Tim. 6. 20. [b] 1 Tim. 4. 16. [c] Acts 20. 28. [d] Cant. 1. 6. [e] 1 John 1. 1, 3. [f] Luke 24. 45, 32.

As we should labour to understand that, ourselves, which we would lead others into the understanding of; so we should ourselves be affected with that, wherewith we desire to affect others,—for the expressions of seriousness and earnestness are but affectation, further than as they flow from true affection. Let what we say come *from* the heart, and then it will be likely to reach *to* the heart. But what ever influence it has upon others, let us take care that it have a good influence upon ourselves, that we be leavened by it, and delivered into the mold of it; that one poor soul, at least, may be the better for every sermon we preach, that is *our own.*

I have often, with a great deal of pleasure, thought it a mighty advantage—which we who are ministers have, above others—for the keeping up of our acquaintance with heaven, and the carrying on of the interests of the spiritual and divine life in the soul—That the business of our profession is such as obliges us to be much in converse with the Scriptures, and the things of God, to *meditate on those things,* and *give ourselves wholly to them.*[a] And—besides, our stated devotions; in secret, and in our families; which we have more time for than those have whose business lies in the world—we have occasion to be frequent in prayer with the sick, and the afflicted, and the families of our friends; and in good discourse with them: which if it be, as it ought to be, a *pleasure* to us, and we be in it as in our element, it will be something more, it will be a *profit* to us; and unless we be very much wanting to ourselves, will contribute abundantly to the prosperity of our own souls.

Yet this is not all: look well to the tenor of your conversation, that it be even and regular, and such as becomes your character; that by its evangelical tendency you may be preaching daily to those with whom you converse. It is not enough that it be blameless and harmless, and without rebuke; but your light must shine in every thing that is virtuous and praiseworthy. It is not enough for us who are ministers to say, none have learned *any ill* by us: but what *good* have they learned? It is part of the charge to Timothy, *Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*[b] It is not enough that we do not pull down with one hand what we build up with the other; but we must build up with *both* hands, both with our doctrine and with our example,—then and then only are we burning and shining lights. The account we have of our master is—Of what he began both to *do,* and to *teach*;[c] which is an intimation to us, that our teaching and doing should be of a piece.

II. There is a *trust* committed to you *as a minister,* which you must be true to. Every servant in the house has his work assigned him; but the steward is not only employed but intrusted; there is more referred to *his* prudence and care than to the other servants: now the ministers of Christ are stewards of the mysteries of God,[d] and it is required in stewards that

[a] 1 Tim. 4. 15. [b] 1 Tim. 4. 12. [c] Acts 1. 1. [d] 1 Cor. 1. 2.

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they be faithful; they are *rulers in the household*, under the Master, *to give them their portion of meat in due season*;[a] and in order to the due discharge of their trust, have need to be wise as well as faithful. Now when a steward enters into his office, it is usual to give him a particular account of the things put into his hand, and the trusts committed to him; the keys of such and such a store-house are lodged with him, and he is to be accountable for what is in it, and what is given out of it. Perhaps Christ alluded to this; when he gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of Heaven,[b] —and, in him, to all faithful ministers who are intrusted to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ, and, that kingdom, according to the direction of their Lord, and for his honour.

When the Levites had *their hands filled*—as the Hebrew phrase is, for consecration—that is, had the charge of the sanctuary committed to them, and the parts and utensils of the tabernacles put under their custody; each of the three families had their part committed to them, and knew what they were to take care of, and account for: the Kohathites had the charge of the ark, the table, the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary; the Gershonites of the tent, the curtains, and hangings, &c. the Merarites of the boards, bars, pillars, &c.[c]—Thus care was taken, that each should know his charge; and it is said, that *the instruments of the charge of their burthen were reckoned to them by name*;[d] that they might be engaged to the utmost circumspection in the discharge of their trust.

Give me leave, brother, in like manner to be particular in giving you an account of the holy things put into your hands, that good thing which *is committed to you; to keep*, not by any skill or strength of your own, but *by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us*;[e] and I hope you will not think we take too much upon us, if we *charge you, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*:[f] and in the discharge of this stewardship, remember that our Master expects we should approve ourselves both faithful and wise servants, as those who, through grace, have both skill and will for our work.

1. You must, faithfully and wisely, explain and apply the oracles of God. You have declared, that you receive the Holy Scriptures as of divine authority, and the standing rule of your faith and practice, and as such we commit them to you to be your treasury and touch-stone, the fountain whence you must derive your knowledge, and the foundation on which you must build your faith; for by them is the *man of God perfect*, accomplished as a man of God, and thoroughly *furnished for every good word and work*.[g]

The book of the law was committed to the custody of the priests;[h] and it is a very proper and significant usage in some churches to put the bible into the hand of Ministers, when they ordain them; that is one of the great things we commit to you; keep the bible as a sacred deposit of inestimable value, which being a light shining in a dark place, it is not strange if the powers of darkness level all their force against it, to corrupt it, to slacken the obligation, or lessen the reputation of it, to take it away from us, or which would come all to one, to take us off from it to follow some false light. It is therefore given in charge—to all christians, but to ministers in an *especial* manner—To *hold fast that form of sound words* which we have in the Scriptures, in *faith and love*, and to hold to it. Let us be true to this trust, as faithful keepers both of the words and things contained in the Scriptures; as the Masorites, among the Jews, were of the *letter* of the Old Testament, who could tell how often each letter of the alphabet was to be found in their Hebrew Bible: and, let us not come under the black character of those, who in the primitive Church were called *traditores,—traitors*, or *betrayers*; because, to avoid suffering, they gave up their Bibles to their persecutors.

In all your preaching, keep close to the Scripture; and fetch both matter and words thence. *To the law and to the testimony.*[a] It is Scripture philosophy, and Scripture oratory, that ministers must be masters of, and serve Christ and his Church with: if they speak not according to that rule, it is because there is not that light in them that should be. You have a Gospel to preach, not a Gospel to make; and then only are faithful to your commission, when you strictly pursue your instructions; and deliver *all that*, and *that only*, *which you have received of the Lord*, in its native purity and simplicity, as one who dares not add thereto, or diminish from it, nor make any alteration.

Study the true and genuine sense of Scripture—by consulting the originals; and comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and rest not in Scripture words and phrases, without understanding the true import and intention of them, and doing what you can that those you speak to may rightly understand it too: for what will it avail us, *hærere in cortice,—to worship in the outer court?* Paul, when he was a Pharisee, had his Bible at his fingers' ends, and yet owns he was *without* the law,[b] because he was a *stranger to the true intent and meaning* of it; and what does it profit, *then?* Nay, if we do not take pains thoroughly and truly to understand the Scripture, we shall be in danger of handling it deceitfully, and wresting it to our own and other's destruction.[c] In plain texts, keep to the plain sense; in difficult ones, be modest and humble in your searches, and *keep to the proportion of faith*,[d] expounding them by those that are more plain.

Accustom yourself to a Scripture language; and labour to be ready, as well as mighty, in the Scriptures, that you may speak of divine things, in the words which the Holy Ghost teaches;[e] for in those words

[a] Luke 12. 42. [b] Mat. 16. 19. [c] Num. 3. 25, 31, 36. [d] Num. 4. 32. [e] 2 Tim. 1. 14. [f] 1 Tim. 6. 13, 14. [g] 2 Tim. 3. 17. [h] Deut. 17. 18.

[a] Isa. 8. 20. [b] Rom. 7. 9. [c] 2 Pet. 3. 16. [d] Rom. 12. 6. [e] 1 Cor. 2. 13.

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they are brought with the most power, both to convince and to comfort. Do what you can therefore to make them familiar both to yourselves and to your hearers. Whence can we better fetch both strength and ornament to what we say, than from the Scripture?

In order to all this, I earnestly wish that the reading and expounding of the Scriptures were universally practised in all our congregations, as blessed be God it is in many; it has been, and would be of great use to increase Scripture knowledge both in ministers and people; and some plain and obvious observations gathered out of a chapter in the exposition of it, might do as much to enlighten the mind, and direct the conscience, as a long studied train of arguments in a sermon. *Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ—Water drank from the spring-head is sweet indeed.*

2. You must, faithfully and wisely, administer the ordinances of Christ, according as your opportunity is. Divine institutions are to be kept pure and entire, not kept *from* the Church, but kept *for* it, and you are intrusted with the custody of them, and the dispensing of them, so as to serve the great ends for which they were appointed; both those which are common to all revealed religion, as the word, prayer, and the Sabbath day: and those which are peculiar to the christian economy, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The preaching of the word is a divine institution; not only for the bringing in of those who are without the Church, as if none needed to be preached to but Heathens and Turks,—but for the bringing up of those who are born within the Church, as they come up to years of understanding; and the building up of those who are grown to maturity, who, as long as they are on this side Heaven, need the constant preaching of the word, for the increasing of their knowledge, the refreshing of their memories, the assisting of their meditations and devotions, and the directing of their affections and conversations; besides the necessity there is of it, for the conviction and conversion of sinners, even in christian nations; *I charge you therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word, the* pure word of God; be constant, *be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.*[a] Prepare for this part of your work; it is the wisdom of the preacher, still to teach the people knowledge; let him give good heed, and seek out, and set in order many proverbs; let him study to find out acceptable, profitable words.[b] Manage it as an ordinance of Christ, instituted for the advancing of his honour and interest, and therefore preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord,[c] as one who has determined to know nothing, but Christ and him crucified,[d] and desires to acquaint others with him. "Preach Christ, brother," said an aged minister, to one who asked his advice; "whatever you do, preach Christ."

Prayer is another divine institution, and you are to give yourself to that, as well as to the ministry of the word[a]; and this part of your work is as necessary to be done, and to be done well, as that. You must be the people's mouth to God, to declare all their concerns to him,—as well as God's mouth to them, to declare all his counsel to them. And for this also you must prepare; by meditation and secret prayer,—and acquainting yourself more and more with the Scriptures and your own heart, and the several cases both of saints and sinners. Know and observe the great intentions of this ordinance,—not to prescribe to the providence of God, but to plead and put-in-suit his promises, to give him the honour due to his name; and to fetch in that grace, strength, and comfort, which he has encouraged us to ask and hope for in the name of Christ: keep this in your view in every prayer.

The Lord's Day is a divine institution; the religious observation of one day in seven to the honour of God, is as ancient as the world; the fixing of it to the first day of the week, in honour of Christ rising from the dead, is as ancient as the Christian Church; and the thing itself is necessary to the keeping up of religion in the world; and, therefore, study to keep up the honour of the Christian sabbath, that you may keep up the power of it; call it a *delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable,* and teach others to call it so too.

The two sacraments—of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—you are likewise intrusted with the administration of; and must therefore study the nature of them, and furnish yourself well with that which is pertinent and proper to be said in the administration of them, both in the word, and prayer, by which they are sanctified; and get your heart affected with the great things contained in those ordinances, that you may administer them not only so as to instruct, but so as to affect others also. And in all your administrations have an eye to the institution, that is your warrant on which you must depend for your authority; and, therefore, that must be your rule to which you must adhere for your direction. *See thou do all, according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount.*

3. You must faithfully and wisely maintain and defend the great truths of the gospel. From the beginning, the gospel was preached with much contention[b], and our Lord Jesus himself endured the contradiction of sinners; and the like must be still expected, till we come to that world where there is no pricking briar, nor grieving thorn. The ministers of Christ are not only labourers in his vineyard,—but advocates for him at the bar, to plead his cause; soldiers for him in the field, to fight his battles; and you must furnish yourself accordingly.

There are matters in variance among good Christians and good protestants; like those of old about meats and days, in which we must study mutual forbearance; humbly and honestly walking according to the light God has given us, and charitably believing that others do so too. But there is opposition given to the gos-

[a] 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. [b] Ecc. 12. 9, 10. [c] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [d] 1 Cor. 2. 2.

[a] Acts 6. 4. [b] 1 Thess. 2. 2.

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pel we are the ministers of, by atheists and deists, socinians and papists; against whom, we must contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints[a]; and to whom we must not give place by subjection; no not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel may continue with us. In controversies of this nature, you must know how to handle your arms, and to stand to them, those weapons of our warfare, which, though not carnal, yet are mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds[b]; must be able to give a reason of the hope that is in you[c], and to convince gainsayers in meekness, and yet with all faithfulness, instructing those who oppose themselves[d].

Ordinarily, it may be best, In your preaching, to handle the truths of the Gospel as if they were never controverted; setting them before people in their true light and evidence; and rather obviating and anticipating objections than raising them; but still you must be furnished with answers, whenever there is occasion for them, to those who contradict. Know what to say, and be ready to say it, to those who question the Being of God, and the Dominion of his Providence; who oppose the Scripture and divine revelation, who set up any other light and power in competition with it; to those who deny the trinity, the Godhead of Christ and his satisfaction; and to those who advance the Pope's supremacy and infallibility, who worship images, and give that honour to creatures, which is due to God and Christ only: Here, you must put on resolution, and holy zeal, and set your face as a flint. And never betray these great truths of Christ by a cowardly silence; but in things wherein the Lord your God is jealous, be you so too. Buy the truth, and sell it not. As you need not distrust your cause, so you need not distrust him whose cause it is; his advocates shall never want instructions,—but if you humbly and honestly depend upon his assistance, and aim at his glory, it shall be *given you in that same hour what ye shall speak*.

There are some controverted things, in which we must be careful not to run into extremes; we must hold fast both the truth as it is in Jesus[e], the truth which gives all the honour to Christ, and exalts free grace,—and yet we must hold fast the truth which is after godliness[f], the truth which strengthens our obligations to holiness in heart and life. The Gospel does not make void the law, but perfects it. Duty must be done, and must be preached; but still Christ must be *all in all*, both for strength and righteousness. What *seeming* differences there may be between one Scripture and another, your business must be to accommodate them, not to aggravate them, for we are sure there are no *real* differences; and when we meet with difficulties that we cannot solve, let us abide by that which is plain and without controversy, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

4. You must, faithfully and wisely, preside in religious assemblies; for as a minister, you are appointed to be one of the stewards of Christ's courts, and one of the masters of those assemblies[a]. The holy convocation is a divine appointment. Though every particular family and person, a-part, might get the knowledge of God's will from his word and praise him, and pray to him, yet he has ordained that Christians should associate at stated times for his worship, under the conduct of a gospel ministry; the Jews had their synagogues, which it was our Saviour's custom to attend in, with his neighbours, every sabbath day, to set us an example. Religious assemblies are appointed—for the glory of God and Christ; for the keeping up of the countenance of religion in the world; for the joint profession of our most holy faith and hope, and a joint concurrence in prayers and praises; and for the testifying and promoting of holy love: to be pledges of the communion of saints, and earnests of Heaven.

God promises to Joshua, that if he will keep his *charge*, he shall keep his *courts*[b]: these courts you are to keep—for *him*; in his name, and not your own; for his honour, and not for your own; and so as to answer the great designs of their institution. God's tabernacles are amiable, study to make them more and more so; his service reasonable, evidence that it is so; The assemblies of his people are both his praise and his pleasure; let us therefore preside in them, so that he may be both praised and pleased. When the sons of God come together, to present themselves before the Lord[c]; remember it is your business, as their mouth, to present them to him; both as learners at his feet, and supplicants at his footstool. And have this in your eye.

Let every thing in our religious assemblies be done decently, and in order, as becomes the solemnity of them; and nothing that is vain or light, that sullies the beauty of the service, interrupts the thread of it, or tends to distract and draw away the mind from it, be said or done, or suffered in our assemblies,—but let every part of the service be managed with that seriousness, and reverence, and due decorum, which becomes those that worship God in the Spirit, and know and consider who he is with whom we have to do, and what it is we have to do with him. So that if an unbeliever, or one prejudiced should come in, he might see and say, that God is with us of a truth[d]. This charge therefore we commit to you, that you maintain the honour of religious assemblies; for that will redound much to the honour of Christ, who has promised to be there where two or three are gathered together in his name.

5. You must, faithfully and wisely, witness against Sin,—and carry on the holy war against it, for the suppressing of it, the breaking of its power, and the checking of its prevalency; for the Lord has sworn, that he will have war with that Amalek, that enemy to his church and people, that rebel against his crown and dignity, from generation to generation[e]. Every baptized christian is an enlisted soldier, but every minister

[a] Jude 3. [b] 2 Cor. 10. 4. [c] 1 Pet. 3. 15. [d] 2 Tim. 2. 25. [e] Eph. 4. 21. [f] Tit. 1. 1.

[a] Ecc. 12. 11. [b] Zec. 3. 7. [c] Job 1. 6. [d] 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. [e] Ex. 17. 16.

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a commissioned officer to fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil; your business, therefore, is to strive against sin; to strive against it—in yourself, in others, in those especially who are under your charge.

Bear your testimony against all instances of vice and immorality, all appearances of sin, and approaches toward it. That which is confessedly evil, and a violation of the law of God, faithfully reprove, and warn against it; that those who have sinned may be brought to repentance, and others may hear and fear. Here, you must be *zealously* affected; as the angel of the church of Ephesus, that could *not bear them which were evil and hated*, though not the persons, yet *the deeds of the* Nicolaitans, *which Christ also hated* [a]; here the zeal of God's house should even eat us up, and make us so far to forget ourselves, as not to fear the face of man [b].

The charge given to God's prophets, was to cause Jerusalem to know her abominations [c]: to shew the house of Jacob their sins; and herein to cry aloud, and not to spare [d]; not spare those, not spare themselves. A minister is a reprover in the gate, a reprover by office, and, therefore, ought to speak as having authority, and to be bold for God; O that we were all more so! And had we but more boldness in the cause of Christ now, it would be a comfortable earnest to us of boldness in the day of Christ shortly. Some sinners must be rebuked sharply [e], and saved with fear, plucking them out of the very fire [f]. And this consideration should awaken us to a holy zeal herein, that we have no other way of delivering our souls, but by warning the wicked man of his sin and danger. If we do not reprove our neighbour, we suffer sin upon him, and are in danger of bearing sin for him [g].

In the difference that arose between Christ's disciples who followed him, and one who cast out devils in his name, but did not follow with them,—Christ laid down this rule of CHARITY, *He that is not against me is with me* [h]; but in the controversy between Christ and Beelzebub, between holiness and wickedness, he laid down this rule of ZEAL, *He that is not with me is against me* [i].

6. You must faithfully and wisely separate between the precious and the vile. It was required of the priests, that they should put a difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean [k], and this was the condition of a prophet's acceptance with God, *If thou take out the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth* [l]. Not that we must pretend thoroughly to part between the tares and the wheat, the sheep and the goats, in this world; that will never be done, till the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory: yet Christ has lodged with his ministers a power, according to the word, to *bind* and *loose*.

In your preaching you must distinguish, as the Gospel does,—that you may speak terror and comfort to those to whom they respectively belong, and may neither strengthen the hands of the wicked; nor make the hearts of the righteous sad, whom God would not have to be made sad [a]. The business of the steward, is to give to every one their portion of meat in due season; to every one that which is appointed for them, and is fit for them; and you must do so, by dividing the word of truth aright [b]. *Suum cuique—to every man his portion:* acquaint yourself with, and then accommodate yourself to, the state of the souls of those you preach to, that they may readily say, *This is for me, it suits my case.*

In administering special ordinances; you must go by rule, and not lay them in common. Those who are ignorant or scandalous, and openly profane and vicious, ought not to be admitted to eat of the holy things now under the Gospel, any more than they who were ceremonially unclean under the law. *Procul hinc procul inde profani,—Far, hence far, away! ye profane:* We cannot know mens' hearts, but must be guided by a judgment of discretion, to do that which will be most for the honour of Christ and his institutions, and for the welfare of the souls of men.

7. You must faithfully and wisely comfort afflicted consciences. The great Shepherd gives the undershepherds a particular charge to strengthen those of the flock who are diseased, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken, and to bring again that which is driven away [c]; from him therefore take this part of your charge. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Zion* [d]. Among those who have spiritual senses *exercised*, there cannot but be some who are wounded in spirit; learn how to deal with such, how to pour oil into their wounds, and to bind them up. Those have indeed the tongue of the learned, who know how to speak a word in season to them who are weak [e].

Learn how to deal tenderly with them, and with a spirit of meekness; putting your soul into their soul's stead; that you may heal their bruises, and yet not heal them slightly; may not add to their trouble, and yet may not shew them the wrong way to peace. Their case is often—difficult and to be studied,—but very pitiable, and not to be slighted.

Direct those who are of a sorrowful spirit, to fetch all their comfort from Jesus Christ, and to build their hope on him; shew them the way to that city of refuge; and teach them not to look for that in themselves which is to be had in Christ only, that is a perfect righteousness; not, for that on earth which is to be had in Heaven only, that is, a perfect holiness; not for that in the world, which is to be had in God only, that is, a perfect happiness.

If their souls refuse to be comforted, and they hearken not to you for anguish of spirit, yet do not give up their cause, but continue to speak comfort to them, and to pray for them; if indeed they be righteous, light and joy are sown for them [f], and will come

[a] Rev. 2. 2, 6. [b] John 2. 19. [c] Ez. 16. 2. [d] Isa. 58. 1. [e] Tit. 1. 13. [f] Jude 23. [g] Lev. 19, 17. [h] Mark 9. 40. [i] Mat. 12. 30. [k] Lev. 10. 10. Jer. 15. 19

[a] Ez. 13. 22. 2 Tim. 2. 15. [c] Ez. 34. 4. [d] Isa. 40. 1, 2. [e] Isa. 50. 4. [f] Ps. 97. 11.

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up again in due time; and we must wait for it, as the husbandman does for the harvest, with long patience. Remember it is a part of your charge, to be a helper of the joy of the Lord's people, and to be an instrument in the hand of the Spirit as a comforter.

8. You must faithfully and wisely intercede for the church of God, and pray for all the parts of it, and for the advancement of all its interests. God has set the watchmen upon Jerusalem's-walls for this purpose, that they may cry day and night to him, and give him no rest until he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth [a]. Receive this charge therefore among the rest,—to pray constantly and earnestly for the peace of Jerusalem: yea, and for the welfare of all men, and the fruits of divine compassion to the *whole* world that lies in wickedness: for, so, extensive must your intercessions be,—not only for all saints, but, in the first place, for all men [b].

Public persons must be of a public spirit; which Christ intimated when he taught his disciples to pray, *Our* FATHER, as taking along with them all that can call God FATHER, even those to whom he is so only by creation. You are especially to bear Zion's concerns much upon your heart; as Aaron did the names of all Israel in his breast-plate, when he went in to minister; hereby, you must testify your love to the *whole family that is named from Christ*,—and must keep up the communion of saints,—and do your endeavour to enlarge the hearts, of those among whom you minister, to a catholic concern *for all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both their's and our's.* [c] As in our family worship, we should pray for all Christian families; so in our public worship, for all Christian assemblies,—which you, as presiding therein, have the charge of.

In times of desolating threatening judgments, when the hand of God is gone forth against a people, it is expected, that Aaron stand between the living and the dead, with his censer in his hand, to stay the plague; that the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the temple and the altar, saying, *Spare thy people, O Lord;* [d] that they beseech God that he will be gracious to us. [e] *If they be prophets*, says Jeremiah, *and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them make intercession to the Lord of Hosts.* [f] If we cannot otherwise be serviceable to the public, we may and ought to be so by our prayers: and how much the issue of the struggle between Israel and Amalek in the valley, depends upon the constancy and faith of the intercessors in the mount, who hold up their hands to God, [g] we cannot tell;—but it would be very sad, if by our neglect to pray for it, or by our formality and carelessness in prayer, the righteous glorious cause of God and religion should languish and be lost.

9. You must, faithfully and wisely, transmit that good thing which is committed to you, pure and entire to the next generation; you must not only keep it yourself, but keep it for, and leave it with, those who shall come after you, that one generation may praise God's work unto another. Timothy must commit what he has heard and received to faithful men. [a] That which was *commanded our fathers*, is made known to us, that we may make it known to *our children*, and they to the *children which shall be born*, who shall *arise and declare it to their children*; [b] such care as this must be taken (and may the grace of God make it an effectual care!) to preserve the entail of religion, that that light may not die in our hands, nor that treasure be buried in our graves.

We charge you with the *lambs* of the flock; [c] have an eye to them, a tenderness for them: the first charge Christ, gave to Peter was, *Feed my lambs;* and the same charge is given to all the under-shepherds, not only by the precepts, but by the example, of the Chief-Shepherd, who with a particular care gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads them. If Christ have such a concern for them, he expects you should; and you may expect that, *therefore*, your concern for them shall not be in vain.

Lead them, therefore, into the green pastures, and feed them beside the still waters; lay before them *that* in the word of God, which is *milk for babes:* let your doctrine drop upon them as the rain; and labour to instil into their hearts, betimes, the pleasing, but commanding, principles of love to God and Jesus Christ; delight in the word and prayer; good thoughts of religion and the ways of God; and joyful prospects of the glory to be revealed, and every thing that may invite them, and win upon them to set their faces heavenward.

In preaching; in visiting the families under your charge; you must be a teacher of babes, for Christ is so, and a very meek and compassionate one. The catechising of youth is a very good work, either publicly or privately, and if the blessing of God go along with you in it, it will contribute very much to the good progress and success of all your other work. Invite, encourage and persuade those who are young, *to join themselves to the Lord* in the days of their youth, and to *subscribe with the hand* to be his; [d] and if we do our endeavours, though we should not gain our point, it will be a comfort to us, to have been found in the way of our duty.

And now, brother, you see what the trust is that is lodged in your hand, and the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus. You hear your charge, what do you think of it? I doubt not, but you have considered it before you came under these bonds, and have already sat down and counted the cost; and therefore, I hope, the repeating of this charge—though you see how great your work is, and what difficulties you must expect to meet with in it—yet it does not make you repent your choice, nor wish yourself at liberty again; nor make you despair of going through with the undertaking. This use you should make of it:—To be brought to see your own utter insufficiency for it, by any ability of your own:—" Is all this to be said? *Ah,*

[a] Isa. 62. 6, 7. [b] 1 Tim. 2. 1. [c] 1 Cor. 1. 2. [d] Joel 2. 17. Mal. 1. 9. [f] Jer. 27. 18. [g] Exod. 17. 11.

[a] 2 Tim. 2. 2. [b] Ps. 78. 5, 6. [c] Isa. 40. 11. [d] Isa. 44. 3, 5.

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Lord God, I cannot speak it, for I am but a child,[a] unless God give me a mouth and wisdom. Is all this to be done? Ah, Lord God, I cannot do it, unless God *work in me both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*[b] *Who is sufficient for these things?* Whoever is, I am not."

But instead of being disheartened by the greatness of your work, and the difficulties that attend it,—you should rather, thereby, be animated and stirred up to set about it, and go on in it, with resolution such as becomes the Christian hero, the good soldier of Jesus Christ, who knows WHOM *he has trusted,* as well as *what* he is *trusted with,* and how to commit that again to Christ, which Christ has committed to him against that day.

Let me therefore say something in the close, Both to quicken *you* to your work, and to encourage you in it—and not you only, but myself and other my brethren, who have laid our hand to this plough.

1. Let us propose to ourselves such considerations as are proper to quicken us to our work, and to the diligent, faithful discharge of the trust reposed in us.

(1.) The things we are employed about are of vast importance, and such as highly deserve our utmost care and application. Our business lies not in the little trifles of sense and time, in the merchandise of silver, or the gain of fine gold; no, it has reference to the upper unseen world, the world of spirits; to the future state, the state of retribution,—and to this present state, only with regard to that. Let us often consider,—that we are dealing for an eternal God; with immortal souls; about their everlasting state: and we shall see how well worthy our business is of the whole man. What an awful thought should *that* give us, which the apostle speaks, concerning the work of ministers,—that they watch for *souls.*[c] It is no time to trifle: when there is a soul in the case, and its endless weal or woe.

Those who are concerned about the lives and estates of their *patients* and *clients,*—have need to be both skilful and careful; much more should those be so who are concerned about precious souls, one of which is of more value than the whole world of inferior creatures. What greater care can lie upon a man, than the care of *souls,* which Christ purchased with his own blood, and thereby taught us how to put a value upon them.

Our business lies in the *things pertaining to the kingdom of God,*[d] (his kingdom among men;) concerning *those,* we have received instructions; and in comparison with those things, what are all the affairs of the kingdoms of this world but children's play? It is the word of reconciliation that is committed to us, that word by which we must all be judged, shortly; and therefore we are concerned to be skilful masters of our business, and faithful careful ministers to it. We work for God; and therefore should see to it, that we do our work well. We work for Christ; who did his work for us with indefatigable industry, and did not fail, nor was discouraged,—nor gave it up, till he could say, *I have finished the work that was given me to do.* Mr. Perkins's motto was, *Minister Verbi Es, Hoc Age—If we be ministers of the word of God, we must mind our business;* for It is a *word* that will be a savour either of *life unto life,* or of *death unto death.*

(2.) Our master's eye is always upon us; wherever we are, and whatever we are doing; whatever we say, whatever we think,—he perfectly knows it, its principles, and all its circumstances. He sees us when we trifle, and do the work of the Lord deceitfully; when we offer the torn, and the lame, and the sick, for sacrifice,—how plausibly soever it may be palliated before men. If we aim at self, and at our own praise, when we should seek the honour of Christ;—he is acquainted with those corrupt glances of an eye that goes astray from him.

Now if God has such an observing eye upon us,—we ought to have a jealous eye upon ourselves, and upon the frame of our spirits. God's servants need not do better than to serve him with eye service, because they are always under his eye: ministers who are more immediately employed *for* him, are more immediately observed *by* him. Those who execute the Priest's office are said to *walk before God.* O that we could thus walk before him, as always in his sight,—that that consideration may not only restrain us from every thing unbecoming us, but engage us to go on in our work with the more cheerfulness and courage. As it is the terror of the slothful and wicked servant, so it is the pleasure and encouragement of the good and faithful servant, to be under his master's eye. If we take pains in studying; be constant and lively in prayer in our closet,—he sees our *secret services* to his name, as he does also the secret *springs* of our public performances, which men cannot judge of; and if in these our hearts be right with him, and we approve ourselves to him, we may have the satisfaction of this,—that HE approves of us: and then we may reckon it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. He who judges us, is one who knows us, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth.

(3.) Our time is very precious, and our day is hastening toward a period. When we see what a deal of work we have to do, and what a little time we have to do it in,—we shall see how strongly we are bound, by a close application of mind, to do a double work in a single day, that our work may not be unfinished, when our time is done; or (which perhaps may be much sooner) when our opportunity is done.

We cannot but be conscious to ourselves, that we have lost a great deal of time: how many empty spaces are there in our best days, and how many more in our worst? What a great deal more good might we have done to the souls of others, and got to our own souls, than we have, if we had been busy! Now though the time that is lost cannot be recalled, yet it may be *redeemed;* may be *bought back*—with a little self-denial and industry, in the improvement of the present time. Thus a spend-thrift, when he sees his folly, and begins to take up, knows he has no other way to recover his past losses, but by being so much the more frugal

[a] Jer. 1. 6. [b] Phil. 2. 13. [c] Heb. 13. 17. [d] Acts 1. 3.

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frugal for the future. O that we would all learn this good husbandry, to be very sparing in our expences of time; not to lavish away any of the precious moments of it in trifles. "An hour saved is an hour got," is a more valuable principle of good husbandry, than "A penny saved is a penny got."

We know not how little time may yet be before us; nor how soon, and how suddenly, we may be sent for home. Our commission runs *durante bene placito,—during pleasure*; and we may be displaced at less than an hour's warning; may be commanded away by death, or rendered useless by sickness, or may be silenced and driven into corners; or, some way or other, laid-aside as despised broken vessels; and therefore, we should be quickened to work the work of him that sent us, while it is day, because the night comes. [a] Peter stirs up himself—to stir up others, and by preaching and writing to be a remembrancer to the churches—with this consideration, that *he must shortly put off this tabernacle.* [b] If christians must exhort one another, surely then ministers must exhort *them—so much the more as they see the day approaching;* [c] the day of trouble; the day of restraint; the day of death: And therefore, improve the day of opportunity. If we find death working in us, it concerns us to be so much the more busy in the work of life, and whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might, it will be time enough to rest when we come to Heaven. It well becomes us to abide by that resolution: *Non propter vitam, vivendi perdere causas—Not, for the sake of life, to lose the intent of living.*

(4.) If we obtain mercy of the Lord, to be faithful,—there is hope that we may obtain this further mercy of him to be useful. It is true, there are many who faithfully do their duty: and yet are disappointed of the success: they *toil all night, and catch nothing:* they labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought: and go in the bitterness of their souls because of this:—But yet, if we do not the good we wish, we may hope that, through grace, we shall be instrumental to do *some* service to Christ and the souls of men; and the prospect of that should quicken us to diligence. Our Lord Jesus was animated to go on in his work, with an assurance that he should *see his seed;* should *see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied,* and that the *good pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands.* [d]

Let this, therefore, quicken us,—that we know on whose errand we go, and carry a word that shall not return void. St. Paul was quickened by this consideration, that he did not *run as uncertainly,* nor *fight as one that beats the air;* [e] it is good work we are about, and we are not without hopes it may turn to a good account; that though we are the weakest and unworthiest of all our Master's servants, yet we may by his grace be instrumental to save some soul from death; to turn some sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; we may have some who may be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. By a holy ambition of such an honour as this, let us be spurred on to the utmost diligence and courage in the service of Christ. The more we magnify *our office,* though we have all the reason in the world to be ashamed of *ourselves,* [a] the more we shall think it worth our while to take pains in it.

(5.) We must shortly give account of our ministry; either with joy or grief, according as we are, or are not, diligent and faithful in the ministry. O that we were filled with this: and influenced by it: That the talents, put into our hands to trade with for our Master's honour, must be reckoned for; after a long time it may be, but at the set time. [b] And whether, upon inquiry, we shall be found among the good and faithful servants, or among the wicked and slothful servants,—is now worth while to consider; for it is what our everlasting weal or woe depends upon.

Blessed Paul stirred up himself—to the utmost care and diligence in his work—with a holy fear, lest while he preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away at last: [c] much more reason have we to quicken ourselves with such a consideration. We have souls of our own to save: and if we prove false to our trust, and the souls of men perish through *our* treachery and neglect,—it will be a righteous doom upon us,—*Thy life shall go for his life;* thy soul for their's. We are watchmen; and ought to watch for souls,—as those who must give account, and know not how soon. And woe to us if the blood of souls come to be required at our hand. [d]

Let us, therefore, be humble, diligent, and faithful in our work; and, often calling ourselves to account, Whether we are so or no? and wherein we find we come short of our duty, let us judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord; and get our accounts balanced, by the satisfaction of Christ; then shall we lift up our heads—with joy in our hearts—when our Lord comes, and enter into his joy: when the servant, that because his Lord delayed his coming, grew insolent and abusive, shall have his portion with the hypocrites. [e] That work had need be done carefully, which will have this serious issue.

2. Let us also furnish ourselves with such considerations as are proper to encourage us in our work, and to support and comfort us under the difficulties we meet with in it; that the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, may be strengthened and confirmed, and we may go on in our work, not only with resolution, but with cheerfulness.

(1.) We are employed in work, wherein God is working with us, and we are workers together with him. [f] Nothing could be more encouraging to those, whom Christ has sent to preach and baptize in his name, than that parting promise of his: *Lo, I am with you always,* you and your successors, *even to the end of the world.* [g] The tokens of his presence immediately appeared; for when the apostles went forth preaching, it was evident that the Lord was *working with them, and confirming the word by signs following,* [h] which was an early specimen of the lasting fruits of that promised presence of his with his church and ministers, which they are encouraged to depend upon.

[a] John 9. 4. [b] 2 Pet. 1. 13, 14. [c] Heb. 10. 25. [d] Isa. 53. 10. [e] 1 Cor. 9. 26.

[a] Rom. 11. 13. [b] Mat. 25. 19. [c] 1 Cor. 9. [d] Heb. 13. 17. [e] Luke 12. 42—46. [f] 2 Cor. 6. 1. [g] Mat. 28. 20. [h] Mark 16. 20.

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If Christ have sent us,—he is with us; and his word in our mouth shall not return void, but as the rain from heaven, shall *accomplish that for which he sends it* [a] by us; whether it be sent, as Elihu says of the rain, *for correction,—or for his land,—or for mercy;* [b] and though Israel be not gathered, they who are faithful shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord; [c] and we shall be a sweet savour unto God in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved; [d] and if our labours have not the desired success, yet they shall have the designed success; our peace shall rest on the sons of peace; and if it find none to rest upon, yet we shall be no losers, it shall return to us again.

(2.) We shall find God's grace sufficient for us, if we be not wanting to ourselves in making use of it. It was with reference to the many difficulties and hardships Paul met with in his ministerial work, that Christ said to him, and in him to every faithful minister, *My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.* [e] He knows what measures of grace we and our work call for, and will be sure to give what is requisite; for not only all our supply is from him, but such a supply as is a sufficiency. [f]

If we go about our work in the strength of Christ; depending upon it, and deriving from it; we shall find, that as our day, so shall our strength be,—and we shall be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening us; [g] all those things which Christ has appointed us to do for him. And the more humble the sense we have of our own insufficiency, the more confidently we may depend upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever charge is given us, grace is promised with it, to enable us to discharge it, if we will but by faith fetch in that grace as we have occasion for it, and make use of it. The Spirit of Christ was sent, to assist the disciples as ministers; to teach them who were to teach others; to lead them into all truth, who were to be the guides of the church; and to bring all things to their remembrance, as they had occasion for them: and it is a comfort to us, that that presence and power, that influence and operation of the Spirit is to abide with the church and its faithful ministers always: if, therefore, we do not quench, and grieve, and resist the Spirit, and provoke him to withdraw; if we pray to God to give his Holy Spirit to us, as he has promised to give to them who ask him, and walk in the Spirit, and act in a believing dependance upon him; he will work all our works, in us and for us; and then, and then only, we shall be able to work for him.

(3.) We serve a Master, who if our hearts be upright with him, is ready to pass by and pardon our many failings and defects. It is a great encouragement to all Christians, and to ministers particularly, that though our work be great and difficult, and our strength no way proportionable to it, yet we are under grace, and not under the law. The rule is strict, and we must aim at perfection in our conformity to it: but though in many things we come short of the rule, and cannot do so well as we should,—yet if with a willing mind we do as well as we can, we shall be graciously accepted through a Mediator; and what is amiss shall be passed by and pardoned upon our repentance.

Let not this comfortable word be abused to the indulgence of our sloth and negligence, but rather let it quicken and encourage us in the service of such a God, with whom there is forgiveness that he may be feared. [a] Blessed Paul, the most active, zealous servant that ever our Master had, found cause to complain of a body of death he carried about with him, by reason of which he could not do the good that he would; [b] and if that which was his complaint be our's, that which was his comfort may be our's too; *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* [c]

It was a strict charge which Christ gave his disciples, when he sent them forth. But we find them defective in many instances: in their faith; in their humility; and in the diligence of their attendance on him, witness their sleeping in the garden: yet because they truly loved and honoured him, and believed in him, he not only continued them in his family, but favourably excused their infirmities, imputing them to the weakness of the flesh, while he *knew* the spirit *was* willing; [d] and praised them, at parting, for continuing with him in his temptations. [e]

(4.) We have many encouraging examples set before us, of those who, in their day, experienced the grace of God, and his consolations bearing them up, and carrying them on cheerfully in their work. Our fathers bore their testimony to the goodness of God, and the truth of his promise, and the power of his Spirit: they received the same charge that we have done; laboured under the same infirmities, and struggled with the same difficulties that we do; and yet they were enabled to go on in their work, to persevere to the end, to finish well, and to give up their account with joy: and they owned to the last, it was by the grace of God that they were what they were, and did what they did: They were no better than that grace made them. Whenever they told us what God did for their souls, and what he did by their ministry,—they were sure still to ascribe all the glory to free grace.

Now this is a comfort to us, that how weak soever we are, we have the God of our fathers to trust to, and depend upon; who did not fail *them;* and therefore, we hope, will not forsake *us.* He says to us, as he did to Joshua, when he was called to carry on that work which Moses had been long employed in: *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.* [f]

We who have had our hands for many years at this plough, can assure you from our own experience, if that will be any encouragement to you, brother, that we have all the reason in the world to speak well—of our *Master*; he is our best friend—and of his *work;* it is its own wages. We have cause enough to be ashamed of *ourselves,* that we have done our work no better; but the *Gospel of Christ,* which we are intrusted with the preaching of, we hope we shall never be ashamed of. [g]

[a] Isa. 55. 10, 11. [b] Job 37. 13. [c] Isa. 49. 5. [d] 2 Cor. 2. 15. [e] 2 Cor. 12. 9. [f] 2 Cor. 3. 5. [g] Phil. 4. 13.

[a] Ps. 130. 4. [b] Rom. 7. 19. [c] Rom. 8. 1. [d] Mat. 26. 44. [e] Luke 22. 28. [f] Josh. 1. 5. [g] Rom. 1. 16.

(5.) Great

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(5.) Great will be our reward in Heaven, if we be faithful. Though we can merit nothing at the hand of Christ—but when we have done all, must say *We are unprofitable servants,*[a] much more when we have done so little, nay, though there is so much sin and folly mingled with our best performances, as might justly cut us off from all hope of acceptance—yet, through Christ and his merit, we are encouraged to look for that crown of glory; which the Chief-Shepherd when he appears shall bestow upon all the under-shepherds who are faithful to him.

Our Master himself had an eye to the *joy set before him.* And this enabled blessed Paul to triumph: when he was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand:[b] not only that his warfare was accomplished, and his toilsome course finished, but that thenceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness; and not for him only, but for all those who love both the first and second appearing of Jesus Christ.[c]

Your success in your ministry will add to your comfort; the souls you win for Christ will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord,[a] which should engage you to *aim* at success in your work: but though you should not be honoured with much of that, God will not be unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, and if but little encouraged here, it shall without fail be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

You must count upon sufferings. When Christ sent forth his disciples, he told them, not only what great things they should *do*—but what great things they should *suffer for his Name's sake;*[b] persecution and opposition from without; contempt and contradiction from within. Suffering ill for doing well you may think *hard* of, but must not think *strange* of; your Master is before hand with you in his sufferings, and will not be behind hand with you in his recompenses; your journey may be tedious, and your voyage perilous, but hold out with faith and patience, you will be at home shortly, and one hour in heaven will make amends for all.

[a] Luke 17. 10. [b] 1 Pet. 5. 4. [c] 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8.

[a] 1 Thes. 2. 19. [b] Acts 9. 16.

A Sermon *preached at the Funeral of the Rev.* James Owen,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY, APRIL 11, 1706.

Acts 20. 37, 38.

And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.

MY text is a short account of the solemn farewel, which was interchanged between St. Paul and the elders of Ephesus; and you see upon the reading of it, that it was a very mournful farewel; no improper subject therefore for a mournful funeral, such a one as we have now been attending: for what are funerals but our farewels to our friends, and this farewel in the text being pronounced by the Spirit of prophecy a final farewel, it was a sort of funeral.

And there is one circumstance of the story, which makes the resemblance the more lively and affecting; it is that which is added, (v. 38.) that *they accompanied him unto his ship.* For methinks, when we follow the remains of our deceased friends, who we trust sleep in Jesus, to the grave, and lodge, and leave them in that close and dark cabin, we do in effect the same; we accompany them to their ship, so I would rather call it, than their prisons, for the body, though confined to it for a time, is to pass through it to its glory. Let us, therefore, say concerning those whose earth we have committed to the earth, in hope of a resurrection to eternal life, that we have put them on ship-board, not to be tossed with tempests, for there the weary are at rest; but rather to be be-calmed and wind-bound a while, till the embargo shall be taken off in the resurrection, and then, like the ship into which Christ was willingly received, it shall immediately land[a] its passengers in the desired harbour of endless bliss and joy. Or, we will suppose, that we shut them up in such a ship, as God shut up Noah in, not so much for passage as for preservation; in which they shall be safe from the waters of the flood, and kept secret till the appointed time comes for God to remember them,[b] as he remembered Noah;[c] and then they shall be brought out with joy, and led forth with singing into a new world.

How does this alter the property of death and the grave! Let the thought of it therefore give us quite another prospect of them, than that which we are apt to amuse ourselves with. The sanctified soul, after it is delivered from the burthen of the flesh, goes immediately to joy and felicity, under a convoy of blessed angels; and the deserted body too is taken care of, it is shipped off in a very good vessel, under the protection of a covenant with the dust, which shall be remembered; so that it is sure not to be lost; it is dust which shall never be the serpent's meat, but shall without fail meet its soul again in due time, in the better country, that is, the heavenly; to be separated no more for ever.

In the account here given of this solemn farewel, it is observable, that St. Paul took leave of his friends with prayers, and they of him with tears. Prayers and tears are not only the Church's artillery, with which her enemies, as there is occasion, are attacked and repulsed. But they are likewise a part of the Church's

[a] John 6. 21. [b] Job 14. 13. [c] Gen. 8. 1.

treasure,

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treasure, with which her friends are enriched and entertained.

1. St. Paul, as became him, took leave of them with prayer; so he concluded his farewel sermon, *When he had thus spoken,* with the utmost expressions of reverence and fervency, *he kneeled down and prayed with them all;* knowing, that what he had said to them would not edify them, as he desired, without the grace of God working by it, he thus implored that grace. Being to leave them, in return for all their respects to him and his ministry, he thus left his blessing behind him, and a prophet's prayers will at any time amount to a prophet's reward.[a] He had told them, (v. 32.) he *commended them to God,* which he did effectually by this solemn prayer. If he must leave them, he will leave them in the best hands, and engage his gracious presence with them, who has promised never to leave, nor forsake those who trust in him.[b] Our Lord Jesus concluded his farewel to his disciples with a prayer for them, (John 17. 1.) and at last was parted from them as he blessed them.

Many a prayer St. Paul had put up for those Ephesians, which he gives them a specimen of once and again in his epistle to them; nor would he after his departure from them, cease to pray for them;[c] this is one way, by which the communion of saints is kept up in their present dispersion; but this prayer he prayed with them, partly for their instruction, and the riveting of the things he had said to them in their minds; for which reason in his epistles to the churches, he tells them particularly what it was that he asked of God for them, that they might study to answer the intention of his prayers, as well as of his preaching and writing: and partly for the alleviating of their griefs, which in this prayer he poured out before the Lord, and that afterwards, they might reflect with some comfort and satisfaction, upon this part at least of the sad solemnity.

It is good for friends to part with prayer, the rather because when we part we are not sure that ever we shall meet together again; but here we may suppose, the duty was performed with the more affection, and warmth of devotion, because they knew it was to be the last prayer, that blessed Paul was to pray with them; and it is very fit that at death we should take leave of our friends with prayer, because then we are to take leave of prayer itself; farewel prayer, and welcome praise, everlasting praise.

2. They, as became them, took leave of him with tears. They wept at prayer, and it was a very proper expression of their pious importunity. Jacob commenced Israel, a Prince with God, when he wept and made supplication;[d] and our Lord Jesus himself in the days of his flesh, offered up his prayers with strong crying and tears;[e] though he had no sin to lament in prayer as we have. They wept at parting with so good a friend. Paul had in this discourse with them, more than once intimated, how often he had wept over them, such was his tender affection to them, and hearty concern for their welfare; he had served the Lord among them with many tears, (Acts 20. 19.) and had warned them night and day with tears, v. 31. And now in a just and grateful return for his love, they weep over him: For *He that watereth shall be watered also himself.*[*]

Let us observe on this sad occasion.

(1.) Who the mourners were. They were the elders or presbyters of the church of Ephesus, whom Paul sent for to attend him at Miletus, v. 17. It appears by the scope of the foregoing discourse, that St. Paul now in the clear foresight, and actual consideration, both of his own death, and of the rise of heresies and sects thereupon, was deliberately and solemnly committing the conduct and government of the renowned church of Ephesus to the presbyters, or presbytery of that church, for a pattern to other churches; plainly telling all these elders,[b] and not any one more than the rest, that the Holy Ghost ἔθετο Ἐπισκόπους—*had made them overseers,*[c] or bishops of that church, and that therefore it was incumbent upon them to feed it; that is not only to teach, but to rule it; committing the discipline, as well as the doctrine of Christ, to their ministration; without the least intimation of his doing it only *pro tempore,—for the time being,* and with a purpose to alter the constitution afterwards: accordingly, he charges them with the utmost diligence and application of mind, to set about the discharge of this great office, v. 28. *Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock;* and plainly intimates, that they must not any longer expect the personal residence either of himself as an apostle, or of Timothy as an evangelist, among them, nor depend upon them for any further particular direction in the affairs of their church; but under Christ, and in his strength, take the work into their own hands, and manage it according to the rules they had already received; *Take heed to yourselves. As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, and beareth them on her wings,*[d] to teach them to fly, as soon as she perceives they are fledged; so does St. Paul here by these elders, putting some of his honor and spirit upon them, and exciting them now to do that themselves,[e] which hitherto himself or Timothy had done for them; and to make full proof of their ministry,[f] as hitherto they had under their direction made good proof of it.

Now though this was a great advancement to these elders, thus to come of age, and to be no longer under tutors and governors; yet they were so far from being pleased, or puffed up with the honour, that they fell a weeping at the thought of it; that they should never again have Paul to preside among them, and direct them. Thus the disciples of Christ, though he told them when he parted with them, that greater works than he did should they do,[g] yet sorrow filled their hearts, because they should want the advantage of his bodily presence. Those know not their own weakness, and the peril that attends the posts of honour, who are ambitious to stand in the front, and lead the van, to

[a] Mat. 10. 41. [b] Heb. 13. 5. [c] Eph. 1. 16. [d] Hos. 12. 4. Heb. 5. 7.

[a] Prov. 11. 25. [b] 1 Tim. 4. 14. [c] Acts 20. 28. [d] Deut. 32. 11. [e] Num. 11. 17. [f] 2 Tim. 4. 5. [g] John 14. 12.

carry

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carry the standard, or give the word of command among the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Since it is so difficult to rule well, it is very desirable rather to be well ruled.

But though the presbyters, or ministers only, are mentioned, as attending Paul at Miletus, yet it is probable that some of the people were with them, to pay their respects to that great apostle; for we find at another place, soon after this, that he was thus brought on his journey after a godly sort,[a] and accompanied to the ship, by all the disciples with their wives and children, ch. 21. 5.

(2.) Observe, How they expressed their sorrow, we read of nothing they said on this occasion; But,

[1.] *They all wept sore,* ἱκανὸς δὲ ἐγένετο κλαυθμὸς πάντων—*There was an abundant weeping of them all*; so the phrase is, perhaps in allusion to that saying of the Canaanites, concerning the lamentation that was made at Jacob's funeral, *This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians.*[b] It was not one or two of them, whose spirits were more tender than the rest, that could not forbear weeping on this occasion, but they all wept; there was not one dry eye among them. Nor were they women and children, who mourned thus passionately, but the elders of the church, who did not think it any diminution to their gravity or dignity, in this way to give vent to their sorrows.

Our Lord Jesus was often in tears,[c] particularly at the grave of his friend Lazarus; and it is probable, his frequent weeping, was that which made those who fancied him to be one of the prophets risen from the dead, to conclude, that certainly he was Jeremias the weeping prophet.[d] Our way lies through a vale of tears, and it becomes us to conform to the climate: *Blessed are they that mourn,* that *sow in tears.*

[2.] They *fell on Paul's neck and kissed him;* signifying hereby, how dear he was to them, and how loath they were to part with him. They took him in their arms, and laid him in their bosoms, to shew how near he lay to their hearts, and that he was to them as their own souls. Thus they embraced at parting, as Jacob and Joseph did at meeting,[e] with all the affection that can be supposed, between the tenderest father and the dearest children. Could they have detained him in the cords of love, and with those powerful bands constrained his stay, he had not left them: but there is no remedy, he must go; he loves them well, and would gladly abide with them, but he loves his Master better, and must preach his kingdom in other cities also;[f] yet they will make it appear, it is with the utmost regret and reluctance imaginable, that they bid him farewel; their life they think is bound up in his.

See here one fruit of the gospel of Christ, as far as it took possession of men's hearts, it not only slew all enmities, but strengthened all endearments. If the followers of Christ, shewed themselves thus mutually kind upon all occasions, well might they say among the heathen, *See how these christians love one another:* and by this would all men know, that they were the disciples of him, who loved us first.[a] O that this fruit might revive, might remain! How happy is it, where there is such sincere and flaming affection as this between people and ministers, between christians among themselves, and ministers likewise one to another, for where love thus reigns, the God of love no doubt commands the blessing—even life for evermore.[b]

(3.) Observe what was the matter of their sorrow, it was chiefly this, because he had said, and had said it with an observable air of assurance, that they should *see his face no more;* which bid them to think that he was now ready to be offered, and that the time of his departure was at hand,[c] and for this sorrow filled their heart. He could himself finish his course with joy, it was a pleasure to him to think of it, but to them nothing could be mentioned more painful; this put him into a dilemma between life and death, Phil. 1. 22, 23. The joy and gain set before him made death desirable, and yet the grief and loss he should leave behind him, made him, with a noble self-denial, willing to live.

Yet whether he was to die quickly, or live a good while longer, he does not inform them, only that they for their parts should *see his face no more;* this was the word which was as a sword in their bones. We have no reason to think, that St. Paul had any thing charming in his face above other men, it did not shine as the face of Moses did; but, on the contrary, we know that his bodily presence was weak and despicable; and it is probable, his visage, like his master's, was marred more than any man's, furrowed with tears and toils; but it was not the shew of his countenance that they looked at; they therefore loved to see his face, because then they were sure to hear his voice, and the voice of Christ speaking in him; then they were sure to have some spiritual gift[d] or other imparted to them, for their instruction and edification; but now they must never expect that privilege again. It is true, after this they might hope to hear from him by letter, and did do so, and his very enemies owned that his letters were weighty and powerful; they had likewise his other epistles to the churches, besides that to themselves, to consult and converse with, yet it troubles them to think that they shall never see him in the pulpit, never hear him preach any more; and though that which is written remains, yet that which is delivered *viva voce—with the living voice,* is more likely to *affect;* and we cannot but desire with St. John, if it may be, to *see the voice that speaks to us.*[e]

But why should they sorrow most of all for this word, that they should *see his face no more?* There was another thing which he had said, for which, in my mind, they had more reason to be sorrowful, than for this; for he had told them, that *after his departure grievous wolves should enter in among them; nay, that some of themselves,* it should seem, he means some of these very men he was now speaking to, should arise

[a] 3 John 6. [b] Gen. 50. 11. [c] John 11. 35. [d] Mat. 16. 14. [e] Gen. 46. 29. [f] Luke 4. 43.

[a] John 13. 34. [b] Ps. 133. 3. [c] 2 Tim. 4. 6. [d] Rom. 1. 11. [e] Rev. 1. 12.

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and preach *perverse things*, to *draw away* the *disciples after them*, v. 30. For this, methinks, they should have sorrowed most of all, as the disciples of Christ did, who are said to have been exceeding sorrowful, when their master told them that one of them should betray him.[a] But the truth is, the things of sense make deepest impressions upon us, and affect us most; we grieve for sin less than we ought, and for trouble more. Or we may suppose, that therefore they thus lamented Paul's departure from them, because this would be the sad consequence of it, which they hoped might have been happily prevented, if he could but have tarried with them.

However, that it grieved them thus to part with him, was both his honour, and their praise.

[1.] It was his honour. It was a sign he lived in esteem among them, as one who did good *in* Ephesus, (as Jehoiadah had done in Israel)[b] that he went away attended with so many unforced, undissembled tears.

It is a mark of disgrace to depart without being desired,[c] and as an evidence of that, without being lamented, none to say, *Ah Lord*, or, *Ah his glory*.[d] But a branch of honour to be wept over, as Josiah was, and dismissed with the genuine and unbribed lamentations of those, that are wise and good.

It is true, there have been those who have triumphed in the fall of the worthiest and best of men; when Christ's two witnesses are conquered and slain, the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice in it, and make merry;[e] their lives were their torment, and therefore their deaths are their joy; they who took away their lives, *cast out their names as evil*, that they might make the world believe, they had done God and their country good service. And, probably, the mighty industry of the persecutors, to blemish the memory of the martyrs, might give occasion to their surviving friends, so much the more to magnify them, and pay the greater respect to their names; even such as in after-ages degenerated (as good things are apt to do) into superstition. But the removal of virtuous and useful men, though it may be the sport and joy of profaneness and bigotry, will be the grief of all Wisdom's children. Though Stephen was cast out of the city and stoned, in a popular tumult, as one not fit to live, yet there were found devout men, (who, it should seem, were not as yet professed christians, but proselytes of the gate, hearty well-wishers to religion in general) and those carried Stephen to his grave, and made great lamentation over him.[f]

St. Paul, for his part, was loaded as much as any man with disgrace and ignominy, where-ever he went, and yet there were those of whom he was had in honour.[g] Thus did he pass by evil report and good report; some hated and vilified him, others loved and magnified him: let none, therefore, be deterred from religion and godliness, by the contempt put upon them; if they have their reproach, they have their praise: set the one therefore over against the other; balance the dishonour with the honour, and see the advantage unspeakably on religion's side; for the reproach is groundless and trifling, may be easily despised, and will quickly be rolled away; but the honour is just, and real, and weighty, and will last to eternity.

[2.] It was their praise. It is upon record to the commendation of these elders, that they thus lamented St. Paul's removal from them; it was a sign they loved him, and valued him, and had been edified by their conversation with him; a sign they judged of persons and things not by outward appearance, or according to the corrupt but common sentiment of a vain and inconsiderate world, that sits in darkness; but that they were governed by their believing regards to an Eternal God, an immortal soul, and an everlasting state; for the sake of which they had this mighty affection and esteem for blessed Paul. A citizen of Zion honours all his fellow-citizens,[a] but the priests, and the Nazarites, those precious sons of Zion, are counted worthy of double honour, such was the honour those elders here generously and gratefully yielded to Paul.

We will, therefore, take it for granted, that these tears were truly pearls; pearls of great price, and that in them part of a just debt was paid to St. Paul now at his going away; and so we may

Observe, That the removal of a good minister from *us, is a thing to be greatly lamented by us*. Our parting with a faithful minister, cannot but be, if we consider it aright, a very sorrowful parting.

I have already seen so many of the tears of this congregation upon this sad occasion, that I could not think of any subject more suitable, nor more pertinent to my purpose than this; I wish I were able to improve the fair occasion it gives me, to account for the justice of your tears, and to direct them into the right channel; to affect you with the Providence you are under, and yet to reconcile you in it, and satisfy you in the will of God.

Had your aged pastor's voice (that least considerable of the qualifications of a minister) been but as good as his head and heart, now in his advanced years, and likely to have reached this great assembly, the work had been at this time in much better hands than mine;* but after all our endeavours, the best part of the work, even the sanctifying of this sad event to the spiritual benefit of every one of you, and the furtherance of the life of your souls by the death of your minister, must by faith and prayer be humbly left to a better hand than any of our's; even to that of the Blessed Spirit, who worketh all in all.

Tears for the dead carry with them their own justification; when the body is sown in corruption, it is fit it should be watered; we are allowed to sorrow, even for those, that we have reason to hope sleep in Jesus; and are only cautioned not to sorrow as those who have no hope.[b] The house where death is, is supposed

[a] Mat. 26. 22. [b] 2 Chron. 24. 16. [c] 2 Chron. 21. 20. [d] Jer. 22. 18. [e] Rev. 11. 10. [f] Acts 8. 2. [g] 2 Sam. 6. 22.

[a] Ps. 15. 4. [b] 1 Thess. 4. 13.

* The Rev. Mr. Tallents, now in the 87th year of his age, and a constant preacher.

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to be a house of mourning,[a] and many a good lesson the man of wisdom will learn there.

But it is a particular case we are now to speak of, and to our grief it is a *case in faith*; it is that of a dead minister, whom we have special reason to weep over; And *Oh! that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears,* for this purpose! Mourning for the dead, even for a priest when he died, by the law of Moses contracted a ceremonial pollution;[b] because that law could not take away sin, which is the sting of death, so that that mourning was then attended with a conscience of guilt unremoved; but the gospel of Christ having abolished death, and altered the property of it, and so enabled us to triumph over it; our sorrow for the dead is now so far from defiling us, that, if it be duly improved, it may, by the grace of God, become a happy means of our cleansing; God grant our's may be so upon this occasion!

I shall endeavour briefly to shew (I.) Who it is, whose removal is to be thus lamented; and (II.) Who they are, from whom it is justly expected, that they lament it; and both from the text and context, as God shall enable me.

I. I say, It is a good minister, whose removal is to be thus lamented. Shall I give you, in short, the character of such a good minister, as is worthy of this double honour?[c] Honour while he lives, and honour when he is gone? You here have lost one, who of his standing, was justly numbered among the first three, for eminent gifts and attainments, and a capacity of serving Christ and his Church with them; but thanks be to God, a man may come far short of him, and yet be found a good and able minister of the New Testament; and not to be parted with without sorrow. We will therefore draw the portraiture of this good minister, by his interest and fidelity, not by his learning, or the arts and languages he is master of; and we will borrow it from the testimony of St. Paul's conscience here, in the preceding discourse concerning himself; in which he did not intend to magnify himself as some great one, but only to justify himself against his accusers, as one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

And here let me premise, (and yet, I hope, we are in this matter so manifest in your consciences, that I need not mention it) that we abhor the thought of drawing into the character of a good minister, his being in every thing of our mind. Far be it, far be it from us, to monopolize christianity or the ministry, and confine either, within the pale of our own particular opinion, in things that concern not the vitals and essentials of religion. We are not here seeking to advance the reputation of a party, nor appropriating the good characters to those of our own denomination; no, we take all occasions to protest against it, and while we walk according to what we have attained, endeavouring therein to approve ourselves to God in our integrity, we charitably believe that others do so too; and therefore we heartily love and honour good men, and good ministers; however, in the less weighty matters of the law, we differ from them in sentiment and apprehension, and practise accordingly; and we highly value all who cast out devils in Christ's name, though they follow not with us.[a] We have a spiritual communion with them in faith, hope, and holy love; we pray for their success, we rejoice in their usefulness, we would be helpers together with them, endeavouring as we are able to promote the common interests of Christ's kingdom, and the common salvation[b] of precious souls; we desire their lives, we lament their deaths; God forbid we should do otherwise, for without doubt, *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and should be approved of us.*[c]

Who then is that good minister, whose removal is to be thus lamented by us.

1. He is one, who having entirely devoted himself to the glory and honour of God, makes it his business to serve him. Thus St. Paul was among the Ephesians, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears.[d] You call us your ministers, and we are very willing to be so called, for we are your servants for Jesus' sake;[e] but we rather look upon ourselves, as ministers of God to you for good; Christ is our master, and he is a good minister, who seeks his master's favour, consults his master's interest, and makes it his business to do his master's will and work.

Nothing is more essentially necessary to the making a man a minister, than self-dedication to the glory of God; nor does any thing go further to denominate a man a good minister, than to act in pursuance of that self-dedication, by a diligent and serious attendance upon God in all instances of devotion, and a wise, faithful, and zealous activity for him, and for the interests of his kingdom; studying by all means possible to do good to the souls of men, and to advance religion in the power of it. He who thus waits on his Master, by *waiting on his ministry,*[f] *shall be honoured.*[g]

He is a good minister who seeks not his own glory, but his who sent him;[h] who serves not his own belly, but the Lord Christ;[i] who aims not at the applause of his fellow-servants, but at his Master's acceptance; for if we please men otherwise than for their edification, we are not the servants of Christ.[k] He is a faithful friend of the bridegroom, who seeks the bridegroom's honour, and does all he can to engage people's affections for him, that he alone may be exalted. Let us be nothing, so that Christ may be *all in all.*

St. Paul was a great scholar, and a chief speaker; yet he reflects with more comfort and satisfaction upon the humility of mind, and the many tears, with which he had served the Lord; than upon the strength of his reasonings, and the eloquence of his discourses,

[a] Ecc. 7. 2. [b] Lev. 21. 1. [c] 1 Tim. 5. 17.

[a] Luke 9. 49, 50. [b] Jude 3. [c] Rom. 14. 17, 18. [d] Acts 20. 19. [e] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [f] Prov. 27. 18. [g] Rom. 12. 7. [h] John 8. 50. [i] Rom. 16. 18. [k] Gal. 1. 10.

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with which he had served him. He is a good minister, and does good service to Christ and his Church, who is humble and affectionate in the work of his ministry, though he do not excel in gifts. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*[a]

2. He is one who faithfully preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus St. Paul, though born at Tarsus, a gentile academy, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a jewish rabbi, yet in his preaching set aside all his learning, and testified the gospel of the grace of God;[b] pressed both upon Jews and Gentiles nothing else but repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.[c] Gospel grace and Gospel duty were the subjects he dwelt upon at all seasons, both publicly, and from house to house; of these he kept back nothing,[d] with these he mingled nothing, ministering the gospel both pure and entire.

And he is indeed a good minister who makes the gospel his oracle, the gospel his touchstone, the gospel his treasury and storehouse, out of which he furnishes himself for every good word and work. Who dares not preach another gospel, nor corrupt this; knowing it is only a dispensation that is committed to him;[e] for which he is accountable; who delights not in preaching any thing but the gospel, knowing nothing so entertaining, nothing so edifying, as that great summary of the gospel, *Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*[f]

He is a good minister, who fills not your heads with airy notions, nor troubles your minds with matters of doubtful disputation, who affects not to gratify a vain fancy with fine speculations, or an itching ear with the enticing words of man's wisdom; but aims, by the plainness and simplicity of the gospel, to win your hearts to the faith and love of Jesus Christ. *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*[g]

3. He is one who cares much for the state of precious souls. Concerning this, St. Paul here appeals to the elders of Ephesus, that he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears[h]. His care was extensive, he had an eye to every one under his charge, high and low, rich and poor, to those who were his grief, as well as to those who were his crown; it was constant, he never ceased night or day, but filled up all his time both of business and conversation, with that which tended to their edification; and it was very affectionate. He warned with tears of love, and tenderness, and holy fear, lest they should come short, and miscarry at last. Thus zealous was blessed Paul, for the edification of the body of Christ, not seeking his own profit, or secular advantage, but the profit of many, and their spiritual advantage, that they might be saved;[i] for upon that was his heart fixed.

And he is a good minister, who has a tender and compassionate love for the souls of men, trembles at the thought of their eternal ruin, and earnestly desires their eternal welfare; for the securing of which he would gladly spend and be spent;[k] who studies to find out acceptable words, by them to teach the people knowledge,[a] who, in his preaching and converse, aims and endeavours to make these with whom he has to do, some way or other wiser and better; who even *travails in birth again*, as it were with labouring pangs, to see Christ formed in them;[b] the height of whose ambition is, to be some way instrumental for the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the building up of saints in holiness and comfort; humbly subscribing to St. Paul's protestation, *We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*[c]

4. He is one, who, by the Grace of God, lives in some measure above this present world. This was St. Paul's rejoicing here; even the testimony of his conscience, concerning the temper of his mind, *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel*;[d] he never desired to be as rich, and look as great as his neighbour; he was perfectly dead to worldly greatness and gaiety; he had likewise the testimony of his friends, concerning the course of his life; they knew very well, he was so far from aiming to get wealth, that he laboured in an honest calling to get bread, rather than be burthensome to them, to the prejudice of his ministry; *You yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities*, and not to mine only, but to *their's that were with me.*[e] In his whole conversation, he discovered a generous contempt of this world, as became one who was so well acquainted with another world, and the great and everlasting things of that world.

And he is a good minister, whose life is in this, as in other instances, of a piece with his doctrine; whose eyes are not dazzled with the glittering lustre of gold and silver, nor his heart drawn, or held, by the magnetic virtue of this earth; who seeks not yours for himself, but you[f] for Christ; minds no high things, but heavenly things; no pleasure so much as that of doing his duty; no preferment in comparison with that of being accepted of God;[g] no business in competition with the business of his ministry; who having engaged, and employed himself in the affairs of another life, entangles not himself in the affairs of this life; whose conversation is in heaven,[h] and in whose forehead, as well as his heart, *Holiness to the Lord* is engraven in legible and indelible characters. The apostles betimes taught gospel-ministers the proper place for their worldly wealth, when they ordered the money that was brought them, to be laid not in their hands, much less in their bosoms, but at their feet.[i]

You see now, who, and what manner of men those ministers are, whose removal is so great a loss, and to be so much lamented. God grant that we all, who are called by this worthy name of ministers of the gospel, may answer these characters. How far our deceased brother did so, some of you know very well, and need not that any man should testify.

II. I come in the next place, to shew you who they are, who are concerned to lament the removal of such

[a] 1 Cor. 8. 1. [b] Acts 20. 24. [c] Acts 20. 21. [d] Acts 20. 20. [e] 1 Cor. 9. 17. [f] 1 Cor. 2. 2. [g] 2 Cor. 4. 5. [h] Acts 20. 31. [i] 1 Cor. 10. 33. [k] 2 Cor. 12. 15.

[a] Ecc. 12. 9. [b] Gal. 4. 19. [c] 2 Cor. 12. 19. [d] Acts 20. 33. [e] Acts 20. 34. [f] 2 Cor. 12. 14. [g] 2 Cor. 5. 9. [h] Phil. 3. 20. [i] Acts 4. 37.

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ministers as these, and what cause they have to do so.

They were the elders of Ephesus, elders in office, not in age, who here wept sore for the departure of Paul from among them: And they may be considered, 1. As ministers; 2. As ministers just setting out in the work of the ministry: and 3, as at this time, and upon this occasion, the representatives of the people, or church of Ephesus. And so,

1. We who are ministers, are taught to bewail the removal of our fathers and brethren from us, and that we shall see their faces no more in this world. Even Paul the aged, speaks of the recovery of a young minister, Epaphroditus by name, from a dangerous fit of sickness, as a very great mercy of God to himself, *least* (says he) *I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*[a] Though he had as little need of the help of others, as ever any minister had, yet the death of Epaphroditus would have been a very great affliction to him, and would have added as much as any thing to his sorrows. Elijah lays very much to heart the death of the prophets, and himself being left alone, though he was so well able to stand alone.[b]

Let the priests, therefore, the Lord's ministers, weep on such sad occasions, between the porch and the altar,[c] mingling their tears with their sacrifices, and their prayers with their tears, saying, *Spare thy people, O Lord.* When the harvest is plenteous, and the labourers, the skilful, faithful labourers so few, our master has appointed us to pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest;[d] and are we not to lament it greatly, when some of the most industrious of the labourers are called out of the harvest, when they could so ill be spared?

Our hands are this day weak; and by such providences as these, they are much more weakened. God is contending with us; our glory is waxen thin; the death of every good minister, (and we have parted with a great many of late, in the midst of their usefulness) is *as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and* alas, *the rest of the trees of our forest are so few, that a child may write them.*[e] It is time for us, with the prophet Ezekiel, to fall down on our faces, under a deep sense of God's displeasure, and to cry as he did, with a loud voice, *Ah! Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel:*[f] high time to cry, *Help, Lord,* when *the faithful,* the faithful helpers, *cease* and *fail.*[g]

And by the sadness of our countenances upon such occasions as these, let our hearts be made better[h], and let us be quickened with more care and diligence to work the works of him who sent us while it is day, because the night comes, and before it comes, *wherein no man can work*[i]. Let us not only be true to our trust, but busy at our work, because we must shortly give account of our stewardship, and be no longer stewards. By such a providence as this, God speaks aloud to us, as he did to Moses, (Num. 27. 13.) *Thou shalt be gathered to thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. Whatsoever,* therefore, *our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might; not counting life itself dear to us,* nor being too tender of it, *so we may finish our course with joy.*[a]

2. The sons of the prophets are, in a particular manner, taught by this instance to lament the removal of their master from their head. And it will be a good sign that they are genuine sons, and will be a good presage of their inheriting a child's portion of their spirit, if, with a filial affection, they cry out as Elisha did, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.*[b] When Elisha had, in those words, erected a monument to the honour of his departed tutor, immediately he took up his mantle, and did wonders with it.

Those who are setting out in the ministry, or setting their faces toward it, have great reason to lament the removal of the elder ministers, especially such an one as we are now particularly lamenting, whom God had eminently qualified for the committing of the treasure of the gospel, to some of the earthen vessels of the rising generation, and the putting of the light into their hands; who did, not only, as a minister, *generare filios—beget sons* to Christ by the gospel; but as a tutor, *generare patres—beget nurses* for those children, and fathers to bring others to Christ. We cannot express the greatness of the loss of such an one, which they, in a special manner, have reason to be sensible of, who sat down under his shadow.

When John Baptist was beheaded, it is said, *his disciples took up the body and buried it, and* then *went and told Jesus;*[c] let those do so who were brought up at the feet of this well-instructed scribe; go and tell Jesus that you are orphans, and take him for your guardian, with whom the fatherless find mercy, and who has promised not to leave his disciples orphans.[d] Resolve, that from this time, more than ever, you will cry unto him as your father, and the guide of your youth,[e] and be assured he will never fail nor forsake those, who trust in the shadow of his wings.

The people that sat under the constant instruction, and inspection of a good minister, ought to lament the removal of such an one from them. When our temporal comforts are removed from us, our relations or friends, in whom we had sensible delight, or by whom we had secular advantage, our grief then has more need of a bridle than of a spur; but when those are taken from us by whom we had, and hoped for benefit to our souls only, then it is necessary something should be said to us, to make us sensible of our loss, and to stir us up to mourn for it; for this is an affliction, which, if not duly weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, we shall not be enough affected with; or at least the impressions of it are apt to wear off quickly, and are soon forgotten and lost.

Let me, therefore shew you briefly what reason you of this congregation have to lament the loss of a faithful shepherd, though thanks be to that God, who graciously continues his aged servant among you, labour-

[a] Phil. 2. 27. [b] 1 Kings 19. 10. [c] Joel 2. 17. [d] Mat. 9. 38. [e] Isa. 10. 18, 19. [f] Ez. 11. 13. [g] Ps. 12. 1. [h] Ecc. 7. 3. [i] John 9. 4.

[a] Acts 20. 24. [b] 2 Kings 2. 12. [c] Mat. 14. 12. [d] John 14. 18. Marg. [e] Jer. 3. 4.

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ing in the word of doctrine, you are not as sheep having no shepherd. I have reason to think, you are very sensible of the breach made upon you; I desire you may be so upon right grounds, that you may sorrow after a godly sort; that you may not, like children, cry for you know not what: but may be able to give a rational answer to such a question, as that which Joseph put to his fellow prisoners, *Wherefore look you so sadly to day?*[a] You may reply to that question with such questions as these.

(1.) Should we not grieve to part with a near relation, to whom we are joined in a close alliance? *Ah!* my brother, or *Ah!* sister; is mentioned as sufficient matter for lamentation, Jer. 22. 18. And shall the bonds of kindred by blood and nature, be stronger than those of kindred by the spirit and grace? You have had fathers of your flesh, whom it may be you have followed to the grave, and you gave them this reverence, you lamented them; you would have reproached yourselves, as void of natural affection, if you had not done so; and will you not shew this respect to your spiritual fathers, that thereby you may do honour to the Father of your Spirits, and live[b].

Ministers are your's, you have an interest in them, an interest by promise; *Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, are your's;* 1 Cor. 3. 22. It was one of the last subjects your deceased minister preached upon among you; I hope you will not forget it; he told me of it when I visited him in his illness;) it follows, *or life, or death,* which may be understood particularly of the life and death of your ministers; their life is for your service, and their death too, if you make a due improvement of it, may be for your awakening and quickening, for whether they live or die, they are the Lord's,[c] and your's for his sake.

They are your's, for they are gifts which the exalted Redeemer gave unto men for the perfecting of the saints[d], which he gave unto you to be your guides, overseers, and rulers, not to have dominion over your faith, we do not in the least pretend to it, but to be the helpers of your joy[e], and nurses to the *new man* in its infancy, *till it comes to the perfect man.*

You see how nearly related your ministers are to you; they are appointed to be friends to your souls, and if, as you ought, you account them your best friends, it cannot but be a grief to you to part with them.

(2.) Should we not grieve to part with those who have loved us, and been kind to us? As we are bound in duty to lament the departure of our relations; so we are bound in gratitude, to lament the departure of our benefactors; whom God by his grace has made blessings to us. Even the unthankful Israelites, had so much sense of honour in them, as to mourn for Moses thirty days[f], in consideration of the great things God had done for them by his hand; and shall we be less sensible of those invaluable benefits we enjoy by the mysteries of God, which ministers are the stewards of?

[a] Gen. 40. 7. [b] Heb. 12. 9. [c] Rom. 14. 8. [d] Eph. 4. 11, 12. [e] 2 Cor. 1. 24. [f] Deut. 34. 8.

My brethren, we have nothing in ourselves to boast of, but a great deal to be ashamed of, yet, we hope, we can appeal to God as our record, how sincerely we long after you all in the *bowels* of Jesus Christ;[a] how dearly we love you, how earnestly we desire your spiritual welfare, how jealous we are over you with a godly jealousy; and as far as you have perceived this Spirit to be working in your ministers toward you, that must certainly be a grief to you, to have them taken from you. Do you lie so near their hearts, and shall not their departures be laid near your's?

There is something of a generous gratitude in these sorrows we are now calling for, such as well becomes those, who ask in sincerity, *What shall we render?* And would be found, as they are able, rendering according to the benefit done to them. Thus the memory of the just should be precious to us, especially their's, who, by the grace of God, turned many to righteousness; thus should their names be preserved, and embalmed in tears. If for a good man,[b] a useful man, some would find in their hearts to die, to obtain a reprieve for them; shall not all find in their hearts to mourn, when they are past reprieve? Especially, since it is mentioned, as a piece of gross stupidity, and a sad presage of approaching ruin to a people, when the righteous perish, and none consider it, or lay it to heart.[c]

(3.) Should we not grieve to part with those, who can very ill be spared, and that we shall certainly find the loss of? We shall see ourselves engaged to this, by a sense of interest, as well as duty and gratitude. The death of a good minister is a loss, a loss to you, and as such is to be lamented; a loss, which it may be, you are not so sensible of now, as you will be hereafter, when you will know that a prophet *hath been* among you;[d] hath been, *but now is not*; when you will wish to see some of those days of the Son of Man, which you have seen, and may not.

Alas, says the true mourner, If we be bereaved of our ministers, we are *indeed* bereaved; we shall find more and more the want of their preaching and praying, their instructions of us, their intercessions for us; their prudent counsels, their faithful reproofs, their directing and encouraging examples; we may have another minister, but not such another; or such another, but not such another *to us;* it is well if the gap be not too great to be filled up. *Our soul desireth the first ripe fruits,*[e] but where are they?

It is a public loss, a loss to the town and country, to the land and nation; and public spirits cannot but bewail public losses. How ill can the Church of God spare any of its good ministers! They are the chariots and horsemen[f] of the land, strip us of these, and we are naked and defenceless. They are our treasure, rob us of these, and we are impoverished; they are the burning and shining lights, put out these, and we walk in darkness; they are our glory and joy, take away these, and our pleasant things are departed. Our songs are made to cease, our honour laid in the dust,

[a] Phil. 1. 8. [b] Rom. 5. 7. [c] Isa. 57. 1. [d] Ezek. 33. 33. [e] Mic. 7. 1. [f] 2 Kings 2. 12.

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and the crown fallen from the head, *Wo unto us for we have sinned.*[a]

It is true, our God has the residue of the Spirit, nor is he tied to particular instruments; he can raise up a seed to serve him, as well qualified as those who went before; *Instead of the fathers,* when he pleases, *shall be the children;*[b] and will be so, if their spirit descend and rest upon us: *With God all things are possible;* but, alas, we have not this hopeful prospect to give you; we who are risen up, come too far short of these who are gone, and going off, into whose labours we are entered, to be able to excuse you from deep lamentations of the death of your elder minsters, and from sighing out your Ichabod, *Where is the glory?*[c]

Is it nothing to you, then, all ye who pass by, is it nothing to you, that the gold is thus become dirt, and the most fine gold changed;[d] that we have reason to fear such an alteration in the house of our God among us, as was in the temple of Jerusalem in Rehoboam's time, when the shields of gold were carried away, and shields of brass were provided instead of them.[e] God look upon us, and prevent the fatal consequences of such a change as this! How far God may carry on his work by prerogative of power, even when he has removed such workmen, I cannot say; but this I am sure of, their removal is a very threatening omen, which we are all concerned to have awful apprehensions of.

It were now easy to draw a great many inferences from this melancholy subject; to reprove those who lay not to heart such sad dispensations; and much more those who rejoice in the extinguishing of our lights, because they love darkness rather; to encourage ministers to diligence and fidelity in their work, that they may finish their course with honour, as well as joy; to quicken and engage you all to a careful improvement of the labours of your faithful ministers, while they are continued with you, that you may not have tears for your own hardiness and unprofitableness, to mix with your tears for their removal; to inquire whether you have made a due improvement of the former afflictions of this kind you have been under, in the death both of good ministers, and good christians, who have shone as lights among you, holding forth the word of life.

But it is time I apply myself more particularly to the sad occasion of our being together here this evening. Though it is not a Paul, it is not an apostle we have now parted with, and are now lamenting, we compare not our Fir-trees with the Cedars of Lebanon; yet it is one who, I believe, was manifest in the consciences of many of you, to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, and one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be found both skilful, and faithful in that great work.

The earthen vessel, now a broken vessel, we have lodged in the dust, with the expectation of its being raised shortly a vessel of honour; and now what improvements shall we make of this sad providence, and how shall we pay some part of that debt of respect we owe to the surviving name and memory.

Were this a proper place and time for me, to express my own sorrow on account of this breach made upon us, I could not find out better words, nor more apposite and expressive to do it in, than those of David, when he lamented the fall of one, who had been dear to him as his own soul; *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me.*[a] If while I live I forget him, I must lie under the imputation of forgetting my own friend, and my father's friend.[b] A friend, with whom I have had an intimate acquaintance about seven or eight and twenty years, with whom I have many a time taken sweet counsel, and by whose conversation and correspondence, I either have been edified, or might have been; having always found him, not only well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,[c] but ready to distribute, and willing to communicate.[d] Such was the pleasantness of his life, and the distress by his death must be proportionable; *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me;*[e] *and my acquaintance into darkness.* In our lives we were not much divided, either in time or place, how far, and how long we may be so in our deaths, he only knows in whose hands our breath and times are; God, by his grace, make me ready, and willing to go after him!

But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying;[f] that is my design, that is my desire, and I hope by the blessing of God it will be some way edifying to you; if, 1. I give you some short account of his character. 2. If I make some remarks upon his removal; and 3. If I then briefly direct you to some of the work of this day in its day.

1. If I would expatiate upon his character, I have a very wide field before me, and am really sensible, there is a justice owing to so good, so great a name. I confess I am not fond of making every friend I love and honour, a *nonsuch;* it must be left to him, to whom all hearts are open, to put that into any man's character, that there is none like him in the earth,[g] yet, I think, that this is not to be deposited as common dust; nor his monument to be inscribed with common characters; and yet as an advocate for his honour, shall only make that very reasonable demand, *Give him of the fruit of his hands, and let his own works praise him in the gates.*[h]

But aiming, as I said, at your edification, two things I shall suggest, which I think have a direct tendency that way, and may turn to a good account.

(1.) Let that be observed concerning him, which will furnish us with matter for praise and thanksgiving to God. And a great deal of reason we have to give thanks, not only in general, for all the saints and servants of God, who are departed this life in the *faith and fear of his holy name;* to the general assembly of whom, we are come in faith, hope, and love; but in a particular manner for those who have been in their

[a] Lam. 5. 16. [b] Ps. 45. 16. [c] 1 Sam. 4. 21. [d] Lam. 4. 1. [e] 2 Chron. 12. 9, 10.

[a] 2 Sam. 1. 26. [b] Prov. 27. 10. [c] Mat. 13. 52. [d] 1 Tim. 6. 18. [e] Ps. 88. 18. [f] 2 Cor. 12. 19. [g] Job 1. 8. [h] Prov. 31. 31.

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day the lights of the Church, and justly accounted fathers in it; for who is their father? Who but the Father of lights and spirits? *The Lord God of the holy prophets.*[a]

What we call the endowments of nature, a great genius, a solid judgment, a clear head, a strong memory, a quick fancy, a ready utterance, and the like, are all gifts from above; from his hand who formeth the Spirit of man within him. *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord has made even both of them.*[b] All souls are his, even the greatest, the largest souls are so.

What we ascribe to industry, and close application of mind, attainments in knowledge, and a great compass of learning, God must have the praise of; for he it is that giveth men power to get this wealth, and it is not got by their might, and the power of their hands.[c] He it is that giveth the tongue of the learned, and who, in order to that, openeth the ear to hear as the learned.[d] He it is that lighteth the candles; and it is with a borrowed light that the Church's stars shine, with a light reflected from the Sun of Righteousness, that great light of the world.

It is to God, therefore, that we should give the praise of all those excellent gifts and graces, which we have observed in our deceased brother. Bless the Lord, who raised him up out of a remote and obscure part of the kingdom, as a root out of a dry ground, to be so eminently serviceable to the interests of Christ's kingdom in his day, qualified him for service, called him to it, and signally owned him in it; Let us glorify the God of Israel, who has given such power unto men, and put such treasures into earthen vessels.

(2.) Let that be observed concerning him, which is proper for our imitation. What you have heard from him, and seen in him that was virtuous and praiseworthy, transcribe it into your own hearts and lives, speak and do in like manner, and the God of peace shall be with you.[e] Those who were exemplary while they lived, should be made use of as examples when they are dead. It is required in general, that we be followers of all those, who are now through faith and patience inheriting the promises.[f] But particularly, that we follow the faith and holiness of those who have been by office our guides in the good ways of the Lord, considering the end of their conversation;[g] yet with this necessary proviso and limitation, that we follow them as they followed Christ,[h] and blessed Paul himself, that great example, was to be followed no further.

Here let all who know him observe for themselves, and preach to themselves; his children, his pupils, his familiar friends and acquaintance, let them recollect what they have taken notice of in him, that was fit to be imitated, and improve it for their own direction, caution, and quickening. I shall only mention two or three things, wherein I would for my part, propose him to myself for a pattern, and endeavour to imitate him.

Marcus Antonius the Emperor, that great teacher and example of virtue, begins his celebrated book τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν,—*concerning himself*, that is, his diary, with an account of the particular good lessons, or rules of conversation, which he learned from his parents, tutors, and others; whom he names with respect, who were the guides and companions of his youth. Were I to draw up such an account, I should be unjust to him, if I should leave him out of it, in whom I have thought those things among others well worthy imitation.

[1.] That he was a good husband of precious time; and that is a piece of good husbandry, which I am sure is good divinity. I have always known him to be an indefatigable student, and one who took so much pleasure in his work, both as a scholar, and as a minister, that one might see, he accounted it not only its own wages, but its own recreation.

Even till his Lord came he gave a constant attendance, to reading, exhortation, and doctrine, not neglecting the gift that was in him, but continually meditating upon these things, giving himself wholly to them; so that his profiting (even in his early days) appeared unto all men.[a] His Lord having entrusted him with five talents, he continually occupied the same, and traded with them, till, by the grace of God, he had made them five talents more. When he was sometimes urged to abate of the constancy and intenseness of his studies, in consideration of his health, he would say, "You must excuse me, I have but a little time to be working in, and I must be busy." *And seest thou a man* thus *diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings*, and *not before mean men.*

It was often observed concerning him, how uneasy he would be, when forced and kept from his studies, by that conversation which was only entertaining and not edifying, and with what pleasure, as soon as possibly he could, he would retire from it to his work; that he might fill up time with something that would turn to a good account, according as the duty of every day required. This is in a happy sense *living fast.*

[2.] That he was ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and made them above any thing his meditation. His large acquaintance with other learning, did not at all abate his value and pursuit of Scripture-learning, to which all his other studies were made subservient. As he lived a Scripture-religion, so he preached a Scripture-divinity. Scripture language was his eloquence, like that of Apollos, who was *an eloquent man*, because *mighty in the Scriptures;*[b] Scripture reasons were his arguments, like the same Apollos, who *mightily convinced the Jews, shewing* what he taught *by the Scriptures.*[c]

Thus he came to be such an excellent expositor as you know he was; opening the Scripture by itself; comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and speaking the things of God, as they ought to be spoken, in the words which the Holy Ghost teaches.[d]

[a] 1 Sam. 10. 12. [b] Prov. 20. 12. [c] Deut. 8. 17, 18. [d] Isa. 50. 4. [e] Phil. 4. 9. [f] Heb. 6. 12. [g] Heb. 13. 7. [h] 1 Cor. 11. 1.

[a] 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15. [b] Acts 18. 24. [c] Acts 18. 28. [d] 1 Cor. 2. 13.

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Thus he was furnished with milk for babes, and pasture for the lambs of the flock, witness his great dexterity in explaining the Catechism; and with strong meat also for strong men, witness his solid and substantial discourses, in which he set before you the great things of God with admirable clearness, and in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.

Thus he adhered to the good old way, and testified the pure gospel of the grace of God, which exalts the Lord Jesus alone, as all in all, for strength as well as righteousness, and teaches us to cast every crown at his feet; taking all occasions to witness against those notions, which set up man's sufficiency in competition with Christ.

[3.] That he was a faithful and wise reprover of sin, and bold in bearing his testimony against it. Though you know, he was very courteous and obliging in all his behaviour, and not willing to make any man angry or sad, yet when there was a just occasion, he would admonish and rebuke with all authority, and yet with meekness and long-suffering.

Here he set his face as flint, and clad himself with zeal as with a cloke; as one who knew very well whose cause he pleaded, when he pleaded against sin; and how faithful and kind the wounds of a friend are, while the kisses of an enemy are—deceitful; and as one, who believed there was a truth in Solomon's observation, which amounts to a divine promise, Prov. 28. 23. *He that rebuketh a man* for his faults with wisdom and tenderness, though for the present he may incur his displeasure for his plain dealing, yet *afterwards he shall find more favour*, and be looked upon as a better friend, *than he that flattereth with his tongue.*

[4.] That he was a man of true catholic charity; though no man was clearer in his own judgment, better understood the grounds on which he went, nor was better able to give an account of the hope that was in him with meekness and fear, yet he maintained an extensive charity for those from whom he differed, and a temper of mind toward them that was truly christian, and became a follower of the Prince of peace, and a servant of the God of love.

As he wrote, he thought and lived: MODERATION was his VIRTUE, it was STILL his virtue; and it is not long since he took an effectual course to let it be known unto all men, as if he had foreseen that the Lord was at hand. And this is a virtue, which has, and will have its praise with all those, who know how to distinguish between the weighty and uncontested matters of the law and gospel,[a] *judgment, mercy, and the love of God*, and the matters of doubtful disputation;[b] such as the distinction of meats and days. This is the virtue, by which the unity of the Spirit is kept in the bond of peace; notwithstanding a diversity of opinion, and practice accordingly: the triumphs of this virtue over bigotry on all sides, will contribute abundantly to the peace of Zion's walls, and the prosperity of all her palaces.

[a] Mat. 23. 23. [b] Rom. 14. 1.

2. We are next to consider the end of his conversation,[a] ἔκβασιν,—the *issue*, or *outlet* of it. Having seen how he went on in the world, we are now to inquire how he went off out of the world. Others had more of his life than you of this place had; but God sent him hither about six or seven years ago to finish his testimony first, and then to finish his course among you; so that it is but a little time that you have had to improve by his life; God, by his grace, enable you to improve so much the more by his death: and a very improvable providence it is. It is a cloud mostly black and dark, yet not without its bright side.

(1.) We are here presented with a very melancholy and afflictive scene, which we ought to have very awful, serious thoughts of; something there is more than ordinary in this house of mourning, which the living should lay to heart.

To see a man so well qualified with gifts and graces, for the service of Christ and his Church, as he was; so well furnished by the blessing of God upon the many years hard studies of an uncommon head, with all sorts of useful knowledge, so inquisitive after more knowledge; and withal so communicative of what he did know. To see such a man thus taken away, in the midst of his serviceableness to his generation, when he had but little exceeded the fiftieth year of his life; though his strong constitution of body, and prudent management of himself, gave encouragement to hope, that though these treasures were in an earthen vessel, yet there were goods laid up for many years; and though his zeal and unwearied industry, promised us a great deal more of public service, and that he should long be a blessing to his generation, yet to have the number of such months cut off in the midst, such a tongue silenced, such a hand withered, such a head laid in the dust, and at such a time as this, when it could so ill be spared; *What shall we say to these things?* What construction can we make of such a providence as this? We must have recourse to our first principles, abide by them, and resolve to hold them fast, and not let them go, how difficult soever it may be to reconcile some particular events to them. However it be, we are sure that God is neither unwise, nor unjust, nor unkind: he is not only an absolute sovereign, who may do what he will; but a righteous ruler, who does no wrong to any of his creatures; a tender father, who designs no hurt to any of his children. However it be, yet the Lord Jesus takes care of his Church, secures its interests, and the glory of his own name; which, whatever becomes of us, will endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. Under the threatenings of providence, we must fly to the promises of the word, and cast anchor there; God knows what he is doing, though we do not; and we are sure dwells in perfect light, though as to us he makes darkness his pavilion. *Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters*; such as cannot be fathomed, cannot be tracked; but we are confident of this very thing, that thou art *righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works.*

[a] Heb. 13. 7.

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Were we not certain that the soul is immortal, and that there is another life after this, we should be tempted to expostulate with our Maker, as the Psalmist does, *Lord, wherefore hast thou made all men,* especially such men as these, *in vain?* So long in the making, so admirably well made; and yet so suddenly unmade, and so little use in comparison made of them? Such a living temple reared, and yet the people of thy holiness to possess it such a little while; many continued who are the burthens of the earth, under which it groans, as sadly weary of them; and yet those removed who were the blessings of it, after which it groans, as sadly wanting them. We now are at a loss, and cannot expound such dispensations as these; but the resurrection of the just, and the glories of the future state, will solve the problem, and clear up this seeming paradox; *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;* when the mystery of God shall be finished. How those lights still shine, to the praise of the Sun of Righteousness, which we count extinguished; and how these servants of Christ still serve him in his temple, the period of whose usefulness we are here lamenting, we cannot tell, nor how much to their advantage, the time that is lost on earth may be made up in heaven. Yet still, on us it looks black, and is a very sad presage; the Lord's voice by it cries in the city, cries in the country, God grant we may understand what it says, and may return a good answer, that our God may not proceed in his controversy.

(2.) Yet even in this afflictive providence, the grace of God presents us with something very encouraging and reviving to us; and that is, the great comfort and joy with which our deceased brother finished his course; which I ought to take notice of, to the glory of God, and for your instruction. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of man,* though it be not always rapture and extasy, yet *it is peace;* the *effect of righteousness* will be *quietness* and *assurance for ever.*

I came short of being a witness of his translation, but those who were about him when he was taken up, saw with what a wonderful serenity and composure of mind, he performed his dying work, that work which is to be done but once; and therefore had need be well done. He had often prayed for grace to finish well, and it appeared that his prayer was answered, and that the grace of God in him was not in vain; so cheerfully did he look the king of terrors in the face, and bid his message welcome. Though he had as much reason, as most men have, upon all accounts, to desire life, yet it appeared that to depart, and to be with Christ, was to him much more desirable.

The strong pain of the stone (that *Flagellum Studiosorum—scourge of the student,* as it has been called) with which he was frequently exercised, he bore not with the senselessness and stupidity of a stoic, but with the humble patience and submissiveness of a christian, who had learned of his master to take up his cross. And when upon the continuance of a threatening and fatal symptom, he received the sentence of death within himself, with what ease did he take leave of the world, as one well pleased to think of being no more in it.

His solemn farewel to his children and pupils, the good counsels he gave them, the blessing with which he blessed them in the name of the Lord, and the testimony he bore with his dying lips, to the good ways of God wherein he had walked; I hope they will never forget; and that particularly, they and we will ever remember and practise what he said after many other good counsels, should be the last and great thing he would recommend to them, and that was humility; "It is" (said he) "one of the brightest ornaments of a young minister to be humble."

The words of God which he had made his songs in the house of his pilgrimage, were his delightful entertainment when his tabernacle was in taking down. How pleasantly did he triumph then, in the words of blessed Paul, *I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day,* 2 Tim. 1. 12.

When he was asked in his illness, whether he would have some of his friends sent for to keep him company, he answered, "My fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and he that is not satisfied with that company, does not deserve it."

Another time being asked, would he not be glad to see his brother from Warrington, for whom he had an an entire affection, he replied, "I know no man after the flesh; my Elder Brother is in heaven, who is the first-born among many brethren." Thus he seemed to be taken up *with* heaven, before he was taken up *to* heaven.

Coming to himself again once after a fit, in which those about him thought him departing, he asked, "Have I not finished yet? I thought I should have finished now." Thus did he with the sucking child, play upon the hole of the asp, and with the weaned child, put his hand upon the cockatrice's den; knowing, that death itself cannot hurt, or destroy in all the holy mountain. Isa. 11. 8, 9.

Over-hearing his dear and affectionate yoke-fellow bemoaning herself, and saying, "*O this is a sad day!*" being the Lord's day, and some few hours before he died. He replied, with some shew of resentment; "A sad day do you call it? No, It is not a sad day, I thank God; it is a comfortable day to me." And it was observed that he departed with a smiling countenance.

As he found himself drawing near to his end, he was ever and anon lifting up his heart to God, in such devout and pious breathings as these. "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. How long, Lord, holy and true? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Lord Jesus receive my spirit. Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." And not long before he departed, "Now let the blessed angels come and do their office."

Thus, my brethren, thus he finished his course; this was the end of his conversation. In such a heavenly temper as this, he removed to the world of spirits, as one

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one who was already acquainted with that world, and longed to be better acquainted with it. Blessed be God, who thus crowned his own work in him, and brought forth the top-stone of that blessed building with shoutings, and let us cry, *Grace, grace to it.*

Let this help to confirm our faith in the gospel of Christ, and to assure us that its original and tendency is divine and heavenly. That we see it furnishes the professors of it with effectual supports, and real solid joys then when they most need them, and when all other comforts fail, and are insufficient. The everlasting covenant, and particularly the promise of eternal life, you see is a fountain of living waters, which will refresh and make glad the heart, when all those things which the world offers us to be depended upon, and delighted in, will be dried up as the brooks in summer. I beseech you, sirs, build upon a foundation which will hold firm, when this deluge comes: treasure up comforts which will stand you in stead in a dying hour, and which will indeed make the clods of the valley sweet to you; *Sit tibi terra levis,—the very earth itself light to you.*

Let this encourage us in our christian race and warfare, that those who have fought this good fight with courage and constancy, have had the comforts of it in their last extremities; and having run their race with patience, have finished their course with joy. Christ's faithful soldiers die not only in the bed of honour, but in the bed of peace and rest. Let us hereby be quickened to make our calling and election sure, for so we shall have, not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance ministered unto us, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. I shall now close with a word of exhortation to you, my friends, who are here lamenting the loss of your faithful minister, that you may be sowing in your tears, doing your duty now you are bewailing your affliction. We will take it for granted, that like those Ephesian elders you sorrow most of all, because you shall see his face no more in this world; from that consideration therefore, what I have now to say to you by way of counsel and direction shall take rise.

(1.) Now you shall see his face no more, thank God that ever you did see his face. When Job's comforts were taken away, he blessed God who gave them. Own yourselves indebted to the divine favour, for the setting up of such a burning and shining light here in your candlestick. There is a particular Providence displayed in the removal and settlements of ministers. Be thankful for that providence which sent him hither, and that grace, which I trust, made him a blessing to you. Be thankful for what you have seen, and heard, and tasted of the word of life in his ministry, and that you have had reason to say, that God was with him of a truth.

Thank God for all the good ministers, whose faces you have seen to your comfort, and who were in their day, the helpers of your faith and joy. Remember your guides, the guides of your youth, which have spoken to you the word of God; and remember to give God thanks for them, and for the good they were instrumental of to your souls. We do not desire you to build, or garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, but here set up your Ebenezer to the honour of him who raised them up to you, saying, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us;* helped us with good ministers, having never left himself without witness, nor you without helps for your souls, and directors of your way in this wilderness. Thanks be to God we never knew the meaning of a famine of the word,—the heavenly manna; though it has been often despised, yet has never been withheld.

Thank God for those whose faces we yet see, for the remnant that is left of the messengers of the Lord, and that when so many are removed into graves, the rest are not removed into corners. Though your pulpit be in mourning, thanks be to God, it is not empty. You of this place have particular reason to be thankful for the lengthening out of the days of your aged minister, and for the fruit he still brings forth in his old age. I pray God that your profiting, in proportion to that and other your advantages, may appear unto all men.

(2.) In the hiding of his face, take notice of the hiding of God's face, and look upon it as a token of his displeasure. Hear it as the Lord's controversy, and inquire diligently, and beg of him to shew you wherefore he contendeth with you. It is not seven years since God removed one faithful good minister by death, (Mr. *Brian,*) who had long laboured among you in the word and doctrine; and now another taken away from the midst of you; is not this an indication of God's anger? and ought not you to humble yourselves under his mighty hand? Let *our brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning, which the Lord has kindled;* and by serious repentance help to quench the flame.

It was certainly in displeasure to the people, that God silenced Ezekiel, and told him; he should no more be to them a reprover, Ezek. 3. 26. and you are now under such a rebuke; now is a time for you to look into your own hearts, and to inquire what you have done to provoke God, thus to break you with breach upon breach. Lay not the blame on others, but each of you take it to yourselves, and give your consciences leave to deal faithfully with you. It is sin that separates between you and God, between you and your ministers; find out the sin that has done you this mischief, and mourn for that; weep not so much for them who are gone, but rather weep for yourselves, and for your own sin and folly, which have forfeited the advantages you have lost. Ask seriously, have not I been a careless trifling hearer of the word? Has not my heart gone after my covetousness, when I have come before God as his people come, and sitten before him as his people sit? Has not the word been unprofitable to me, not being mixed with faith? Has not my conversation been disagreeable to my profession, and my practice contrary to what I have heard, and been taught? Have not I left my first love, and is not that the reason, wherefore the candles are thus removed, and thereby the candlestick itself threatened? How long has God come seeking fruit, but has found none, or next none? And therefore, though he has not

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yet cut down the barren tree, he has in displeasure removed one of the dressers of it.

O let this providence awaken you to repentance, for your little proficiency under the means of grace; and set yourselves to mortify those lusts and corruptions, which have been the hindrances of your profiting; and have made your hearts like the highway, or the rock, or the thorny ground, under the seed of the word. It is said, that when David lamented Saul and Jonathan, he took care to *teach the children of Judah the use of the bow*, 2 Sam. 1. 18. Which may be understood of the military bow; those great men being slain by the archers of the Philistines, 1 Sam. 31. 3. He endeavoured to make the men of Judah more expert archers, that they might revenge the death of their princes upon the Philistines. Let us meditate such a holy revenge this day, and resolve by the grace of God to be the death of our sins; finding them to be the death of our friends, particularly of our ministers.

(8.) Now you must see his face no more, recollect what you have heard from him, and seen in him, for your edification. Now this faithful witness has finished his testimony, will you set yourselves to sum up the evidence, and do it faithfully. Review what you have seen, and give what you have heard a re-hearing, to better purpose than before. Call to mind the subjects he has preached upon among you, the good truths he has taught you, and treasure them up, that they may be ready to you upon all occasions. The people who attended the ministry of John Baptist, after he was dead, remembered what they had heard from him; and improved it for the assistance of their faith in Jesus Christ; *All that John said of this man was true.*

Remember, I beseech you, what you have received and heard, and hold fast, continuing in the things which you have learned. His last sermon particularly, I hope you will never forget; when in the midst of his illness, God granted him such a reviving (which proved a lightening, as you call it, before death) that he thought himself able to preach: his love to his work, and to your souls brought him hither; if it were to his own injury, as perhaps it was, let it be so much the more to your profit; live that life, which he then taught you; get to be experimentally acquainted with that great mystery of godliness, which he then endeavoured to lead you into, from Rom. 1. 17. *The just shall live by faith.* Live by faith now, and you shall live by sight for ever. Look back upon the years of his ministry with you, and the words you heard from him which quickened you, never forget them. Now he must break the bread of life to you no more; *Gather up the fragments which remain that nothing may be lost.*

(4.) Now you must see his face no more in this world, seriously consider, how you will look him in the face in the great day. Believe it, sirs, that day will come, and we shall as sure see it as we see this; it concerns us to inquire whether we shall see it to our comfort, or to our confusion; whether it will be to us a day of trembling, or a day of triumph. It is certain when our Lord Jesus shall come in the glory of his Father, he will be attended by the ten thousands of his saints. Enoch foresaw this, and foretold it. Among those holy myriads, no doubt, we shall meet our faithful ministers; and if we shall know any of our relations in this day, as I see no reason to think but that we shall, sure we shall take particular notice of those, who were sent to us as ambassadors for Christ, ministering the gospel of the grace of God. Nay, they will then be to give account of the souls committed to them, and of the success of their negotiation; the servant who was sent to invite to the marriage, came and shewed his Lord all the slights that were put upon him; and by the word which you now hear, you will then be judged, according as our testimony is, or is not believed.

Think then, with what shame and confusion, those will see the faces of their ministers in that day, who lived and died in an unsanctified, unregenerate state, whom Christ, by his ministers, long and often invited to light and life, but they refused, and persisted in their refusal, loving death and darkness rather, and so will their doom be. Their ministers then will be called, to appear as evidence against them, and dreadful to the condemned sinners will such a testimony as this be. Lord, *we called* them, but *they refused; we stretched out our hands, but no man regarded.* We laid before them the terrors of the Lord, shewed them his wrath revealed from heaven, against their ungodliness and unrighteousness, but it prevailed not to startle and awaken them; we gave them warning; told them many a time, what would be in the end of their evil way, but they would not take the warning; we have delivered our own souls, but we could not deliver their's; we invited them to Christ, and to the marriage supper of the Lamb; we told them often of the glories of redeeming love, the riches of gospel grace, the consolations of the new covenant, the pleasures of serious godliness, and the joys at God's right hand for evermore; but we could not win upon them, to give up themselves unto the Lord. *We have piped unto them, but they have not danced; we have mourned unto them, but they have not lamented.* How will this aggravate the misery of those that perish, and bring oil to their flames!

But I hope better things of you, my brethren, *and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak;* the labour of your ministers among you, I trust, has not been in vain, and shall not be so; the apostle expresses, with a holy triumph, the prospect he had of meeting his friends with comfort in that day; *for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing,* which we have our eye much upon in our present services and sufferings, *are not even ye,* not so much now in this imperfect state, but *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?* O let us live so, that our ministers may thus give up their account of us with joy, for that will be profitable and comfortable for us Then how sorrowful soever our parting with them is at death, our meeting with them again at the resurrection will be joyful; and under our present griefs, we may comfort ourselves and one another, with the hopes and expectations of it.

Lastly, Now you must see his face no more, look more by faith upon the glory of GOD in the face of Jesus

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Jesus Christ. All flesh, you see, is as grass, and all the glory of man; the greatest eminency of gifts and usefulness, is as the flower of grass, sullied, withered, and laid in the dust; but the glory of the Lord in the word endures for ever, and is liable to no decay.

Our deceased brother, when near his death, heard one who stood by say, "Alas! What shall we do if he be taken from us?" answered, "Be not concerned at that, *The* LORD *liveth.*" Trust therefore in the living GOD, and in him secure to yourselves living comforts. You change your ministers, but you do not change your master; the law made them priests who had infirmity, who, therefore, could not continue by reason of death, and the gospel does the same; but the Lord Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood, for he is consecrated for evermore. The Blessed Spirit is given to abide with us for ever, and in him our Lord is, and will be with his Church always, even unto the end of the world. When you have another minister, you shall not have another gospel, nor another Saviour, but still the same treasure, only in another earthen vessel. Let not your religion then die with your minister, nor your faith, and love, and holy zeal be buried in his grave; for you are built not upon the apostles and prophets themselves, but upon their foundation, Jesus Christ himself, the everlasting foundation, and the chief corner-stone.

Keep your eye, therefore, upon the Lord Jesus, and set your hearts on him, rejoice in him always, and rely upon him, and that joy shall never be turned into sorrow, nor will that hope ever make you ashamed. Our candles are soon extinguished, and at the longest burn out of themselves, but the Sun of Righteousness shines perpetually; *Walk*, therefore, *in the light of the Lord.* Cisterns are dried up, but the fountain of life is ever full,—ever flowing. You see the end of your minister's conversation, but *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.* To him I commend you all, and to the word of his grace; as blessed Paul did, Acts 20. 32. his mourning friends here, knowing very well, that that grace is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

A SERMON *preached at the Funeral of* DR. SAMUEL BENION,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY,

To which is added, a concise MEMOIR of his LIFE.

1 PET. 1. 24, 25.

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man, as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

SURE I need not remind you, brethren, you cannot but remember it: you cannot but be thinking of it at this time, that it is not full two years since we were upon a like sorrowful occasion met together in this place, to solemnize the funeral of a very able, faithful minister of this congregation, whose memory, I hope is, and will be, precious among you, Mr. James Owen. If you and I had made a due improvement of that severe stroke, surely, we had not felt the smart of this: but, LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, and men *will not see, they shall see.* If GOD judgeth, he will overcome. GOD grant, that this present dark dispensation of providence, may so revive the impressions of that, as by both together, we may be duly humbled under the mighty hand of GOD, that Elihu's complaint of old, Job. 33. 14. may not be taken up against us, *God speaketh once, yea, twice,* yet *man perceiveth not,* does not understand the meaning, nor answer the ends of what he says; or that of the prophet, that *the righteous,* as to our world *perish,* and *no man lays it to heart,* or is duly affected with it; nay, merciful, useful, good men are taken away, and none consider it. O that we knew how rightly to expound, and that you knew how rightly to apprehend such events as these.

He whom we have now followed to the silent grave, and left there, then followed with us, and was a deep sharer in our griefs on that occasion. But must the successor in the work of life, so soon succeed in dying-work too? All who go before us, say to us, as CHRIST to Peter, *You cannot follow me now,* because your work is not done; but *you shall follow me hereafter,* John 13. 36. But here is one, who soon followed to the grave his predecessor in this pulpit; for death is not tied up to the rules of proportion, or due distances, every man must go in his own order; the order appointed by him, in whose hand our times are.

Considering age, and bodily strength and vigour, we who are ministers must think, that he whom we have now laid in the dust, was a few days ago, likely enough in a course of nature, to have seen most of us laid there. I thought concerning him,—This is the Joseph, that shall put his hand on mine eyes, Gen. 46. 4. and do that office for me, which I am now doing for him: but living and dying, it seems do not go by likelihoods: the Sovereign Lord of life has ordained otherwise, and the number of his months (which were far from being months of vanity) are cut off in the midst.

Now, what shall we say to these things? *What is this that God hath done unto us!* For my part, I am quite at a loss, am full of confusion, and know not what to say. The tidings astonished me, and made me cry out to God, as the prophet did, Ezek. 11. 13. *Ah Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?* But what shall I say to you? I wish I were better able to perform this service which your aged pastor has called me to—How to order the course before you, I know not, and yet something I must say, both as a mourner with

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with you, and as a monitor to you, that I might both soften the ground, and break it up.

I have something to say as a mourner with you: I am willing to hope, you have no need, to raise up your mourning, of singing men, or singing women, to move your passions; you are sensible of your loss, and here is a grievous mourning for it; we are lamenting one, that I perceive is universally lamented, and have the tears of many mingled with our's on this occasion. But my business will be, to shew you what reason we have thus to lay to heart this breach made upon us, that we may be able to give a good answer to that question, which, whenever we are of a sorrowful countenance, we should put to ourselves, *Wherefore look we so sadly to day? Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* That if there be no good reason for the grief, we may dismiss it; if there be, we may direct it aright.

For my own part, I have all the reason in the world to bewail the loss of a very dear and affectionate friend, with whom I have many a time taken sweet counsel. You, for your part, have reason to bewail the loss of an able, faithful minister, from whom you have many a time received good counsel. And that we have of late lost so many such, cannot but aggravate the grief. *O that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears,* that we might sorrow after a godly sort; not for them who are gone; if we loved them we should rejoice rather in their joy, that joy of their LORD, into which they are entered; but for ourselves, and for our children, who are left behind: and GOD give us grace to sow now in these tears for them, that we may hereafter reap in joy with them. And the truth is, as there are none of the afflictions of this present time, that has more in them to justify our grief, nor over which we may more safely say, *We do well to mourn,* than the death of good people, and good ministers: So there are none that (when the matter is considered entirely) has more in them to qualify our grief, and to balance it; for to them, whom to live was CHRIST, to die is gain,—everlasting gain. By St. Stephen's death, the church lost a minister, and therefore, justly, when they carried him to his burial, made great lamentation over him, which well became devout men, Acts 8. 2. and is recorded for our imitation; yet, at the same time, it gained a martyr. And, *if I be offered,* (says St. Paul) *upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice,* not only myself, for my crown, but *with you all,* for the benefit which may accrue to you thereby.

The wise man recommends it to us as an excellent means of increase in wisdom, to frequent the house of mourning, and to accommodate ourselves to the temper of it: there (says he) *the heart of the wise is,* and there it learns many a good lesson, while the heart of fools is in the house of mirth, and there learns many a bad one. Two houses of mourning this death, this so great a death, calls us to—Go to the house whence we fetched those dear remains we have now laid by, or laid up rather in the dust, and that is a house of mourning for its father, for its master, who was every way its glory and blessing: this is a more common case, and what occurs often: but besides that, here is another house of mourning, this place of your religious assemblies is so. The gates of the daughter of Sion are covered with a cloud; and justly, when one of the masters of the assembly is removed, his light to be seen, and his voice to be heard no more among them. We find it made the character of those whom GOD will gather, gather with everlasting loving-kindness, that they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and that to them the reproach of it is a burthen. When the solemn assembly is thus deprived of its guides and glories, one after another, and broken with breach upon breach, all who wish well to it ought to be sorrowful: and coming thus from one house of mourning to another, we are inexcusable, if by both together some good impressions be not made upon our souls, which will abide and command there, and if by the sadness of the countenance, our hearts be not made some way better, God by his grace make them every way better.

I must say something also as a monitor to you: For the business of your watchmen is to give you warning; which you are to take at your peril. Believe it, sirs, this rod has a voice, a loud voice; whether you perceive it or no, the man of wisdom will. That you therefore may approve yourselves wisdom's children, *Hear ye the Lord's controversy,* and send us not to plead it with the rocks and the mountains, to as much purpose as with you; for a hearing it will have, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear. You are called to hearken to the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war; for when ambassadors are recalled, heralds are sent; none of you, I hope, have said, *We will not hearken.*

GOD has a controversy with you of this place, of this congregation, from the head of which two such eminently useful men have been removed in so short a time, in both of whom you thought you had goods laid up for many years. He has a controversy with us who are ministers; for hereby our hands are very much weakened, and our glory is waxen thin. Lord, *shew us wherefore thou contendest with us.* It highly concerns us, I am sure, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, which is gone forth against us, and by earnest prayers to stand in the gap, at which our glory seems to be going out, and our ruin to be breaking in, that we may make good the breach. The putting out of our candles is a bad omen of the removal of our candlestick; it is at least, a call to us, to remember whence we are fallen, and repent, lest it be removed. We know what our sins have deserved, and what providence threatens us with, and are concerned to meet God in the way of his judgments; in such a day as this, he may well wonder, if there be no intercessor; for even the Jews themselves, when our Saviour spoke of taking the vineyard from them, and giving it to others, startled at the very mention of it, saying, *God forbid.*[a] And shall we be less solicitous about privileges more precious?

The text I have read to you, will lead us both to the lamentations we have to make, and to the admonitions we have to give on this solemn occasion.

1. In the places from which it is quoted, it is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who, that he

[a] Luke 20. 16.

might

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might prepare the way of the Lord, even in the desert, is ordered to proclaim this, *All flesh is grass*, &c. Isa. 40. 6, 7, 8. I need not tell you, John Baptist was that voice;[a] it is his testimony concerning himself, and a modest testimony. He was only the voice, GOD was the speaker. And I am apt to think, that as John was the voice crying, so he was the grass that was to wither, and the flower that was to fade, which he was to give notice of, that the people, which mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not,[b] might be satisfied, he was only his forerunner; for all his glory was to be done away, and would be no glory, in comparison with the glory of the Messiah, which excelled, and would remain. John's ministry and baptism soon came to an end, and gave way to him who was to come. He himself spoke of it to his disciples, when they were jealous of the growing honour of our Lord JESUS, and he spoke it with all possible satisfaction, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*[c] And CHRIST speaks of John's being but for a season, a burning and shining light.[d] His office was *pro tempore,—for the time being*, an introduction of good things to come, and his brightness like that of the morning star, which disappears when the sun rises. This grass began to wither about eighteen or nineteen months after his first shewing unto Israel, when he was cast into prision by Herod, and was quite cut down, some time after, when he was beheaded: and his baptism did not long survive him, but his followers soon became the followers of CHRIST, to whom he had justly and generously consigned them, and turned them over.

Ministers, who, like John Baptist, are friends and servants of the bridegroom, like him must wither as grass, and all their glory fade. But CHRIST their master the *Word of the Lord*, the essential, eternal word, *endureth for ever*, the *Word of life.*[e] For though he also, like John Baptist, was cut off in the midst of his week,[f] yet he rose again, and rose to die no more; *Death has no more*, no longer *dominion over* him. And *of him it is witnessed that he liveth.*[g] This is he who by the gospel is preached unto us, as an Everlasting Father, and Ever-living Priest: his word also which he has spoken and delivered to us as it is a quickening so it is a living word, the last revelation, and which shall last through all the revolutions of time to the endless ages of eternity.

2. Here it is brought in by way of instruction and encouragement to the young converts whom the apostle in the foregoing verses is exhorting to holiness and love. Be *holy*, and *love one another*,[h] and so prepare yourselves for the blessedness of heaven, which consists in the perfection of holiness and love; for you are born again, not of corruptible seed,[i] not of the gentile learning, or the jewish law, both which wither as grass, and will perish in the using, but by the word of the gospel, which is quick and powerful, and abides for ever; which will continue in the world while that stands; and in the sanctified soul while it lives: in the former it has lighted a candle which all the devils in hell cannot blow out; in the latter it has opened a well of living water, *springing up to life eternal.*

[a] John. 1. 23. [b] Luke 3. 15. [c] John 3. 30. [d] John 5. 35. [e] 1 John 1. 1. [f] Dan. 9. 26, 27. [g] Heb. 7. 8. [h] Heb. 7. 15, 22. [i] Heb. 7. 23.

This consideration is very proper, and should be very powerful to quicken and confirm those who have delivered themselves into the mould of the gospel, and are leavened by it, that the principles they go upon are not doubtful or mutable; but eternal truths that will never fail; and though their ministers die, (CHRIST's followers as well as his forerunners are as grass, and their glory as a flower) yet their faith does not die with them, for it rests not on the testimony of mortal men, but of the immortal GOD; they are lights, but they are not *that light*;[a] they seem to be pillars, but they are not our foundation; we soon see the end, the exit of their conversation, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him therefore let us stedfastly adhere, and in him let us encourage ourselves and one another, on such a sorrowful occasion as that which brings us together at this time.

Two doctrines naturally arise from this text.

I. That Man and his glory are fading and withering. *All flesh is grass.*

II. That God and his word are ever-living, and everlasting.—*The word of the Lord endures.* The former of these will furnish us with matter of lamentation, the latter of consolation; and GOD by his grace make both instructive, both to him that speaks, and them that hear.

I. That man and his glory are fading and withering. We may truly say, This day is this Scripture fulfilled before our eyes, as we have heard so have we now seen, *All flesh is as grass*, and that grass withers. Nay, all the glory of man, all that which he is most valued and admired for is as the flower of the grass, and that flower fadeth and falleth away.

1. Every funeral proves that *all flesh is as grass*, and that that *grass withers*. The body is here called *flesh*, because as flesh it is apt to putrify, it has no consistence, nor can any confidence be put in it; flesh is continually wasting, and would soon be consumed if not continually supplied, and, therefore, from it rather than from the bones (which without the flesh are a skeleton, and the very image of death) the living body has its denomination. Flesh is sometimes put for the corruption and sinfulness of our nature, to which our frailty and mortality are owing: *The body is dead because of sin*, and therefore it is fitly called flesh when it is spoken of as withering.

All flesh is grass, that is,

(1.) It is weak and low, and little as grass. Mankind is indeed numerous as the grass of the field, multiplies, replenishes, and covereth the earth; but like grass, it is of the earth, earthy, mean and of small account. Alas the kingdoms of men which make so great a noise, so great a figure in this lower world, are but as so many fields of grass compared with the bright and glorious constellations of stars, made up of the holy and blessed inhabitants of the upper regions. Man in his present state looks great, when set in the scale against the beasts that perish; but very little, yea less than nothing and vanity, when compared with the angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

[a] John 1. 7, 8.

Proud

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Proud men think themselves like the strong and stately cedars, oaks, or pines, but they soon find themselves as grass, as the grass of the field, liable to be nipt with every frost, trampled on by every foot, continually insulted by common calamities of human life, which we can no more resist or guard ourselves against, than the grass can secure itself from the fatal blast, when the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.

(2.) It is withering, and fading, and dying as grass, having both its rise and maintenance out of the earth, it hastens to the earth, and retires to its root and foundation in the dust. It soon withers, and is gone e'er we are aware. In the morning, perhaps, it is green and growing up, its aspect pleasing, its prospect promising; but when we come to look upon it in our evening walk, we find it cut down and withered. Nay, the grass upon the house-top, which seems advanced above its fellows, and proud of its advancement, withers first, and is least accounted of, withers before it grows up, and never fills the mower's hand, as if the nearer it came to the habitations of men, the greater impression of frailty it received, and the plainer instruction of frailty it gave.

If it be not cut down by disease or disaster, it will soon wither of itself; it has in it the principles of its own corruption.* Age will certainly wither it, and it shall not return to the days of its youth; it will be withered in the grave, there it will be mingled with, and not distinguished from common dust. The bones will there be uncloathed presently, and the poor remains of this withered grass, the worms shall feed sweetly on. Let but the earth open her bosom a little, and it will appear like Ezekiel's vision, a *Valley full of dead and dry bones; very many* they are, and lo, *they are very dry*:[a] but see with an eye of faith, what they shall be shortly: these dry bones shall live, and shall again be cloathed and covered, not with corruptible flesh, but with incorruptible, when what is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual one.

Is all flesh grass? All, without exception of the noble, or the fair, the young, or the strong, the well-born, or well-built, the well-fed, or well-bred. Is all grass, weak and withering?

[1.] Then let us see ourselves to be grass; and humble and deny ourselves. Is the body grass? Then be not proud, be not presumptuous, be not confident of a long continuance here; forget not that the foot may crush thee. Am I grass? Then I must expect to wither, and prepare accordingly, and lay up my portion and happiness in none of the delights and accommodations of this animal life, which will all wither and perish with it, but in something suited to the nature of an immortal soul, and which will last as long as it lasts. Am I grass? Then I may wither suddenly, and know not how soon, and therefore must never be secure, nor adjourn the necessary preparations for my removal hence to any further day; but what I do, must do it quickly, before I wither, and it be too late. Grass falls let me not be such a fool as to lay up my treasure in it. Stars fall not, let me therefore be so wise as to lay up my treasure above them, where neither moth nor rust corrupt.

Is the body grass? Then let us not indulge it too much, nor bestow too much time and care, and pains about it, as many do, to the neglect of the better and immortal part. After all, we cannot keep it from withering, when its day shall come to fall; let us, therefore, be most solicitous to keep the soul from perishing, and to get that nourished up to life eternal; for that labour will not be in vain, but will turn to a good account.

[2.] Let us see others also to be as grass, and cease from man, because he is no more than thus to be accounted of. If all flesh be grass, then let us not trust in an arm of flesh, for it will soon be a withered arm, and unable to support or protect us; and they who make it their arm, will be like the heath in the desert, destitute and dejected; grass is too short, too slender, to lean upon: the Egyptians are flesh, and not spirit, and therefore they shall help in vain. Let the Rock of Ages then be our stay, and let our hope always be in the Lord our God.

This is given also as a reason why we should not be afraid of the power of man, when it is most threatening, so as by it to be either driven from our duty, or discouraged and disquieted in it: *Who art thou*, what a fool, to be *afraid of a man*, that cannot only do no more but *kill thy body*, (which is our Saviour's argument) but must himself die, and the son of man, that shall be made as grass? Sure, thou forgettest the Lord thy Maker, whom thou oughtest to fear, and on whom thou hast all imaginable encouragement to depend: if he be for thee, what can a handful of grass do against thee?

Let this consideration also moderate our affections to all our creature-comforts and enjoyments: if we set our hearts upon them, when they wither, where are we? What was too well beloved, will then be too much bewailed: and the flowers that are laid in the bosom, or much smelled to, will soonest go to decay. Let those therefore, who have yoke-fellows, children, and friends who are dear to them, take heed of making them too dear; but labour to be as though they had none, because they are all grass, whose time is short, and the fashion of which passeth away.

Thus let this be read as the inscription on every grave, even the graves of the common people; let this be heard as the voice of every funeral knell, *All flesh is grass*. But,

2. Such a funeral as this we are now solemnizing, goes further into the text, and proves likewise, that *all the glory of man is as the flower of grass*, the beauty, or verdure of it, and that *that flower falleth away*. If the grass withers, it follows of course, that the flower thereof falleth away; so that the Ethiopic version reads the text, *When the grass is dried, the flower thereof is shaken off*. Life indeed may survive its beauties and joys, but take away that, and those fall of course.

We are now to consider, not common men, but men of distinction, and to see them withering and falling; which will bring us closer to this sad occasion. And here,

(1.) Let us inquire, What is the glory of man in this world; and what of it may be found in the character of that man, that son of man, whose death we are this day lamenting, and whose mortal part we have just now laid in bed. There

* *Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula,—Death only discovers the feebleness of the human frame.*—Juv.

[a] Ez 37. 2.

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There is indeed a glory of man, which is counterfeit, and mistaken for glory; Solomon says, *For men to search their own glory, is not glory*, Pro. 25. 27. The glory men commonly pursue and search for, is no glory at all; it is nothing to the weight, the substantial weight of glory, which all who are governed by the principles of divine revelation set their eyes and hearts upon; yet because it is taken for glory, and is courted and caressed accordingly, we must not pass it over without observing, that that also withers and falleth away, as the flower of the grass, and leaves those ashamed of their pride and confidence, who called it glory, depend on it, and have nothing wherewith to balance the loss of it.

Is beauty and comeliness of body the glory of man? So they pass with some, who judge by the sight of the eye; but at the best, they are only the godliness of grass; they are deceitful, they are vain, they are a flower which death will certainly cut down, and commonly it is withered first: either time, or the end of time, will change the countenance; either wrinkled age, or pale death. Look into the coffin, and tell me, where's the rosy cheek, the ruddy lip, the sparkling eye, the charming air, and all the delicate features: they are all cut off, like the foam upon the water. The bubble is broke, and as the prophet speaks, *Instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of well-set hair, baldness.* We should therefore make sure the beauty of grace, the hidden man of the heart, which neither age nor death will sully.

Is wealth the glory of man? Laban's sons thought so, when they said concerning Jacob, Of that which was our father's hath he gotten *all this glory*, Gen. 31. 1. But this also is a fading flower; *Riches make themselves wings*, and sometimes flee away from us; however, when we take wing, we must be stripped of them, and go naked out of the world, as we came naked into it.

Is pomp and grandeur the glory of a man? That also withers away: they who are advanced ever so high must come down to the grave, and their glory shall not descend after them. Great names and titles of honour are written in the dust. And if after death they be written on the dust, yet how is the inscription reproached by that which lies under? Pompous sepulchres, like the whited ones, our Saviour speaks of, appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones,[a] which yet they who go over them are not aware of.[b]

Let us therefore be dead to these glories, not value them, nor ourselves, or others, by them, in comparison with spiritual glory; let us not envy those who have these glories, nor fret at our want or loss of them; but always look upon them with a gracious and generous contempt and indifference, as those who know better things, and hope for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; a glory that fadeth not away.

But, besides these glories of men, which they who are wise can humbly put a slight upon; there is a glory, which is in this world truly the glory of man, and which they who are wise justly put a value upon; and yet that, as to its bright reflections upon this world of our's, withers and fades, and falls at death as the flowers in the grass. The continuance of the best gifts is in the other world, when they are transplanted thither, not in this.

The flowers in the grass are most pleasant to the eye, and most taken notice of; those are the pride and pleasures of the spring. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like that part of the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.[a] Yet the flower fades, and falls away before the rest of the grass does, and the fairest is first cropt. The choicest fruits keep the worst; and that we are least sure of, which we think we have reason to be most fond of. Witness this funeral. We have left in the dust, not only grass, but the flower of the grass; one who had very much of that which is really the glory of a man in this world; and was thereby distinguished and endeared. It is one of the lilies of the field that is withered in our hand, and dropt out of it. Give me leave to shew you in some instances what I think there was in him that was really the glory of a man, that you may duly lament his fall, and be affected with it.

[1.] Is a large capacity of mind the glory of a man? That he was blessed with above most I have known. Every soul is upon some account called, the great soul of man; so high is it advanced above the beasts, and so nearly allied to the world of angels: but that soul which is now retired from the world, was in a peculiar manner a great soul; it was an extraordinary genius that presided in it, piercing in its searches, quick in its perceptions, and vastly extended to take in a great multitude and variety of ideas. God gave to him much of that largeness of heart which he gave to Solomon, that is, *wisdom and understanding exceeding much.*[b]

Those who knew him well, and sat down under his shadow, could not but observe in all his performances, both sacred and learned, such a compass of thought, and copiousness of expression, as shewed him to have an uncommon constitution of mind, formed for something great, and likely out of its abundance to enrich many: it was a soul too great indeed to be long confined to a body, and pent up in a house of clay, which is such a cloud upon the prospects, and such a clog to the elevations of a mind thus raised and enlarged. His soul, I confess, has sometimes seemed to me fluttering and struggling to get clear of its cage, and longing to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven, to remove to the glorious light, and glorious liberty of the children of God; ambitious to see that which is within the vail, and which cannot be seen in this land of darkness and mistake; where at the best, we know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and must be content to do so, till that which is perfect is come.

[2.] Is learning to be reckoned the glory of man? It is certainly so; for it is the elevation of that part of man which is most his honour: and the dust of a learned man we have now been mingling with the common earth. His soul (that great and stately room) was richly furnished with all manner of precious things, and there was no reason to complain either of confusion or of emptiness in it; it was neither bare walls, nor set about with toys.

[a] Mat. 23. 27. [b] Luke 11. 44.

[a] Mat. 6. 29, 30. [b] 1 Kings 4. 29.

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How early he began to gather, in the days of his youth, (and manna must be gathered in the morning) we who knew him then, well remember; and were pleased to observe what great and good preparation he made for the temple, and the service of it; what a noble offering of dedicated things he brought into it, when he devoted himself to the work of the ministry; what a full stock he began to trade with, and how well able, with the good housholder, to bring out of his treasury things new and old.

And while he has been trading with this stock, he has been manifestly adding to it; for there is who scatters, and *yet* increases; who scatters, and *so* increases. He sat not down content with what he had attained to, but was still eager and vigorous in the pursuit of knowledge, still pressing forward; and how greatly GOD prospered him in those pursuits they know very well, who for some years past have been under his tuition, and have lighted their candle at his taper, and to all others also that conversed with him, it recommended him as a lovely and pleasant flower, though the treasure being in an earthen vessel, it was but a flower of the grass, now withered and fallen away.

That part of his education which he had in the university of Glasgow, he often reflected upon with a great deal of pleasure; and took all occasions to mention with honour the learned professors at whose feet he sat there, and the great advantages he had by their instructions; which I thought myself obliged to take notice of, both in justice to them whom GOD made blessings to him, and to his praise likewise, that he always retained a grateful remembrance of those who were the guides of his youth. It was a great refreshment and encouragement to St. Paul, to hear that those whom he had had the teaching of, had good remembrance of him always, and that he was not out of mind, when he was out of sight.

[3.] Is tenderness and humility, modesty and sweetness of temper, the glory of a man? They are so, and therefore we call compassion by the name of humanity, as if there were nothing that did better become a man than that, nor were more his ornament: this is true manhood, though another disposition very different from it, commonly goes under that name. The most mild are really the most manly. While the fierce shew themselves brutes, the gentle, and easy to be intreated, shew themselves men.

And this glory of a man was one of the glories of that man we have now parted with, and it made him a flower above the common grass. On the humble in spirit GOD looks with particular regard, and so should we. How often has he expressed to me such a diffidence of himself, and such a mean opinion of his own abilities, and all his performances, as has really been an hindrance to his cheerfulness, and sometimes to his usefulness? I have seldom heard him speak of any thing he did, but as one ashamed of it, though he was as much as most, a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Such an humble sense as this of our own defects, will contribute much to our improvement. Those who never think they do well enough, will be striving (and not in vain) to do better; while those who always think they do well, are in danger of doing worse.

I have likewise observed in him a most tender concern for others, and for their comfort, and a care that all about him should be easy and pleased: his conversation was as endearing as it was edifying: herein he aimed to follow the great apostle who made himself the servant of all, and became all things to all men, that he might recommend religion to their good opinion; and a greater than he, for even Christ pleased not himself, but taught us by his example, as well as by his doctrine, to deny ourselves.

His compassion for the sick and pained, the poor and needy, was that which first put him upon the study of physic, as his παράεργον—*his by-business*, in which how serviceable he was to the sons and daughters of affliction, and how sensibly he sympathised with them, many who have been the better for it will witness. Bowels of mercies well become the elect of GOD, who are holy and beloved.

[4.] Is the faithful discharge of the ministry of the gospel, the glory of a man? It is so, and it was his glory, and made him one of the flowers of the grass, a sweet savour to GOD in them who are saved, and in them that perish. This earthen vessel, which is now broken and laid aside, had a treasure lodged in it of inestimable value, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What greater glory can a man have on this side heaven, than to be employed as an ambassador for Christ, and an angel of the church, and to obtain mercy of the LORD, to be found faithful in that embassy, in that ministration. We have all the reason in the world to humble and abase ourselves; but the office we are in we have reason to magnify. Let none be ashamed of it, but those who are a shame to it: then indeed, we may blush to think, that we are called by so worthy a name, when we walk unworthy of it, otherwise it is a high, because a holy calling.

It is now about eleven years since with an exemplary seriousness and humility he laid his hand to that plough, immediately upon the death of my honoured father, who had been one of the guides of his youth: how hardly he was persuaded to succeed him, and how modestly he preached his first sermon on Elihu's apology, *Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom*, I well remember. How can I forget that ingenious and judicious confession of faith, which he made some time after at his ordination, and with what a clear head, and fixed heart, he then solemnly devoted himself to the service of GOD in the work of the ministry, and with such a diffidence of himself, as was really a presage of something great; for *before honour is humility*.

How abundantly he laboured in the work of the LORD, and what pains he took in expounding, catechising, praying, preaching, visiting, as well as studying, many here can witness. I wish his dust were not a witness of it, fearing that his close application of mind to his work, his indefatigable prosecution of his several designs to do good, together with the tenderness of his spirit, and the too deep impressions which his cares and griefs made upon it, contributed to the shortening his days. They talk of some who live fast, who hasten their own deaths by their intemperance; but truly, those who live ill, cannot be said to live fast; for they do not live at all to any purpose, they do not the work of life, nor answer the ends

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ends of it: rather say, they die fast; for those who live in pleasures, are dead while they live.[a] But here was one who did indeed live fast, did spend, and was spent in the business of life, and gave this reason why he took so much pains in his work, because he thought he had but a little time to be working in. His heart seemed to be much set on that scripture, and it is not long since he preached upon it on occasion of the death of a worthy good friend of his at Whitchurch, *I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day, the night comes when no man can work.*

[5.] Is great usefulness the glory of a man? and a delight in doing good? No doubt it is so: it was the honour of our blessed Saviour himself, and is mentioned as one of the proofs of his divine mission, that he went about not only working miracles, but doing good; and it was the honour of our deceased brother, in his low and narrow sphere, and according to the grace given to him.

Besides the labours of his ministry, what pains did he take for some years of late in the education of youth, for which GOD had every way wonderfully qualified him, and what pleasure did he take in those pains, because he had reason to think he did good that way, not only to the few that he taught, but to the many who hereafter might be taught by them. And there are those, who, I hope, will, while they live, bless GOD for him, and for his happy care in that part of his work, in which he was as in his element, and by the fruits of which, being dead, he will yet speak.

And his spending his spare hours in caring for and ministering to the sick, and so doing good to the bodies of others, (perhaps to the prejudice of his own) was a further instance of his delight in being useful, and a benefactor to mankind. And *who is he that will harm us,* or *can, if we be* thus τῦ αγαθῦ μιμηλαι—*followers of him that is good,*[b] and doth good, in his goodness and benificence?

Well, here is the glory of man, of this man, let us be ambitious of this glory, and not of vain glory. See true honour in the paths of wisdom and virtue, and seek it there. This is honour that comes from GOD, and is in his sight of great price. He who in humility, sincerity, and holy love and charity, lays out himself to serve CHRIST and his generation in his place, shall be accepted of God, which is what he aims at, and over and above shall be approved of all wise and good men.

(2.) Having seen this flower flourishing, we are now to see it withering, and the glory of this man fallen away. The black and dark side of that cloud which we have been taking a pleasant prospect of the bright side of. As to himself, this glory is not fallen, is not lost, is not stained, is not touched by death; it is not like worldly honour, laid in the dust, and buried in the grave: no, this flower is transplanted from the garden on earth to the paradise in heaven, where it shall never fade, nor fall away, nor ever so much as close, or hang the head. This that was a star in the right-hand of CHRIST, a star that helped to shew the way to Bethlehem, though withdrawn from our orb, shines as the sun in the firmament of the Father. Shines to himself, to his master, and the world of holy angels and glorified saints. This great soul is there filled, its capacities vastly enlarged, and yet replenished; his learning is there completed; his searches after knowledge all crowned, and all his longings satisfied; he who knew but in part, and prophecied but in part, and was lamenting the deficiencies of both, has now attained to that which is perfect, and that which is in part is done away, he having no more occasion for it. The candles are put out when the sun rises. His graces are perfected too, and all the remainders of corruption done away. Whatever men say, there are no consummate virtues on this side heaven, nor any finished man. The great good work in this world is in the doing. In the New Jerusalem it will be said, *It is done.*

But it is his usefulness that we want, that is it which we bewail the loss of; as to us and the world we are yet in, this grass is withered, this flower is faded and gone, this star is fallen. The works of good men follow them, but they forsake us, and we are deprived of the benefit of them; and therefore however in love to them we may see some cause to rejoice; for they are better where they are, than where they were; yet as to ourselves we are losers by it, nor can we say of good ministers what was true of our Master, that it was expedient for us that they should go away; no, their abiding in the flesh would certainly be more profitable for us; our Saviour considered that, when he said, concerning his disciples, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world.*

This is the lamentation therefore, and shall be for a lamentation, that we have lost one whose continuance with us would have been a great blessing to our dark world. Over him we may mourn in the ancient forms of mourning, *Ah, my brother! Ah, my lord!* and *Ah, his glory!*[a] The flower we were pleased with the enjoyment of, we are now pained for the withering of; *Ichabod;* where is the glory of it? It is gone, it is fallen away.

[1.] We have lost an eminently good and useful man, and one who was by the liberal hand both of nature and grace, that is, the God of nature, and the God of grace, made truly valuable and desirable.

You of this congregation have lost a faithful guide in the things of GOD, an interpreter, one among a thousand, a master of your assembly, whose words were as goads to quicken, and as nails to fasten. May that fruit of them remain among you now he is gone. One whose profiting appeared unto all men, and who was likely to have been yet more and more serviceable to your faith and holiness, and longer the helper of your joy; who was far from any thing that savoured of faction or party-making, but was entirely governed by principles of catholic charity; in the essentials of religion zealous, in things indifferent, and which are controverted among the wise and good, moderate; in both conscientious.

The loss his pupils have of him I cannot express, nor they neither, so admirably fitted was he with a head and heart to serve them. What a tender concern he had for them and their welfare, was very evident, and how much he laid to heart the death of two of them who were very hopeful a little after he came to this town, and how long the impressions of that affliction stuck by him those about him observed. They having been so dear to him, I hope

[a] 1 Tim. 5. 6. [b] 1 Pet. 3. 13.

[a] Jer. 22. 18.

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his memory will always be precious to them; and they will not only do him honour at his death, by lamenting their loss of him, but do him honour after his death, by a diligent building upon the foundation he laid.

We who are ministers have lost one who was very much our ornament and strength, and likely to be more and more so, and that is come upon us which St. Paul dreaded in the death of Epaphroditus, *Sorrow upon sorrow*,[a] of this kind, we are *broken with breach upon breach.*

As for his near and dear relations, when I come to put my soul into their stead, I must say, *Their heart knows its own bitterness;* but a stranger cannot pretend to describe it. Call them *Mara*, for the *Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with them.*[b]

[2.] We have lost him in the midst of his days, in the midst of his usefulness, when he had not reached quite half way to that period of human life which Moses long since fixed at seventy. This is a very great aggravation of our loss, and makes the burthen lie very heavy upon us. When God would make the land tremble, and every one mourn, he threatens that he will cause the sun to go down at noon; and so darken the earth in the clear day: this is our case; here is a sun gone down at noon; eclipsed in its meridian lustre; a valuable life, to our great surprise, cut off abruptly, without the previous notice of age, or any chronical distemper. At night the sun knows its going down, and we expect it; we are none of us so ignorant as to count upon an eternal day within the horizon of time; but till night we think ourselves sure of the sun. What a confusion is it to us then if it go down at noon! So uncertain are all our enjoyments, and so little do we know what a few days may bring forth concerning us or them, even the dearest.

We looked that this had been he who should long have been a burning and shining light among us; that he should long have strengthened our hands, and adorned our interest, and that we and ours should have reaped much fruit from his labours; such a workman we hoped might have been an instrument of gathering in a great harvest of souls to Christ, might have been a spiritual father to many children, nay, to many fathers; but our expectations are dashed and laid in the dust. *We looked for light, but behold obscurity;* we forgot that the life we valued so, was a vapour, which, as it proves, appears for a little while, and then vanishes away, and leaves us astonished. We said, Surely this life shall comfort us, concerning our work, and the toil of our hands; but behold his death does so much the more afflict us. We were exceeding glad of the gourd, and said, under its shadow we shall live, but little thought it would so soon have withered! Lord, *What is man at his best estate?*

[3.] That which yet further aggravates our grief, is, that we have few such left behind. I know God has the residue of the spirit, and can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham. But which way to look for such men as these, we do not see. Here is a breach made, and what prospect have we of the repair of it! Our hands are weakened, and who shall strengthen them? A gap is made, and who shall fill it up? Jehovah-jireh—*let the* Lord *provide* for us; for how to provide for ourselves we know not. We have too much reason to renew the prophet's complaint, *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits; my soul desired the first ripe fruits;* but alas! *where are the clusters?* It is the Lord's doing, and we must acquiesce in it: if we must be emptied and brought low, his will be done. *Let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great;* but *let us not fall into the hands of man.* 2 Sam. 24. 14.

(3.) Let us in the next place, inquire, what is our duty now we are lamenting the fall of such a flower of the grass, that we may sow in these tears.

[1.] Let us be deeply humbled for our sins, which have provoked God thus to contend with us; into this channel let us turn our tears, and then they will turn to a good account. Sorrow for sin is that godly sorrow, which is not to be repented of. O that the providence of this day might have this good effect upon us, to open springs of repentance in us, that we may look not only on our dying Master, but on our dead and dying ministers, and mourn. Ministers are sent by the labours of their lives to be the death of our sins, to bruise the head of those old serpents, as instruments in Christ's hand. Is this work done? Is sin crucified and mortified in you? If not,—sin is the death of your ministers, who should have been its death. Your unmortified lusts are the greatest mortification to your ministers: it is sin that silences them: it is sin that slays them; perhaps efficiently, at least, to such a tender spirit as this was, people's unprofitableness, and unsuitable walking, saddens their minister's hearts, and perhaps does more than you are aware of to the shortening of their days. If we improve not the advantages we have by a powerful lively ministry, it is just with God to deprive us of it.

O think the worse of sin for this, and resolve never to be reconciled to it; lay the ax to the root of that mischievous thing, which separates between you and so much good. Is there any of you in an unconverted state? Return to God now in compliance with the call of this providence. Have any of you been hitherto cumbering the ground? Now at length begin to bring forth fruit, lest all the dressers of the vineyard be removed, the rain with-held, and you laid under the curse of barrenness, the just punishment of the sin of barrenness.

[2.] Let us by prayer and universal reformation, go forth to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and stand in the gap to turn away his wrath, that he may not make a full end. If you have any interest at the throne of grace, improve it now: let your closets and families witness for you, that you are of those whose hearts tremble for the ark of God: O lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left, that it may yet be left and increased. At such a time as this God wonders if there be no intercessor; which in another place is thus expressed. *He wonders if there be none to uphold;* which implies, that those who intercede on the behalf of the declining

[a] Phil. 2. 27. [b] Ruth. 1. 20.

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declining interests of GOD's kingdom, do really uphold them, and help to recover them. O pray that God would pour out a double portion of his Spirit on those who survive; and if the Spirit be but poured out upon us from on high, even the wilderness will soon become a fruitful field for all this.

And if you would have your prayers effectual, you must return to him who smites you. For GOD's sake, for precious JESUS's sake, for your own soul's sake, for your dear ministers' sakes, if you love them, and would keep them alive; if you would comfort them, and reap the comfort and benefit of their labours, leave your sins; amend what is amiss in your hearts, and lives, and families: be reformed by this.

The death of good ministers, is not a judgment upon them; it is their gain; the happy period of their toils and griefs: *They rest from their labours* and are *entered into the joy of their Lord*; but it is a judgment upon you; it is your loss, and should be your grief. To you therefore, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men: O that you would hear the voice of the LORD's controversy, and answer the intention of it, which is to part between you and your sins.

[3.] Let the withering of this flower, be a seasonable conviction to us of the vanity of this world. Let it help to take our hearts off from it, and awaken us to think of leaving it. Let us learn to cease from man, from such men; for even their breath is in their nostrils, and not raise our expectations too high from them. Are such *flowers as these withered*, the choicest flowers that grow on this earth? And shall we expect happiness and satisfaction in any thing under the sun, in any thing that springs out of this earth, or is found in it?

When such a one dies in his full strength; one who was so likely to live, and live to good purpose; why should we count upon many years to come, or think of death as a thing at a distance! If the flowers be thus withered and cut down, let the weeds expect to be plucked up: for if this be done in the green trees, what shall be done in the dry? If the fruitful flourishing trees be removed, let us who cumber the ground, not expect to stand long. The LORD awaken us all, by this, and the like providences, to consider our latter end, and to make necessary preparations for it with all diligence.

[4.] Let this providence help to endear heaven to us, and draw up our hearts and affections thither. The glory even of the saints in this world, is as the flower of the grass, withering and fading; but it is not so in that world, where they are crowned with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They are not there as the flower when it shooteth forth, in its weakness; but as the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Converse much with that world, frequently contemplate that glory, till by the Spirit of the LORD you be in some measure changed into the same image, even the image of the heavenly.

I believe your ministers were very dear to you, let them be so still. Though while they were continued to you, they were more your's than they are; yet now they are gone to heaven, they are far more excellent than they were, more wise, and more holy, and every way better. Believe this, and love them, and long to be with them. Think whither they are gone, and let your hearts by faith, hope, love, and holy devotion, follow them to the things which are above, on which as Christians we are to set our affections. To the upper world their nobler part is removed *out of the body*, thither let our's attend them while in the body. Think where they are, and sit with them in heavenly places; keep up a spiritual communion, not only with the innumerable company of angels, but with the spirits of just men made perfect, to whom, as believers we are already comes. Think what they are doing, and join with them, as well as you can, by your humble thankful praises of *him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb*. As we pray, so let us endeavour to do the will of GOD on earth, as the holy angels, and blessed saints above, are doing it. Think of the joy they have entered into, and let it make death desirable to you, that if in life you follow them, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises, you shall at death remove to them: let the death of your dear friends and ministers, make you think with desire and pleasure of that removal.

And here I cannot forbear transcribing some expressions of that blessed martyr St. Cyprian, which have sometimes much affected me, and are much to the same purpose with this head I am upon, and therefore I shall not translate them. *Amplectamur diem qui assignat singulos domicilio suo, qui nos isthinc ereptos et laqueis saecularibus exutos Paradiso restituit et regno cœlesti—Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his habitation, which takes us from these earthly snares, and gives us to paradise and the heavenly kingdom.———Quid non properamus et currimus ut patriam nostram videre, ut Parentes salutare, possimus! Magnus illic nos charorum numerus expectat, frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat: jam de sua immortalitate secura, et adhuc de nostra incolumitate sollicita. Illic Apostolorum gloriosus Chorus: illic Prophetarum exultantium numerus—What speed we make, when the object is to see our country, or to salute our parents! An immense multitude of dear friends await our arrival, secure themselves of their own immortality, and anxious only for our salvation. There is the glorious company of the apostles; there are the exulting prophets.——Ad hos, fratres dilectissimi, avida cupiditate properemus, ut cum his cito esse possimus, &c.—To these, beloved brethren, let us hasten with all possible expedition.* Serm. 4. De Mortalitate.

II. Though man and glory are fading and withering, yet God and his word are ever-living and everlasting. Ministers die, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. The word of the gospel, that last revelation, after which we are to look for no other, does not change, shall not cease, till the mystery of GOD shall be finished. The glory of the law was done away; but that of the gospel remains. The glory of ministers falls away, but not the glory of the word they are ministers of. The prophets indeed, do not live for ever, but the words which God commanded them did, and will take hold, as words quick and powerful. On such a sad occasion as this,

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this, it is very seasonable to consider, *that the word of the Lord endures for ever*; that is,

1. There is in the word of the LORD an everlasting rule of faith and practice, for us to be ruled by; so that our religion shall not die with our ministers, and therefore should not: in the word it will still live, and therefore must still live with us.

(1.) It is our comfort, that christianity shall not die with our ministers, nor that light be buried in their graves. Were the divine truths and laws entrusted with tradition, those invaluable treasures as the world goes, would in time be lost, or wretchedly embezzled. While religion passed in that way of conveyance before Moses, men lived to be very old; yet that did not secure it, but it almost perished: care is taken, therefore, now to preserve it in the written word, and it is its effectual security, so that it can never perish, neither shall any pluck it out of our hands. If we were all in our graves, our religion would be found in our bibles, pure and complete, and by that sure word of prophecy, a much firmer deed of entail, than an uninterrupted succession of pastors would be transmitted to the last ages of time. Thus upheld, the throne of CHRIST shall endure for ever, and be as the days of heaven.

(2.) It is our duty not to let our christianity die with our ministers, but let the word of Christ, contained in the Scriptures, still dwell in us richly, that is still the same; when we have another minister we have not another Gospel, nor durst an angel himself bring us any other. You see gospel ministers, like the priests under the law, cannot continue by reason of death, but as CHRIST's priestly office by his intercession in heaven, so his prophetical office by his word and Spirit on earth are unchangeable; the word of GOD lives and abides for ever.

The death of our ministers should therefore make us love our bibles the better, and be more conversant with them, for in them the Spirit speaks expressly, speaks to us. Your ministers said no other things but what are contained in the Scriptures; blessed Paul himself witnessed no other things but what agreed with Moses and the prophets; CHRIST himself bid his hearers search the Scriptures; that sacred book, your have to be your guide, if your teachers should be removed into corners, into graves. Let me engage you therefore in GOD's name to stick to your bibles, stick close to them; consult the Scriptures as your oracle, as your touchstone; speak according to this light, walk according to this rule, and let its perpetuity engage you constantly and unmoveably to persevere to the end in your adherence to it. Does the word of the LORD endure for ever? Let it be in you a well of living water.

You profess to make the Scripture the commanding rule of your worship, and say, you cannot admit any religious rites but what are there appointed; but you contradict yourselves, and give the lie to your profession, if you do not make the Scripture the commanding rule of your conversation also. Govern your thoughts, words and actions by the word of GOD, and not by the will of the flesh, or the course of this world. As our religion may be found in our bibles, so our bibles should be found in our hearts and lives. Value and love a ministry that will lead you into the understanding and application of the Scriptures, for these will make the man of *GOD* (both the minister and the christian) perfect, and thoroughly furnished both for every good word and work.

2. There is in the word of the LORD an everlasting fountain of comfort and consolation for us to be refreshed and encouraged by, and to draw water from with joy; and an everlasting foundation, on which to build our hopes. When we find that all flesh is as grass, and even the flower of it withers, there is no comfort like this, that the word of the LORD endures for ever. Hence let me recommend strong and lasting consolation to those who are this day lamenting their withered grass and fallen flower.

(1.) With this, let me comfort the near and dear relations of him that we now have parted with; the flower you delighted in, and promised yourselves so much from, is withered and fallen, and laid in the dust; but the word of the LORD endures for ever, and that will never fail you: the more you expect from it by faith, the more you will find in it to your comfort; it is by the word that GOD comforts them who are cast down; and because it endures for ever, they are everlasting consolations that are drawn from it.

Let this comfort the aged parents: they have the word of GOD to be their stay, when this staff of their old age is broken under them, GOD will be better to you than ten sons, than ten such sons, a GOD All-sufficient, a GOD that is enough.

Let the fatherless children who are not yet capable of knowing their loss, be left with the everlasting Father, and be sure that the word of the LORD endures for ever; *With thee the fatherless findeth mercy*, and *the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

Let the widow, the prophet's widow, trust in GOD, and that word of his which endures for ever, the comfort of that afflicted state. *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name*, and he has *betrothed thee to him for ever*, by a bond which death itself cannot untie, in loving-kindness and tender mercies. Let this be the comfort of the house of mourning, though it be not so as in months past; though it be a beheaded broken family; yet the covenant of grace made with the house, and the Church in it, is well ordered in all things, and sure; and let that be all the desire, for it is all the salvation, 2 Sam. 13. 5. and may be so improved in this cloudy and dark day.

(2.) With this, let me encourage the students. The LORD has taken your master from your head to day; I know you loved him dearly, and doubt not but you truly lament the loss of him, and are ready to say, *My Father, my Father!* Your counsels are ruffled, and your measures broke by this providence; but remember, the word of the Lord endures for ever. Study your Bibles, and you will find them the best tutors; tutors that will never die; in them learn Christ, and you have the best learning; let GOD's word be your delight, and your counsellors, make it familiar to you, and when you go, it shall lead you; when you sleep, it shall keep you; when

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when you wake, it shall talk with you. Take GOD's statutes as your heritage for ever, and let them be the rejoicing of your hearts. Grow in scripture knowledge, and in the things of God; speak scripture language; accustom yourselves to it, that is sound speech which cannot be condemned.

And for your comfort, the seed which serves the Lord, among whom the word of the LORD endures, shall be accounted to him for a generation. The Lord God of the holy will never forget, will never forsake the sons of the prophets who adhere to him, and are mindful of him. Be ye humble, diligent, and faithful, and you will find GOD the same to you, that he was to him who is gone; and the best are no better than he made them; you will find Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him I commend you, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to make you instrumental to build up others in holy faith to the heavenly kingdom.

(3.) Let me with this, speak comfortably to this poor congregation.—These two things are come upon thee, the death of two ministers; two *such* ministers!—*Wherewith shall I comfort thee?* What more comfortable than this? That *the word of the Lord endures for ever.* You have not lost that; you may perhaps be tempted to think it is in vain to seek for such helps, such helpers any more; you have procured some of the best, and GOD has removed them from you, perhaps for the same reason that he once and again lessened Gideon's army, because it was too numerous for him to work by; GOD delights to perfect strength in weakness: he will secure to himself a succession, and, I hope, to you too. Bless GOD for your aged minister who is yet continued to you; value him the more; seek out for another in the room of him that is gone, and GOD, I trust, will send you one to be a helper of your faith and joy.

Let GOD's word endure for ever your guide, and it will endure for ever your comfort. Love the scriptures, make much of them, be daily learning yourselves, and teaching your children out of them. CHRIST's scholars never learn above their Bibles, while they are here under tutors and governors; at death they shall take their leave of them, and go thither where there is no occasion for them.

4. Let us all, both ministers and people, comfort ourselves and one another with this word: *All flesh is grass;* but the Eternal Spirit is the life of our souls.—The glory of man fades and falls away, but the glory of God-Man does not: on his head shall the crown ever flourish. The glory of the gospel is the same; and the crown of glory prepared for the faithful, fadeth not away; in these is continuance. The foundation of GOD stands sure for all this, and it is an everlasting foundation.

Let not therefore the atheists or profane, those enemies of our holy religion, rejoice against us, though we fall; though our grass withers, and our flowers fall thus: for though we sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto us; an everlasting light, and our God our glory. His word shall endure for ever, though the ministers of it are lights that are but a little while with us, and it is only for a season that we rejoice in their light. That never-failing word is the firm and immoveable rock upon which the Church is built, and therefore the gates of hell cannot, shall not prevail against it. While the earth remains, the seed-time and the harvest of the world will continue; nay, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of CHRIST never shall;—not one *iota* or tittle of it. Divine revelation shall ride out the storm of all opposition, and triumph over the powers of darkness; shall not only keep its ground, but gain its point; shall go forth conquering, and to conquer, till the mystery of GOD shall be finished, the mystical body completed, and the kingdom delivered up to GOD, even the Father, that GOD may be All in All.

A concise Account of the LIFE *of* DR. SAMUEL BENION, D.D.

HE was born in a country place in the chapelry of Whicksal, in the parish of Prees, and county of Salop, June 14, 1673. His parents are still living, very religious good people, and of competent estate in the world, and he was their eldest son, who lived.

His mother was the daughter of Mr. Richard Sadler, a worthy non-conformist minister, who was turned out from Ludlow by the Uniformity-Act, and spent the rest of his days in obscurity at Whicksal. He died in 1675.

He was baptized by his grandfather, and called Samuel, because *asked of God,* and *devoted to him.*

He gave early indications of a happy genius, and a strong inclination both to learning and piety: and *even a child is known by his doings.*

He began his grammar learning, and made considerable progress in it with the school-master at Whicksal: but in 1688, he was removed to the free-school of Wirksworth in Derbyshire, to be under the conduct and tuition of a very learned able master, Mr. Samuel Ogden, with whom he continued almost three years, till he was near eighteen years of age, a much longer time than youths of his proficiency ordinarily continue at the grammar-school; but he found the benefit of it, (as many who outrun their grammar learning too soon find the want of it) for hereby he laid his foundation large and firm, got great acquaintance with the classic authors, made his after-studies the more easy and pleasant, and arrived to the felicity of speaking and writing Latin with great readiness, fluency, and exactness.

In 1691, he went to live with Mr. Henry at Broad-Oak, who employed him in teaching some gentlemen's sons who were tabled with him, and directed and assisted him in his entrance upon his academical studies. Here he discovered an extraordinary skill in the languages,

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guages, and prudence much above his years in the management of those who were under his charge; and Mr. Henry expressed much satisfaction in his conduct, and a particular kindness for him.

In 1692. He went to London, where he sojourned about half a year with the Reverend Mr. Edward Lawrence, and there had opportunity of hearing the best preachers, and perusing the best books; both which he failed not to improve much to his advantage. When he came down, he prosecuted his studies alone at his father's house with great application. Surely few who have so great a stock of learning have owed it under GOD's blessing so much to their own industry, and so little to the help either of tutors or of fellow-students. He beat it, as we say, out of the cold iron, and when it is so, the excellency of the power is so much the more of GOD.

In June 1695. He went into Scotland to the College of Glasgow, with a young gentleman or two, whom he was intrusted with the conduct of. Having furnished himself before with a good treasure, and matter to work upon, the advantages of that place during the year he spent there, turned to a good account. Here he studied closer than ever, sometimes not less than sixteen hours a day, having a little food brought him to his study, and slipt not any opportunity of improving himself in useful knowledge.

His regent was Mr. Trau, whom he often spoke of with great respect, and who had a particular affection for him, and while he lived kept up a correspondence with him. The other learned men of that university, he also often took occasion to make an honourable mention of. Mr. Jameson, History Professor there, did likewise correspond with him. That miracle of a man, who is quite blind, and has been so from his birth, and yet, as appears by the learned works he has published, a most accomplished scholar, and very ready and exact in his quotations of authors.

In May 1696, he took his degree of master of arts there, and then returned to his father's house, where he would be near to Mr. Henry, under whose ministry he had been trained up, and now intended for some time to sit down for his further improvement.

But within a few days after he came home, Mr. Henry finished his course, (June 24, 1696,) to his great grief and disappointment.

The beheaded congregation presently cast their eye upon him, as the most likely person to succeed Mr. Henry, being one of themselves, and one who upon all accounts promised well, and they had reason to think he would not be without honour, no not in his own country. Without looking any farther, they unanimously made choice of him, and soon found their expectations from him even out-done.

He was then about twenty-three years of age, and had never preached, nor designed it quickly, but wished rather to continue yet for some time a student; so that it was not without great difficulty that he was persuaded to undertake the work itself; pleading with the prophet, (Jer. 1. 6.) *Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child,* especially to undertake it there, and come in the room of such a man as Mr. Henry; this, he was in a manner compelled to, often saying he even trembled to think of it. And truly, I think I never heard any man express himself with more humility and modesty, self-diffidence, and self-denial, than he did on all occasions.

But he plainly saw the providence of GOD calling him to this work, and therefore he submitted and gave himself wholly to it; he lived at his father's house, and preached at Broad-Oak, and all his performances were such, that none had any reason to despise his youth.

His great modesty would not suffer him to undertake the sole charge of that congregation, and therefore he was backward to be ordained, and desirous that the senior ministers of the neighbourhood would come and administer the sacraments to them, which they did for some time.

But in Jan. 1698, he was solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, by the laying on of the hands of presbyters at Broad-Oak, *plebe præsente—in the presence of the people.* And the confession of faith which he made at that time is so remarkably concise, that I think it worth inserting at large, and the rather because we have so little of his remaining in our hands: it is this.

"Being obliged to confess my faith, I humbly crave leave to do it in that method which hath been of singular use to me in confirming of it.

First then, I cannot but be persuaded, that in this earthly tabernacle, my human body, I mean, dwells an immortal soul conscious to itself that it had a beginning, and must needs proceed from a Father of spirits.

I do therefore, in the next place, firmly believe that there is a GOD, that is, an Almighty, All-wise, All-good Being, all whose works must needs originally be both like him, according to the capacity of their nature, and worthy of him.

But sad experience hath effectually taught me, that I am naturally an unholy, impure, perverse creature; an ignorant, obstinate, selfish being; I cannot but conclude therefore, that I am degenerated, and no such thing as I was when I came out of my Maker's hands.

I am satisfied, that I cannot restore myself, that no creature can restore me, and that the work of restitution being such as could not be effected, but by infinite power, it must needs be such as could not be contrived but by infinite wisdom; and that I should never have understood the methods of it, if GOD himself had not revealed them to me.

The necessity, therefore, of divine revelation, in order to eternal life, I am thoroughly persuaded of; and finding a volume in this world, termed by us the Holy Bible, that has in it all the marks of heavenly inspiration that the most inquisitive mind can reasonably imagine or desire; I believe it is the word of GOD, and with all my soul embrace it as the revelation I need, in order to my everlasting happiness.

According to it therefore, finding that the world by its wisdom knew not GOD; I form my conceptions of the first cause of all things, and I embrace heartily the doctrine asserting a trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead.

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I believe, that Infinite Wisdom fore-ordained in eternity, whatsoever shall come to pass in time; and that this whole world, according to the particular appointments of its creation, was made exactly in that admirable manner which the sacred history relates to us.

The account which the Scripture sets before us of the fall, wherein it lets us know our first parents, the once perfect representatives of all their posterity, lost their innocence and felicity together, do entirely satisfy me how sin and misery made their entry into this, ever since, unhappy world; and I believe, I fell in them, and with them.

I believe the reports of a Mediator engaging in our cause, appeasing divine justice, reconciling men to GOD. And hereof, I think, I have even a demonstration in the present constitution of this world, and state of men here differing so vastly from that of the fallen angels. I believe, that this Mediator, is the Lord JESUS CHRIST, Immanuel, who was made perfect by his sufferings, that he might bring all those whom purely free-grace had chosen to be the Sons of GOD, to eternal glory.

For these, I believe, in the highest exaltation, the just reward of his voluntary abasement, he lives to make continual intercession, sending down upon each of them the Spirit, in the most proper seasons and measures, which, by the means of grace, works the faith, hope, and love in them, which qualified them all for justification, to be had only by perfect righteousness; and glorification, to be had only in his purchased bliss.

These means of grace, I apprehend to be chiefly the word and prayer, and the sacraments of baptism, and the LORD's Supper; for the more effectual application of which, I believe, the great King of the Church hath established in it a settled ministry, which he will own and grace to the end of the world.

At the end of the world, I expect a day of universal judgment, in order to which, I certainly look for a resurrection from the dead, and in which I firmly believe an irreversible doom will be pronounced on every man, determining both his soul and his body to the state of felicity or misery the former had assigned it, by a particular judgment, immediately consequent upon his death.

These things past; I believe, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD, and the glory of his power: and that they that be wise, shall shine as the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousnes, as the stars for ever and ever."

This was the confession of his faith; his ordination vows, in answer to the questions solemnly put to him, were likewise very serious and devout, and affecting to the hearers; but too long to be inserted here. However, in the course of his ministry, it was evident he remembered them, and transcribed them into his conversation.

Some of his friends about this time, observing his great studiousness, and the mighty progress he made in learning, and some few of his acquaintance, who had been pupils to Mr. Frankland, who died in 1698, being then destitute of a tutor, earnestly pressed him to undertake the tuition of young men, which he was prevailed with to do. In which part of his work, though his beginning was small, his latter end did greatly increase; so that at the time of his death, he had above thirty under his charge, and more coming.

His good mother had used to be serviceable to her poor neighbours, sometimes in the charitable curing of those who were hurt, or sore, which gave him occasions far beyond his intentions to consult medical books, that he might advise and assist therein, which his quick and active genius soon improved by; so that he got a considerable insight into the practical part of physic, the theory of which he who was so great a master in natural philosophy could be no stranger to; with this he was useful among the poor, and gained both experience and reputation, so that he could not avoid a much larger share of business of that kind than he ever either desired or designed. In the year 1703, he took a journey to Glasgow in Scotland, and there he commenced doctor of physic. The learned men of that university shewed him a great respect; he was publicly examined by a convocation of all the heads of the college. Dr. Saintclair, Professor of the Mathematics, who had been operator to the honourable Mr. Boyle, with other physicians, assisted at his examination, and expressed themselves highly satisfied in his abilities. Dr. Kennedy, a famed practitioner, assigned him a case (and it was a case he himself had then in hand) to exhibit a thesis upon, which he did with that accuracy and judgment that gained him a general applause.

His *Diploma* for his degrees, subscribed by all the heads of the College, and sealed with the University Seal, bears date 3° Non Oct. 1703, and gives him a very honourable character. The Vice Chancellor, Dean of the Faculties and others treated him very handsomely; and a Synod happening at that time to sit at Glasgow, the members of it gave him the right-hand of fellowship, and admitted him to be present at their debates, which gave him an opportunity of declaring upon all occasions, with so much the more assurance, his opinion concerning the government of the church of Scotland, that he thought as they managed it, it was as well fitted to all the true intentions of church government, and as likely to answer them as any ecclesiastical constitution in the christian world. He observed to his great satisfaction, that all the while he was at Glasgow, though he lay in a public inn, he never saw any drunk nor heard one swear. Nay, he observed that in all the inns on the road in Scotland where he lay, (though some of them mean,) they had family worship duly performed morning and evening: from which, and other remarks, he made in that journey, he inferred that practical religion does not depend upon worldly wealth, for where he had seen the marks of poverty, he had seen withal the marks of piety.

Having taken his Degrees in Physic, and his abilities for it being approved, he ventured further into that business than he had done before, and as far as would consist with his other employments, and it pleased GOD to give him great success therein. Some of the most eminent physicians in that country, have done him the honour to say, they found him one of the most ingenuous men in their profession, they ever were in consultation with.

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In December 1703, he married Mrs. Grace Yates, daughter of Mr. Thomas Yates of Danford near Whitchurch, a relation that was every way agreeable to him; by her he had two sons, now left in their infancy, to the care of that GOD, who has taken it among the titles of his honour, to be a Father of the fatherless.

Ten years he continued labouring in the word and doctrine at Broad-Oak; but in the year 1706, upon the death of that excellent man Mr. James Owen at Shrewsbury, he was called thither to fill up his place. It was with great reluctance, that he entertained the thought of leaving the people he had been so long with, though it was not many miles from them that he was to remove, and where he might still be many ways serviceable to them: but being very much under the influence of the Rev. Mr. Tallents, who had always been as a father to him; and whose years and wisdom he had a great veneration for, by that he was over-ruled to go, and at Midsummer, 1706, he settled in Shrewsbury; in a fair way to be greatly and long useful, if Providence had seen fit to continue in this world of ours, one who was so great a blessing to it.

That we may do some justice to his memory, and some kindness to ourselves, who yet survive, we must consider him both as a minister and a tutor.

I. As a minister, and he was an able minister, ready and mighty in the Scriptures; and one who knew how rightly to divide the word of truth.

1. Let us consider his judgment and insight. He adhered close to the pure gospel of the grace of GOD in CHRIST. The doctrine of special grace founded in electing-love; and of our justification by the righteousness of CHRIST only, was what he believed and preached, and understood, and he knew how to explain, as well as most men. He did not indeed, trouble his ordinary hearers, with nice speculations on these heads; but I find his thoughts concerning the divine decrees, delivered at large in two lectures to his pupils, at their request, which they wrote from his mouth. In which I am pleased with the account he gives of the divine decrees from Eph. 1. 5. where it is called by the apostle, Εὐδοκία τῆ θελήματος αὐτῦ—*the good pleasure of his will.* In GOD's Decree there is,

"Εὐδοκία, a compound word: Δοκία, is a clear eternal intuition of that which is most agreeable to himself, most worthy of him, and which will afford him world without end in an infinite satisfaction in the being and accomplishment of it. Εὐδοκία, is a perception that it is right: that all seen together at one view, in their place, order, and connexion, are highly consistent with infinite, eternal and unchangeable being, power, wisdom, and love."

"Θέλημα, a determination in consequence of intuition of himself." He was sure, GOD did not decree sin, nor did he see any necessity of asserting a positive decree to permit sin; nor could he by any means admit a decree to damn any man, but upon the fore-sight of his being a sinner; but he thought the doctrine of particular personal, absolute election to eternal life, so plainly revealed in Scripture, that he wondered how any who pretend to regulate their faith by the Bible, should make any doubt of it. He was clear that it fastened upon the persons in their fallen state, and that it depended indeed upon fore-knowledge and fore-sight, but not of any merit in their faith and repentance, but purely upon the victorious efficacy of divine grace.

In these mysteries, he thought religion is not so much concerned to explicate, as to adore.

His thoughts concerning justification, he drew up upon a particular occasion in certain aphorisms; (a method of writing he much used,) which I think may not be amiss to assert at large. He prefixes to them those words. *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

1. I apprehend the term of justification, (as well as that of faith, and some others,) is used in a very large sense in Scripture.

2. That large sense is the concurrence of those acts (δικαιώματα) of judicature, that are necessary to entitle, in the estimate of intellectual creatures, to the highest instances of divine favour.

3. These acts must be concluded to at the least; the removal of that which would preclude such a title, and the position of that which would infallibly found it.

4. That which would preclude it, is the guilt of sin.

5. The guilt of sin, is that on the score of which the Governor of the world, is obliged to take the course, which in the judgment of intellectual creatures is a vindication of his own laws and honour.

6. That course can be no other than exacting what the law requires, on supposition of transgression.

7. That which the law required on that supposition was, that the nature that sinned should make satisfaction.

8. Satisfaction is the endurance of such severe penalties by the sinning nature, as may reflect an honour to him that has a right to inflict them; as great as the violation was a dishonour to him.

9. Such satisfaction is righteousness to the nature that offers it.

10. Righteousness is conformity to rule, that is, to law.

11. Conformity, is complying with what is enacted.

12. That which is enacted, is disjunctively either the obedience or the suffering of the nature it is prescribed to; so that the nature becomes as righteous by suffering, to that degree which is satisfaction, as by doing.

13. The nature the law was prescribed to, was the human, for the covenant was made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity: therefore (1.) Every one of human nature, (before a state of confirmation) including the whole nature, at the time of violation in sinning against it; violates it to all his posterity, and brings unrighteousness on it: so did Adam. (2.) If human nature can provide itself with an individual who is capable of satisfaction, that individual (according to law, performs for all the rest, and brings righteousness on them. Therefore,

14. The whole compass of human nature being limited to Adam and Eve, there being no other individuals at the time of violation, they transgressing, all their progeny were involved, and righteousness is not to be had by the compliance of obedience.

15. Righteousness not being to be had by the compliance

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pliance of obedience, it is to be had by the compliance of endurance, to that degree that is satisfying.

16. No endurance by human nature, to the degree that is satisfying, that is not infinite.

17. No degree infinite, but either by duration or value.

18. If the degree by duration be resolved on, we perish for ever without righteousness.

19. If therefore we perish not without righteousness, human nature is to furnish out a satisfaction infinite by degree of value.

20. A satisfaction infinite by degree of value, falls not within the compass of human finite nature.

21. Not falling within the compass of it, infinite mercy employs infinite wisdom to contrive the exaltation of that nature, by uniting the second subsistence in the Trinity to an individual of it; and so the Son of GOD becomes the Son of Man.

22. The Son of GOD, of man, (1 Tim. 2. 5.) is a human person of infinite value.

23. Being so, his sufferings are satisfaction for human nature.

24. Being so that nature performs the secondary demand of the law.

25. Performing the secondary demand of the law, we are by him conformed to the rule; so that he well deserves to be called, *the Lord our Righteousness.*

26. What he is called, he will be to all who do not renounce him, through an intervening imputation.

27. Imputation, is the admitting the claim of all such to righteousness, because one of the body of beings they belong to, has suffered the penalty.

28. This imputation taking place, the governor of the world has sufficient vindication of his own laws and honour, and is not obliged to any thing else in order to the approbation of his government to intellectual creatures, (See Aph. 5.) in what concerns his treatment of man: so the guilt (that would preclude by Aphor. 4.) in the case of those that do not renounce JESUS CHRIST, is removed.

29. They renounce CHRIST who peremptorily refuse him the honour of his glorious performance.

30. They peremptorily refuse that honour, who will not submit to the economy GOD has established in order to his full reward.

31. His full reward, is the exaltation of his person, (Phil. 2. 6,7,8.) and the salvation of men, Isa. 53. 10, 11.

32. The exaltation of his person, he absolutely expected, John 17. 5. The salvation of men, only on conditions becoming the government of intellectual creatures.

33. The establishing of such conditions, is the introduction of the evangelical law; the observance of which is the only thing needful in order to the second act of justification. (See Aph. 3.)

34. The excellency of this evangelical law, and the reasonableness of obedience is to be accounted for, in a new set of aphorisms, which may be thus conceived.

(1.) Adam involves all his posterity in guilt, before any of them are born.

(2.) They being so involved, are obnoxious to justice.

(3.) Had justice obtained on them accordingly, it had been *Jus—the law;* but it had been *summum Jus—the rigour of the law;* and the righteousness of GOD had been less clear.

(4.) That the righteousness of God might be entirely clear, as it must be when mercy shines with it, it pleased GOD to place man again into a state of fair trial.

(5.) The contrivance in short was, that JESUS CHRIST satisfying, as before, should make a way that GOD, with the security of his own honour, should propose life and happiness on terms proportioned to the abilities of lapsed creatures.

(6.) These terms are, sincere faith and repentance.

(7.) Faith includes that assent, that is, persuasion, that what the Bible imports, especially concerning CHRIST, is true; that acceptance, or receiving of CHRIST for our prophet, priest, and king, that is, deriving our notions of our duty and interest from his word; our hopes of pardon from his merit; and our rectitude of practice from his laws, and that affiance or acquiescence of mind in him, as one able to save to the uttermost, which brings all who are saved to him, as the Being to whom the gathering of the people is to be, and is, consequently, most honourable to him; he so becoming the great centre on which we all hang, and is most infallibly productive of a holy life; and consequently, is, of necessity, preparative for a state of perfect holiness and glory.

(8.) To produce this life, and prepare for this state more certainly, repentance is added to faith, as being a practice most exactly accommodated to the circumstances of imperfect creatures; it bringing the heart daily to GOD, from whom it is ever starting aside; reducing the warping will to its place; so that though (to use St. Paul's distinction) GOD has not our flesh, he has our minds; we serve sin with the former, but GOD with the latter.

(9.) Serving GOD thus with our minds, we are conformed to the gospel rule, and our service is our evangelical righteousness.

(10.) Being our evangelical righteousness, our title to the highest instance of divine favour is founded, as well as our precluding guilt removed. See Aph. 2, 3, 20.

(11.) This title being founded, it is tried and admitted at the great day of doom, and sentence passed accordingly.

(12.) The pronouncing of the sentence, may be justly reckoned a third act of justification.

(13.) This third act once performed, CHRIST enjoys for ever the second instance of his reward, Aph. 31.

(14.) Till this be enjoyed, he is satisfied in the sure prospect of it, and in the enjoyment and exercise of the first.

(15.) The exercise of the first secures this glorious issue; it being the administration of the government of both worlds, in consequence of all power both in heaven and earth lodged in his hands.

(16.) One act of the power for which he had special authority, it being a peculiar instance of his reward, and the great proof to this world, of his kind reception to the other, was that of the pouring out of the Spirit in extraordinary gifts upon the apostles; in saving ones

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on all the elect; in common ones, not to say sufficient ones, on all flesh, Acts 2.

(17.) The Spirit, being poured out on all flesh, it is impossible that those who are condemned should bring any imputation on GOD; they are put on as fair a trial as Adam, had righteousness as much in their reach as he, and perish not for his guilt, but their own.

I must beg my reader's excuse for inserting so long a paper in so short a narrative, but I could not abridge it without spoiling it.

(2.) Let us consider his management of his ministerial performance.

(1.) He addressed himself to them with great seriousness and gravity, and an humble dependance upon the divine grace. Before the notes of the first sermon he ever preached, he wrote thus: *Tu mihi Dux, magne Deus, et manum hanc mentemque dirige, ut Salutaria videam, dijudicem provideam. Nil desperandum Christo Duce et Auspice Christo.—Great God, be thou my guide, and direct this hand and mind, that I may perceive, distinguish, and provide things which are excellent. Christ being my leader and Christ my helper. I will despair of nothing.* ——And that which he wrote as his motto in the beginning of all his sermons, from the very first, which he dated July 6, 1696, to the last, dated February 24, 1707-8, is this Οὐδὲν ἐγὼ Πάντα χριστός. *I am nothing, Christ is all.* Or sometimes the four first letters, ΟΕΠΧ.

(2.) He had an overflowing fulness of thought and expression in all his performances, and when he spoke off hand, was never to seek. A florid masculine style was natural to him, which often set him somewhat above the capacity of the more ordinary sort of hearers; but he would frequently explain himself in easier terms, and as he grew in experience, gained a more familiar way of expressing himself.

(3.) He was ready, lively, and fervent both in praying and preaching, and made it appear that he was in good earnest. With what a πάθος—*pathos* would he reason with his hearers to persuade them to be religious, and to take pains in religion? Many a time he would say, his heart bled to think how many who profess religion are in danger of being ruined to all eternity by their slothfulness.

(4.) He was very large and full in expounding the Scriptures, and very happy in raising observations from what he expounded; and in his expositions delivered as little of what had been said before, as most men, and yet what was very pertinent.

(5.) In the choice of his subjects he observed a method, which was very profitable to those who constantly sat under his ministry. Soon after he set out in that work, he fell into a method of practical subjects; he shewed from several Scriptures what sins are an abomination to GOD, and what graces and duties are in a special manner pleasing to him. Then he shewed how much religion consists, in the due discharge of the duties of our particular relations, and went over them very largely. Then he was very particular in shewing divers things wherein we must take heed to ourselves, as [1.] To our design and end of living, from Rom. 8. 13. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Ps. 4. 6. Luke 10. 42. Ps. 73. 27, 28. [2.] In what concerns our expectation and dependance for strength to attain our end, Isa. 40. 30, 31. [3.] As to our corruptions, Heb. 12. 15. [4.] Our constitution, Mat. 5. 29, 30. [5.] Our company, Pro. 13. 20. [6.] Our calling, Pro. 24. 30, &c. 1 Cor. 7. 24. [7.] Our seasons of grace, Luke 19. 42. 2 Cor. 2. 16. [8.] Our sports and delights, Pro. 21. 17. Ps. 36. 1. [9.] Our tongues, Pro. 18. 21. Mat. 12. 31, 32. Ex. 20. 7. Isa. 58. 13, 14. [10.] Our talents, Mat. 25. 28, 29. [11.] To our possibility of obtaining heaven, 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. [12.] The necessity of sincerity in seeking it, Job 27. 8. Gal. 6. 4.

After he had finished that, he fell into a method of doctrinal subjects, that they might *know the certainty of the words of truth,* (Pro. 22. 21.) proposing to begin with natural truths, and then proceed to revealed, promising to be plain and distinct; to fetch his thoughts from Scripture and his own experience: to omit controversy, and in points disputed to propose what he thought in his conscience was truth: and in all, to make the work of redemption his great mark.

In this, he aimed to follow the method of his confession of faith at his ordination. From Ps. 139. 14. he shewed that we are: that we are made: that we are made by him, all whose works are marvellous. He then proceeded to shew, there is a Being who made man, who has all perfections in himself. What comes from this Being, must needs be good; therefore man was so in his primitive state, (Ecc. 7. 29.) but we see he is otherwise now; yet GOD has a kindness for man, even to a degree that is saving, 2 Pet. 3. 15. There is a salvation, carrying on in this world, (Ps. 96. 2.) by the kingdom of GOD; in which he proposed to shew, who is the King; the ever-blessed GOD; and there he largely opened his names, attributes, &c. Then of his kingdom; that of nature; that of grace; that of glory. Of the creation, and the fall, he was exceeding full; and had made some entrance upon the kingdom of restoring grace, when he left Broad-Oak, and removed to Shrewsbury, where he preached over the Lord's Prayer, and other texts concerning prayer. Then began with the apostles' creed, and was come to the articles of *Jesus Christ our Lord,* when it pleased GOD to put a period to his life and labours.

(6.) His catechising of the children was very profitable, not only to them but to the whole congregation, and therefore he kept it up constantly every Lord's Day in the afternoon. In going over the assemblies' catechism, he taught the children to reduce it into aphorisms; and to begin it thus. There is a GOD, this GOD made man, he made him for some end; his end is to glorify GOD, (and to glorify GOD, is to endeavour to do and to obtain that, on the account of which we and other men and angels may know GOD more, love him more, praise him more, and obey him more, world without end;) he cannot glorify him without a rule; the rule is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament."

(7.) In the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, he was most lively and affectionate: and out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth spoke very much to the purpose. I remember once I was present when he baptized a child, and cannot forget

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forget how much he seemed to be himself affected, and with what warm expressions he endeavoured to affect others with the worth of the soul of that child, that it was an immortal soul, that must live for ever, that must be to eternity either in heaven or hell, and ought accordingly with the utmost seriousness to be dedicated to GOD through CHRIST, and to be prayed for by the congregation, and the rather considering what a theatre of sin and woe this world is, into which it was now born, and in which it was to pass its trials.

(8.) He was observed to be very methodical in his prayers, both in public, and in the family. Generally he went over the several parts of prayer in their order, and sometimes said, he could not but look on it as a great mistake, for men to think method and exactness necessary in addresses to men like themselves, and not so in their addresses to the Great God. He was also very happy in suiting his prayers to the particular occasions and emergencies as they occurred.

(9.) He came off from his ministerial performances, frequently expressing both the great pleasure he took in the work itself, and the little pleasure he took in his own management of it. As to the former, he has sometimes said, he preferred the delight he enjoyed in praying and preaching, before all the entertainments of sense. "How noble a service," said he, "is it, and how great to be employed in the publishing of the gospel, and so for to be sent on the same errand with Christ himself!"

As to the latter, so great was his modesty, that he could scarce be persuaded ever to think well of any thing he did. He said sometimes, he never came out of the pulpit without trembling to think, how poorly he had performed. And when one happened in his hearing to speak well of a sermon of his, he said, "*If you had no better thoughts of my preaching than I, you would never come to hear me.*"

Lastly, we cannot avoid taking some notice of his non-conformity, of which he said little of himself, greater matters filled his head and heart, and therefore we have not much to say of it; only that he had studied the controversy, I believe, as impartially as most men, and without judging others; (*What have I to do to judge another man's servants? To his own master he stands or falls.*) and he concluded he could not conform without sin. He had reason enough to do all he could to get over his scruples; for a near relation of his, who knew very well he could make his words good, promised to procure him a presentation to a certain living of the first rate, if he would conform: but his conscience would not suffer him to do it, though by his refusal, he not only lost his preferment, but highly disobliged his friend, who had made him so kind an offer. Nor was that the only considerable offer of that kind, that he refused; and, which is more, he not only refused them, but afterwards reflected with much comfort upon his refusal of them; and hesitated not to say sometimes, that he was so well satisfied in the reasons of his non-conformity, that by the grace of GOD, if he were called to it, he could seal it with his blood.

Yet he was far from bigotry, and heat, and censoriousness in it: he was very free, occasionally, to join in the public service, and had a great deal of charity for those he differed from, as all those will have on both sides, whose thoughts, like his, are free and generous, and taken up with the essentials of religion, and in whom the love of GOD and their neighbour has the ascendancy.

II. We are next to consider him as a tutor, and here especially lay his excellency; this was that part of his character which we had more particularly in our eye, in attempting to give this representation of him, from the record which divers who had been his pupils, were very forward to bear to him, and the honourable testimonies with which they embalm his memory.

1. Let us consider how well qualified he was for this service, though when he undertook it, his friends had much ado to convince him that he was in any measure fit for it.

He had a very graceful appearance, a good presence, and a happy mixture both of majesty and mildness, gravity and sweetness in the air of his countenance, and that which at first view promised something considerable: his voice also was clear and commanding, and very humble; which made him the best precentor either his academy, or his congregation could have. And in both psalms were much sung, and admirably well, with great variety and exactness of tunes.

He was richly stocked with all sorts of useful knowledge, and was able with the good housholder to bring out of his treasury things new and old; a great deal, both of ancient and modern learning, but especially the products of his own contemplations and reasonings. He was not like an echo which returns only the sounds it receives, but did himself cultivate and improve what he had learned, made it his own, put it into his own method, dress and language, and so communicated it to those who were to learn from him. Few tutors dictate more their own thoughts than he did: and though in his performances he shewed a great deal of judicious reading, yet they seemed rather the fruit of thinking,—deep and close thinking.

In reading lectures he shewed himself master of the notions he delivered, and made it appear he had formed an exact scheme of them to himself, which enabled him to lead his pupils into them with such a connection and chain of thought, and such a powerful conviction, that they have owned themselves strangely surprised with, finding themselves in the light ere they were aware.

He was very happy in a propriety and fluency of expression, as well as in a wonderful acumen and readiness of invention. I believe few men are able to deliver themselves better in set discourses extempore, and off-hand, than he was, either in Latin or English. Divers discourses so delivered, and some of them on the most abstruse points of philosophy and divinity, some of his pupils wrote from his mouth, and they think they have reason to value them as little inferior to studied performances.

Nor did the temper of his mind contribute less to the qualifying of him for this service than his accomplishments in learning. He was of a most tender and affectionate spirit, and was master of the art of obliging. Those who have reason enough to know him, will say o

him

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him, that he was familiar, when he pleased, without making himself little; distant, when he saw occasion, without any shew of haughtiness; grave without moroseness, and pleasant in its turn without intrenching upon seriousness or manliness, and in his common discourse instructive without pedantry or ostentation. Sure never any man who had the instruction of youth was more affectionately beloved, and yet more truly reverenced, than he was by those under his charge. Such an interest did he gain in their esteem by his prudence and tenderness, that they could easily think every thing he said and did, was well said, and well done.

When he had at any time an occasion to shew his displeasure, he knew how to do it so as to answer the end, which was to convince and reform; but those who were long with him have said, that they never saw him disturbed with any intemperate heat, nor transported into any indecencies of expression. Prudence and love and true merit will command all needful respect and obedience, without the help of passion.

That which highly recommended him to his pupils was, that he was so condescending and easy of access, so respectful to them, and discovered such a tender affection for them, that they say, they know not how to represent it to others to that degree that they ought. He would often propose things to them with a deference even to *their* judgment, and not only allowed, but encouraged them to offer their objections against the opinions he delivered; and some of them have owned, that in the reflection they have been ashamed to think with what freedom and vehemence, they have sometimes disputed against what he had declared to be his opinion, and yet how well he took it.

The pleasure he took in his pupils, shewing himself in his element when he was among them, and the tender concern he discovered upon all occasions for their welfare, made him very dear to them. If any of them were sick, how solicitous was he concerning them, and with what affection did he say sometimes, that the life of one of his students, was as dear to him as that of his own child; and so he made it appear.

His deadness to this world, and the things of it, added much to his fitness for this service; for that made it easy to him to deny himself in his own ease and interest, and that in very considerable instances for the satisfaction of his pupils. Under the influence of this principle, he made no difference in his affection to them upon the account of their outward condition: he valued the virtues and good carriage of the poorest, and was displeased at the follies and extravagancies of the greatest; and made both to appear.

2. We are next to consider the method he took with them, and his prudent pious management of them.

(1.) He was much in prayer with them. I put that first, because I look upon it, that the life of religion lies very much in a constant dependance upon the divine providence and grace, expressed by our acknowledging God and seeking him in all our studies, all our affairs, and upon all occasions. This he believed, and practised accordingly. Near an hour was spent every morning and every evening in family-worship, expounding the Scriptures, singing psalms, and prayer. Immediately after family-worship was concluded in the morning, they went to the lecture-room, and he with them; where he again prayed with the students only, giving this reason, that there were many petitions to be put up on their account, which it was not proper for the rest of the family to join in. Then he read a portion of Scripture to them in a peculiar method, (for some time out of Dr. Gastrell's Christian Institutes) and with great concern and holy fervency committed the students and their studies to GOD, begging a blessing on the endeavours of that day. If any thing happened to put off this exercise a little from its time, yet he never failed to perform it afterwards, before he began to read his lectures.

When any came first to him, he prayed for them; when any left him, he prayed particularly for them; when he had occasion to give any of them a solemn reproof or admonition, he followed it with prayer.

(2.) He took pains to compose many learned pieces in Latin, for the service of his pupils, to make up what he thought was deficient in the books put into their hands.

One he called Schematismus, being a scheme of the several disciplines in their natural order; Gnostologia first, containing the Præcognita; then Logic, Metaphysics, Physics, Mathematics; and lastly, Ethics; shewing the nature and use of each, their dependance upon, and their serviceableness to one another. In this he presented the young travellers with a general map of the country they were to survey; and there were some of his pupils who had in other places made considerable progress in the disciplines, who owned themselves indebted to that piece, especially as he opened it to them, for their acquaintance with the true use of philosophy, the order of its several parts, and the mutual relation they bore to each other.

He also compiled a large system of Elenctic Logic; in which he shewed himself as well acquainted with the depths, as with the niceties of that art.

There is another science, which he thought had been least cultivated by the learned, and yet as well deserved their pains as any other, and that is, Pneumatics; he began a large system of this science, which he had a peculiar affection for, his genius leading him to abstract speculations, and made some progress in it a little before he died; as if his close application of mind to the nature of spirits, were a presage of his own removal quickly to the world of spirits, short of which his intense enquiries concerning them, could meet with no satisfaction. Had he lived to finish that work, and could he then have been persuaded to publish it, we have reason to think, it would have been both acceptable, and serviceable to the learned world.

(3.) He took a great deal of pains in reading lectures to his pupils in their several classes every day; which he did with so much clearness and fulness; and withal, with so much pleasantness and variety, intermixing such entertaining stories with that which seemed jejune or crabbed, that their attendance on them was a constant pleasure, and not a task; and though he was long, he never seemed tedious.

He had a particular concern to have them well-grounded

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grounded in Logic, both didactic and elenctic, and spent more time with them, than most tutors do in that part of learning, which teaches us how to direct our thoughts, so that we may find out truth more readily, and express it more pertinently.

And for the improvement of the reasoning faculty, he pressed his pupils very much to the study of pure Mathematics, as that which fixes the mind: and pleases it with those demonstrations which are the result of its searches.

He was a great master in natural philosophy; and though he lived in obscurity, out of the road of books and conversation, yet he found means to acquaint himself with the modern discoveries and improvements in that and the other sciences. Between himself and his pupils, he took care to preserve a freedom of thought; comparing the several schemes and hypotheses together, with a generous indifference to them, and a diligent impartial search after truth, as far as it might be collected from them all.

His pupils observed him to be very curious in his choice of apposite expressions, for the illustrating of what he delivered to them; and that he would sometimes go back to change a word or phrase, if another occurred to his thoughts more expressive. He commonly laid down his instructions in short aphorisms chained together, by which he set both his own and other's notions in a clear light, and oftentimes decided some of the most difficult controversies, by a plain stating of them.

(4.) He formed all his notions in divinity, purely by the word of GOD, the Bible was the system he read, and the genuine expositions of that, he thought the most profitable divinity-lectures he could read to his pupils; to that only he was devoted, and not to any man's hypothesis. He called no man master upon earth; but proved all things by the law and the testimony: nor would he himself be called *Rabbi*; but proposed all his notions to be impartially examined by the same touch-stone.

For the methodising their divinity studies, he made use of the Assemblies' Confession of Faith, and Amesius's Medulla, and some other systems. Mr. How was an author he much admired, and his Living Temple, a book he read to his students, and obliged them to be conversant with; making it his great care to establish them in the first principles of the oracles of GOD, and to fill their minds with them, which he looked upon as the best expedient to fortify them against the two pernicious extremes, of scepticism on the one hand, and bigotry on the other.

(5.) He maintained a very strict and steady government of his little academy; which he modelled as near as he could to the constitution of the College at Glasgow, which he much admired. *Sic Parvis componere magna solebat,—Thus was he accustomed to compare great things with small.* He took care they should employ their morning hours well, and take time for their secret devotions, being always jealous lest any other studies should encroach upon them.

He obliged them to great diligence in the hours set apart for study, and restrained them at other times from recreations which he thought any way unbecoming them.

Those that he found not so quick in taking things, as others are, he did not discourage; but took pains to bring them up as they were able.

If he observed any of them to be remiss in their studies, or that took any false steps in their conversation, how faithfully, and yet how tenderly would he deal with them for their reformation. He had an excellent art in his discourses to them, when they were together, of saying that which obliged them to reprove themselves; and they were sensible of it, and oftentimes he gained his point that way, and saved both himself and them the uneasiness of a particular reproof: but when there was occasion for a close and personal admonition, he gave it with an affecting solemnity, and in such a way as shewed not his anger so much as his love, and evidenced that he delighted not to shame, no not the delinquents: but as his beloved sons, he warned them. He often mingled tears with his reproofs, and expostulated with so much reason and tender affection, as sometimes drew tears also even from those who were not apt in that manner to relent. He commonly followed the reproofs he gave with solemn prayers to GOD for a blessing upon them: and with some who were under his charge, he saw great success of his endeavours this way, not only to his own satisfaction, but to the admiration of others, and endearing of himself, even to those with whom he thus dealt faithfully.

(6.) He was himself a great example of serious piety, and very solicitous to promote the eternal salvation of the souls of those under his charge. The beauty of holiness, was indeed the beauty of his whole management; and the heavenliness of his conversation, was the great ornament of it. With what seriousness and affection, did he discourse of another world, and how indifferent was he to the little affairs of this. What savoury expressions would drop from him, and how awfully would he speak of the things that are not seen, that are eternal. How would he spiritualize common occurrences; and when he was reading lectures to the students upon the works of nature, how would he take occasion from them, to observe with a pious reverence, the wisdom, power, and goodness of the GOD of nature.

When he was speaking of the mysteries of redemption, the love of CHRIST, and the glory of the blessed, he was sometimes carried out even beyond himself, in the admiring contemplation of those heights and depths; and so, as even to forget that he was in the body. These were his beloved topics, and which he took all occasions to enlarge upon with *Juvat usque morari—Here it delights me to dwell.*

He was desirous to kindle, preserve, and inflame the same holy fire in the hearts of his pupils.—How pathetically would he press upon them the great concerns of another world; and chuse out words to reason with them about the one thing needful, commonly addressing them thus: "My dear charge,"—(telling them oft) "if any thing I can do, will but promote your spiritual and eternal welfare, how happy shall I think myself. If what I say, may abide with any of you to do your souls good, I have my aim."

Two

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Two very hopeful young men he buried out of his family after he came to Shrewsbury, who died of the small-pox; and a third, who died of a consumption. This touched him in a very tender part, and lay heavy upon his spirit a great while. How did he humble himself before GOD, and kiss the rod, and bewail sin as that which provoked GOD thus to contend with him. With what pathetical expressions of submission did he resign himself, and all that was dear to him, to the holy will of GOD. *It is the Lord, let him do what he will.* And how solicitous was he to improve those providences for the spiritual benefit of those who did survive; dealing with them in private (besides his public funeral discourses on those occasions) from Job 14. 2. *He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down.* And Ecc. 11. 8, 9. *Remember the days of darkness.* Yet how did he comfort himself and others with this, that however it be, yet GOD is good. *It is well,* 2 Kings 4. 26. However, it shall be well: it shall end well, everlastingly well. Often repeating with much affection:

Ἐστι πάντα καλῶς—*All things shall be done rightly.*

Est bene, non potuit dicere, dixit erit:—When he could not say, it is well, he said, it shall be well. Fetching comfort likewise from 2 Sam. 23. 5. That GOD has *made with us an everlasting covenant.* And much affected his young men were, with a sermon he preached to them in the family, when they came back from the funeral of one of the young men that was buried a little way off in the country, on Luke 24. 52. *And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* Encouraging himself and them with this, that in heaven we hope to meet, and never part.

They also remember, when soon after, another of his pupils was so ill of a fever, that his life was by all despaired of, and it was expected he would in a few hours breathe his last, the doctor called them all together, to join in prayer for him, and with a more than ordinary earnestness wrestled with GOD for his life; and GOD gave him an answer of peace immediately; for when they returned to him after prayer, they found such a wonderful change in him, as was the beginning of his recovery; for which abundant thanksgivings were rendered to GOD. But his joy on that occasion met with a great allay; for the young man's father, Mr. Pike, a worthy minister at Burton upon Trent, who came to be with his son in his illness, when he went away comforted in his recovery, took the infection of the fever with him, of which presently upon his return home he sickened and died in a few days, to the great loss of that town and country; for he was a very zealous good man, a lively affectionate preacher, and one who laid out himself very much to do good.

(7.) Those of his young men who were designed for the ministry, and were drawing near to that sacred employment, he took pains with to possess them with a very deep sense of the awfulness of that function, and the weight of that work they had before them; often proposing to their consideration, the preciousness of all immortal souls, the imminent danger most are in of perishing eternally, and the great account the minister would have to give concerning them; inferring thence, what an earnest care ministers ought to have in their hearts of them, 2 Cor. 8. 16.

That he might make them ready in the scriptures, he obliged those who wrote daily expositions, once a week to repeat what they had written: and the divinity class in their turns, once a week, analised or expounded a portion of Scripture themselves.

That he might train them up in the exercise of the gift of prayer, every night after he had performed family worship, the students were all to retire to the lecture-room, and one of them prayed, each in his turn, besides the more retired services of every chamber. Thus were they trained up to pray always, with all prayer.

In all their performances, he much pressed it upon them to be accurate and exact, both in method and language; and had times of employing them in the polite exercises of oratory and poetry.

He likewise set some time apart every week, for the regulating and directing of their elocution and pronunciation; about which he was very solicitous. He ordered each to read some paragraphs in authors most noted for good language; after which, by his own example, he shewed them wherein they were defective, or had missed the right pause or emphasis; and an excellent faculty he had at exposing, and regulating an odd tone or gesture, to the advantage of the student, without giving offence.

(8.) He took care to possess his pupils with the principles of christian charity and moderation, and to arm them against bigotry. He was no party man himself, nor would he make them such. One who had been a great while his pupil, writes to me to this purpose; that his tutor understood the passions of the mind so well, and had so great an art in managing tempers, so as to gain his point; that if he had designed it, he could easily have sent out flaming bigots: but he was too much a christian, a gentleman, and a scholar, to be swallowed up in the violences of any party. His aim was, to make them men of sense, and catholic christians; and if they fell short of being such, it was not his fault. He adds, "How hard it is, that when on the one side, such noble, beneficial, and heavenly principles of love and moderation, and particularly, a candid temper toward the Church of England, are in the academies of dissenters so studiously infused and encouraged, there should be on the other side such pains taken, and all the arts of misrepresentation used to render the dissenters contemptible and odious, and men not fit to be tolerated. But let us not be weary of rendering good for evil thus; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."

And observing that the dissenters' academies, are by some most maliciously calumniated as nurseries of rebellion and sedition, and hurtful to kings and provinces; he adds, that what insight the Doctor thought fit to give his pupils into politics, tended to beget in them, not only a satisfaction in, but an admiration of the established constitution of the English government, and he doubted not, but they brought with them, from his instructions, a true value for monarchy, and as thorough an abhorrence of the execrable murder of King Charles I. as they could have brought from Christ-Church itself.

As

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As to his practice of physic we have not much to observe, but when he was a youth, his genius led him strangely that way, and he loved to learn medicinal receipts; and had them very ready when he met with any occasion for them. When he fell into that business, he soon found it fatigued him much, both in body and mind; and he would gladly have left it off, but thought he could not in conscience refuse to assist those whom he saw in peril, who earnestly begged his advice; and who would not make use of any other, or could not be at the charge of it. To the poor he commonly gave not only his advice, but their physic too gratis, or money to pay the apothecary. It gave him likewise an opportunity of reproving, counselling, and comforting the sick, and of praying with them.

Luke the Evangelist was a physician, a *beloved physician*, and so was he. In all the places where he lived, and the relations wherein he stood, he was beloved. When he was at school at Wirksworth, he was the darling both of the school and of the town, for the sweetness of his temper, his piety and ingenuity, and his obliging readiness to be serviceable according to his capacity to every body; and when he had finished his time there, and was sent for home, his school-master, Mr. Ogden, wept to part with him, and said, he knew not what would become of his school when he was gone.

When he was a student at Glasgow, he was universally respected there for his great learning, diligence and seriousness: and when he took his Master's Degree, the senate of the academy did him the honour to make him president of all who were laureated that year; an honour seldom or never done to any but one of their own nation. He acquitted himself so well in that place, that when he was to take his leave, the regents courted his stay, and promised him preferment there: but he longed after his father's house, for there he was a great example of filial affection and respect; his parents were no less dear to him than he was to them, and there was nothing he studied more than in every thing to have them easy.

When he went to school in Derbyshire at fifteen years of age, he left a paper which was found after he was gone, expressing his great thankfulness to his parents for the care they had taken of his education, begging their prayers for him, and that they would not be inordinate in their affection to him, and if sickness and death should betide him, not to mourn for him as having no hope, for he knew it would be well with him living and dying. His letters to his parents, both from Wirksworth and Glasgow, as they evidence much of the power of the grace of God upon his spirit, a constant regard to God, and dependance upon him, and an earnest desire to serve the will of God in his generation, so they express a very great tenderness of them, and of their comfort and satisfaction.

He was as a father to his brothers and sisters, and very beneficial to all round about him; so much did holiness and love shine in his conversation, and so diffusive were the influences of both, that the good people of the neighbourhood would sometimes call his house the "Suburbs of Heaven." He gave Bibles and other good books to many, with a charge to read them diligently, and allowed yearly money to a poor man in the neighbourhood to teach so many poor children to read; with a strict obligation that none should know who did it. He was always careful not to give offence to any, very moderate in his opinions, and charitable in his thoughts and expressions concerning those he differed from, which gained him great respect from all sorts of people; and justly was he the more honoured by others, because he had always mean thoughts of himself, and was seldom satisfied with any performance of his own; still saying, "It might have been better done by myself, but much better done by another."

Well, all this had a pleasing aspect, to see so much of the light and love of the upper world shining in this lower region; and to see it in a man of strength and vigour, in the midst of his days, gave us a pleasing prospect, both of his further advances in proportion to his continued progress, and his long usefulness in his generation, but alas! we must take the treasure of divine light as it is given us, in earthen vessels, in china dishes, which do not wear out gradually, but often break of a sudden, without any previous decay: so it was here.

The Doctor's constitution seemed firm enough, but I believe he had done himself a prejudice by studying in the night, and sitting up very late often a great while after midnight. A great scholar once said, he would willingly lose the learning he had got, upon condition he could recover the health he had lost by night-studies. After he began to practise physic, that obliged him often to read late, which I believe did him no good.

But notwithstanding the strength of his constitution, he had himself an apprehension that he should not be long lived. When it was urged by some of his friends to spare himself, he used to answer that he believed he had but a very little time to live, and he was willing to spend it to the best purpose. When he was pleasing himself with the comfortable circumstances he was in, and particularly the great agreeableness of his dear yoke-fellow; he would say, "Well, this is not likely to continue long, we must expect a change." This apprehension grew upon him, and he frequently spoke of it; it was but a little time before he sickened, that he solemnly declared to some of his friends, that he looked upon death to be very near; adding, that he saw impiety come to such a height in this nation, that he feared some sore judgment would shortly come upon it, which God in mercy prevent.

He met with a French book which gave an account of the last hours of a young lady, a protestant of sixteen years of age, not named, who died in France, with high expressions of holy joy and triumph: the book is entitled, "Edifying Death." He was so pleased with it upon the reading of it, that he translated it out of French into English, and just finished it a day or two before he sickened; it is since his death printed at Shrewsbury in three or four sheets.

After he came to Shrewsbury, he had not his health so well as he had in the country; was frequently indisposed with cold, but never under any threatening symptoms.

On

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On Monday, February 23, 1707-8, he complained a little of a pain in his head and back, however he sat down to dinner with his students; as usual, after he had done his morning work, but he eat very little; for it happened just before he sat down, that one of the young men shewed him a paper then newly published, of reflections upon the grand jury's presentment of the book called, "The Rights of the Christian Church," from which he took occasion all dinner time, and a good while after, to inveigh against that book, and to warn his pupils against the pernicious principles of it, with a more than ordinary warmth.

Though he continued not well, yet on Tuesday he studied and preached publicly the week-day lecture, on Mat. 4. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;* he apprehended his distemper to be a slight intermitting fever, which would soon wear off, especially with the use of bark.

On Wednesday he gave a lecture to one class, but excused himself from the rest because of his indisposition, and walked out a little that afternoon; but it was with difficulty that he got home.

On Thursday and Friday he did not seem to be much worse, but prayed with his family even on Friday night, and was observed to be very particular, and asserting in his requests to GOD, that they might all be prepared for death and judgment.

On Saturday he confined himself to his chamber, yet did not seem to apprehend himself in any danger, nor did those about him.

On Monday some very good advice was had, and means used, his distemper was apprehended to be a nervous fever, and malignant; but seemed not to come to any extremity.

On Tuesday evening he sat up till almost bed-time, and having slept a little in his chair, when he waked, he said he had heard extraordinary music, far beyond what he had ever heard in his life. That was the first thing which gave those about him an alarm of his danger, for then it seemed that his distemper began to affect his head; next morning he became extremely delirious, so that he knew not those about him. A piteous case that a soul of such great capacities and attainments, and now just ready to take wing to the world of perfect and everlasting light, should merely by a bodily distemper be put into such confusion as his was; and disabled to discover itself, as otherwise it certainly would have done, to the glory of GOD, and the edification of others. May his living words be duly remembered and improved, for we have none of his dying words to keep account of.

Notwithstanding his delirium he slept much, and so sweetly on Thursday evening, that it was hoped it would do him good, but between ten and eleven o'clock that evening, (March 4,) he waked in an agony, and breathed his last within a few minutes; his aspiring soul hastening as it were out of a body, which not only, as always, detained him from the vision of GOD in the other world, (for *while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord)* but now disabled him from the service of GOD here; and what soul like his could bear to be any longer so fettered?

What a house of mourning was his made that dismal night; what deep impressions this sudden stroke made upon his dear charge, (as he used to call them) I cannot express, and I hope they will not forget. Sure he lived as much desired, and died as much lamented, as most men.

His remains were attended to the grave on Monday following, March 8, with universal lamentation. He was buried in St. Chad's Church in Shrewsbury, close by the grave in which the worthy Mr. James Owen was buried not two years before. Immediately after the body was interred, a funeral sermon was preached in his own meeting-place to a numerous congregation of true mourners. I must conclude this sad account, as Mr. Fox does the history of the death of the Lady Jane Grey!

Tu, quibus, ista legas incertum est, Lector! ocellis;
Ipse quidem, siccis, scribere non potui.

I know not, reader, whether thou canst read this without a tear, I can assure thee that it was not written without many *tears.*

Inscription on his Tomb-stone.

SAMUEL BENION, V. D. M. & M. D.
Whicksoliæ in Agro Salopiensi Natus, Collegii Glasguensis olim Alumnus, Quando Corpus suum huc demisit. Animam puram, piam, & modestam, Terrenis defæcatam, & Cœlestibus plenam, Omnigenâ Literaturâ altè imbutam.

Gloriæ Dei,

In Concionando Evangelium,
Erudiendo Juventutem Studiosam,
Et Curando Ægrotos,
Integrè dicatum;
Non tantum suis, sed & omnibus charum;
In Christi Manus placidè commisit.
Mar. 4. 170$\frac{7}{8}$.
Ætat. Suæ 35.

SAMUEL BENION, V. D. M. and M. D.*
Born at Whicksol in Shropshire, educated in the University of Glasgow, died in this town. He was pious, modest, and profoundly learned, abstracted from the world, his mind was pure and heavenly. Wholly devoted to the preaching of the gospel, the instructing of studious youth, and the healing of the sick; doing all to the glory of God. Dear to his friends, and to all besides. He committed himself with devout tranquillity into the hands of Christ, March 4, 170$\frac{7}{8}$, in the 35th year of his age.

* Minister of the Word of God, and Doctor of Physic.

A SERMON

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A SERMON *preached at the Funeral of the Rev.* MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY;

With a short ACCOUNT of his LIFE and DEATH.

JUDE xxi.

Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

HAD I been left at liberty to choose my subject on this sad and solemn occasion, I should certainly have pitched upon some text or other that would have led me to shew what a great man, (I might say, a prince and a great man, for such men as he who have wrestled and prevailed in prayer are Israel's *princes with* GOD) is fallen this day in our tribe, and what a great loss we have of him, some text that would have been proper to affect us with sorrow for the breach made upon us, which cannot but touch us the more sensibly, because we have been so lately wounded again and again in the same tender part. Though we have a great deal of reason with thankfulness to acknowledge the benignity of providence in continuing such a great blessing as his life was so long to us, yet his capacity for further usefulness being also wonderfully prolonged, we ought to look upon his removal as a further token of God's displeasure against us, and to lament it with a holy fear. Jacob's family so greatly lamented the death of Rebekah's nurse, who could not but be very old, that the place where they buried her was called *Allen-Bacuth,—the Oak of Weeping*, Gen. 35. 8. What a large debt of grateful and honourable tears, is owing then to one who has been so long a spiritual father and nurse in CHRIST'S family? The longer we enjoy good men, the more we should love and honour what we see of CHRIST in them, and the greater loss we should account their removal from us. I should certainly raise up your mourning, could I but be instrumental to stir up your graces; your love to GOD and his image, your zeal for CHRIST and his kingdom: these would engage your mourning for the death of one who bore so much of GOD'S image, and did so much good service to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men in his day.

The notice God took of the death of Moses, *Moses my servant is dead*, Josh. 1. 2. might probably have been my subject; and the rather, because like Moses, in his advanced years, his sight scarce waxed dim; and at length like him, he died at the mouth of the Lord, Deut. 34. 5. Or, Elisha's lamentation for Elijah's departure, which for my own part, I have reason to take up, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* Or, CHRIST'S character of John Baptist, might well have suited the occasion, *He was a burning and a shining light.* Nay, age being a crown of glory; the old-age of such a one, who continued in his usefulness to the last, being a diadem of beauty to all his friends, one whose days spoke so well, and the multitude of whose years taught so much wisdom; it had been no solecism, to have applied to ourselves the lamenting prophet's words, *The crown is fallen from our heads; Wo unto us, for we have sinned.*

But our Reverend Father, seeking your edification, and not his own honour, has appointed the text now read to you, to be the subject of my thoughts and your's at this time. He mentioned it to me a year or two ago, as that which he desired might be preached upon at his funeral, laying the emphasis upon the word *mercy: Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* For (said he) all my hopes of eternal life, are built purely upon the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ. I have nothing else to trust to; so that by this text, he being dead, yet speaketh. Hear, and your soul shall live.

Many, and many a good word he has spoken to you in GOD'S name, as feelingly and affectionately, as much from the heart, and discovering as much of a natural care for your state, as most men I ever heard; now take this as his dying word; and dying words should make living and lasting impressions: take it as his last farewel; his legacy (I may call it) to this congregation, and a valuable legacy it is. After he had been 56 or 57 years labouring among you in the word and doctrine, as opportunity favoured, with this word he breathes his last; this text he lives and dies by, it is his *Consummatum est*, and finishing his course, with it he finishes his testimony. Would you have the conclusion of the whole matter, and whatever you forget, will you be sure to remember that it is this, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life.* O that you and I might hear attentively the instructions of it, might hear them from the grave, though it be a land of silence; might hear them from heaven, not as the word of dying men, but of the living God, who has directed us not only what we must do, but what we may expect. Let the mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST be always before our eyes, and let the believing expectation of it, fill our souls, be inlaid there: let these words be written on the tables of our hearts, as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

I take it for granted, that our deceased father in the choice of this text, designed these two things,

I. To express the workings of his own heart, his own sentiments and devout affections, and to let you know that he for his part was a believing expectant of eternal life, and a believing dependant on CHRIST and his mercy for it, and continued so to the last, and had not changed his mind.

II. To impress the like on your hearts, and to engage and encourage you with the same things with which he found himself encouraged and engaged: he would have you also stirred up to seek for eternal life in Christ's mercy, and to seek till you find. He seemed desirous with the last blaze of his expiring lamp, if it might be

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by the grace of GOD, (that blessed heavenly fire) to kindle the same pious affections in you that his own heart was inflamed with. O that I had more of his spirit, then I could the better lay before you his thoughts that took rise from these words. I have looked upon it as none of the least of the blessings of my life, that ever since I was capable of it, I have been more or less at times made happy with his conversation, and many an hour have spent, abundantly to my satisfaction in fellowship with him; and as it was his condescension, so it was my advantage, that he was very communicative of his observations and experiences, in all his discourses full of CHRIST, and another world; so that I never parted from him, but I might have been the wiser and better for my being with him, and as much from him as perhaps from any friend I ever had, might have learned both discretion and devotion, that is, how to converse both with GOD and man. But if the countenance has for a while been sharpened by such a friend, as iron is with iron, alas, it grows dull again, and we want that liveliness when we have occasion for it. O that the blessed Spirit of GOD would bring this word home to my heart, and your's, would open our understandings, and make our hearts to burn within us, so that from this precious line of sacred writ we may gather now, and lay up for a time of need, that honey which I believe this blessed servant of GOD did in his own meditations suck from it, and may experience the same relish and power of it which we have reason to think he had the pleasure of. The Scripture is a full fountain, out of which we may draw as much water, and with as much joy as others who have gone before us, who have recommended it to us to be our guide and stay, as it has been their's. Streams from this rock followed them through this wilderness to Canaan, where the water will be turned into wine; and they will not fail us, nor be to us as the brooks in summer, if we be not wanting to ourselves.

I. then, Let us consider this text, as recommended to us with the design, to express this good man's believing, hope and expectation of eternal life, through the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Having lived in faith, thus he died in faith, seeing the promised land afar off, but embracing the promise of it, as faithful, and worthy of all acceptation, very sure, and very precious; dying with the promise in his arms, and the life promised in his eye. This reason, this account he gives of the hope that was in him, with meekness and fear; that he hoped *for* eternal life, and hoped *in* the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring him to it; and that this hope was to him as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, entering before into that within the vail, whither he himself is now entered.

It is the privilege and happiness of dying Christians, that they can look with ease and satisfaction on the other side death and the grave; can see firm land, and a good land beyond that rough and stormy sea, and this enables them to look death in the face, and to look down into the chambers of darkness, without change of countenance. They know not only whence death's commission comes from their Father's hand, but whither it will bring them to their Father's house, where they long to be. Dying is not to them as it is to atheists and infidels, "a great leap in the dark." No marvel, if from one who knows not, or receives not divine revelation, we hear sad complaints of uncertainty, and how much the departing soul is at a loss, *Dubius vixi, anxius morior, quo vadam nescio,—I have lived in doubt, I die in anxiety, whither I am going I know not*, said one: *Animula Vagula blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca,—O my poor soul, whither art thou now going*, said another. And we have been lately told, that Mr. Hobbes, (that Leviathan, that crooked serpent) when notwithstanding the vain hopes he had flattered himself with, that though old, he should yet live a while, he was told, that he could not continue long, wished, "O that I could now find a hole at which to creep out of this world!* But they who by faith build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and are united to CHRIST, the chief corner-stone, have a holy humble confidence towards GOD in a dying hour, and having put themselves under a divine conduct, can easily leave the land of their nativity, in prospect of the better country, that is, the heavenly, and though, like their father Abraham, they go out not knowing whither they go; yet, like him, they go out with cheerfulness, knowing whom they follow, and being assured that he will shew them the path of life. And though they cannot particularly describe the future bliss, which is a glory to be revealed, yet they are sure that it is enough to make them perfectly and eternally happy. And knowing whom they have trusted with all the concerns of their felicity, even the same whom the Father has trusted with all the concerns of his glory, they know very well *he is able to keep what they have committed to him unto that day*, when it shall be called for; and be ready to receive that spirit, which they then resign to him, and trust him with. In the assurance of this, they can walk with a holy security through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil after death, and therefore fearing none in death.

Let this be observed to the honour of the Christian religion, and the everlasting gospel, on which it is founded, that thence are fetched such substantial powerful antidotes against the fear of death, as the best of the heathen moralists could never offer. The Platonists sometimes called their philosophy *Meditatio Mortis,—Meditation on death*, and taught their disciples to think of death; but they could not teach them to triumph over it, as our religion teaches us, *O death, where is thy sting!* Let it also be observed for our encouragement to diligence and constancy in the work of GOD, that so we shall have not only an entrance, but an *abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom*. What is there in death to be dreaded, when it is only our passage to that eternal life, which through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ we are looking and longing for.

And as it is the happiness of dying Christians, that they have the hope of eternal life to stay themselves upon in that darksome valley, so it will be for the glory of GOD, and the edification of others, if they tell what GOD has done for their souls, and leave behind them a testimony to the sufficiency of the divine promise and grace from their own experience. Some, perhaps, may be invited into the ways of religion, many, however, will be encouraged therein, when they see and hear, with

* Dr. Kennet's account of the D. of Devon's family.

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what ease and cheerfulness, those who have been long walking in these good ways leave the world in expectation of the blessed hope. Some have thought it no less than a debt which at least the old disciples of CHRIST owe to those about them, to communicate to them the comforts wherewith they are comforted of GOD, in the believing prospects of the glory to be revealed. *I believed, therefore have I spoken.* Our deceased father has thus encouraged us to go on in the way of GOD, by intimating to us, that he found abundant comfort and support under the apprehensions of death approaching, in depending upon the mercy of Christ, and looking for eternal life through him.

When he intimated his mind that I should preach his funeral sermon, he added, that he would not have me to praise him; but,

I hope it will be no violation of that part of his charge, to take notice even of that prohibition to his honour, his great honour; the very mention of it, (and I am obliged to mention it, because otherwise it might justly be expected, that I should have spoken largely concerning his character) turns to his praise; and my silence so restrained speaks aloud, that he was one of those humble in spirit whom honour will uphold; one who sought not his own glory; nor cared to have a trumpet sounded after him, any more than before him, *Digito monstrari, & dicier hic est,—pointing him out with the finger, and saying, This is the man,* but would rather do what was praiseworthy than be praised for it. By this it appeared, that he endeavoured to approve himself to GOD, and was therefore dead to, and looked with contempt upon the applause and commendation of men; and that he lived a life of sincere repentance and self-judging, as the best Christians do; and was far from being like Saul, who, even when he owned his guilt to Samuel, saying, *I have sinned,* added in the next breath, *yet honour me now before the elders of my people,* 1 Sam. 15. 30. And that he was one of those Christians inwardly, whose praise is not of men, not courted or desired of men, but of God, and who make sure a witness in heaven, and a record on high, and then reckons it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Herein let us be followers of him, as he was of CHRIST: let us not search our own glory, for it is vain glory, nay, it is not glory, it is glory that will be turned into shame; but let us with a single eye aim at GOD's glory, and then that will reflect true glory upon us, and everlasting.

He who does but act a part in religion, may conclude as that heathen emperor did, with *valete & plaudite,—prosper and applaud,* the language of the stage; but he whose heart is upright with GOD, though he reckons a good name better than precious ointment, especially that at the day of one's death; yet he is so intent upon his acceptance with GOD, that the other is as nothing to him; well knowing, that true honour after death arises not from men's eulogiums, but from CHRIST's *Euge,—commendation,* if our Master say, *Well done,* the matter is not great what our fellow servants say.

Nor will it (I hope) be any violation of his charge to leave it to his own works to praise him in the gates; they do it, they will do it, further and longer than any thing I can say will. Generations to come will mention him with honour, for his View of Universal History, that copious comprehensive work, which takes in all the generals, and in a manner touches most of the particulars that have swelled the numerous volumes of historians; sure never was so much learning, so much reading crowded into so little a compass; never was one page in two columns so well filled: it is a work confessedly exact and elaborate, and of general and of lasting use. Let that vast performance praise him for his knowledge, judgment, and great industry.

Let his Sure and large Foundations, his History of Schism, and the Defence of it; praise him for his catholic charity, and moderation, and that healing temper which, as far as it prevails and has the ascendance, will extinguish heats, accommodate differences among Christians, and bring and keep good people together in love; conformable to the design of our Blessed Redeemer, who died that he might gather together in one the children of God, who under several denominations were scattered abroad.

But besides these works of his, I hope, the good success of his ministry in this place will praise him, and the remaining fruit of it will be his honour, as well as your comfort and advantage. Recollect what you have heard from him, and live it over. You have fully known his doctrine, manner of life, faith, charity, patience, continue therefore in those things which you have learned, and have been assured of, knowing that you have learned them of one who well understood them himself, and with a very tender concern for your souls, pressed them upon you. Abound therefore in the fruits of righteousness, and so commend your keeping; make it appear you have been well fed with the bread of life, and nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine, by your holy heavenly conversations, your sobriety, justice, charity, meekness, humility, and exemplary walking in every thing, which will be an ornament to your profession, and the standing praise of your ministers who are gone; whose good preaching will best survive them, and be best attested in your good living. If, at any time, you are tempted to do an ill thing, remember you have not so learned Christ, but have been better taught the truth as it is in Jesus. If I may not praise him who is gone, thus you may, and others who thus see your light shine before men, will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Though I may not praise him, yet I hope I may put you upon praising God for him. Men, the greatest and best of men are but what the grace of GOD makes them; all their light they borrow from the Father of lights. All their oil from the good olive, they are ready to own it themselves, *By the grace of God, I am that I am; I live, yet not I; I laboured, yet not I;* now if we give the glory of that grace to him from whom it is derived, and to whom the praise of it belongs; whatever honour that reflects at second-hand on the chosen instruments of that grace, we do but our duty. St. Paul never flattered his friends, yet we often find him thanking GOD for their faith and hope, their love and patience, nor did he court their applauses of him, he was far from it; yet he desired that thanks might be given by many in his behalf, for what

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what GOD enabled him to do and suffer in his cause. That just praise of men turns to a good account, which makes GOD its centre, and runs up all the streams to the fountain. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

You of this congregation, have reason to bless GOD for your ministers, for their gifts, and graces, and serviceableness to you. *Glorify the God of Israel,* who has given such power unto men, and gave men of such power to you. When you reflect with a melancholy thought, upon those dark providences which have of late removed from your head two faithful ministers in the midst of their days, and great usefulness; take occasion thence, to bless GOD for that kind and gracious providence which continued one among you to a good old age, and continued him in his usefulness to the last. Thus GOD has tried you with a variety of instruments; you have at the same time been blessed with the gravity and authority of a Paul, *the aged,* and with the vigour and liveliness of a Timothy, who *as a son with the father, served with him in the gospel:* each age has its advantage, if both have been advantageous to you, you have a great deal to be thankful for; if neither, you have a great deal to answer for. But whether they who piped unto you, or they who mourned, have gained their point, or no, *Wisdom will be justified of her children.*

The sons of the prophets have reason to bless GOD, that ever they had such a father, such a guide, such a counsellor, such an example: I am sure I have, who am less than the least of them. May the mantle of this Elijah clothe those who are left behind, that we may walk in the same spirit; walk in the same steps; and that we may shew forth the thankfulness of our hearts by the conformity of our lives to that holy religion, wherein we have been instructed by those who were the guides of our youth, and by our steady and constant adherence to the gospel of the grace, the free grace of God, which they lived and died by.

I am sure, it is no transgression of his charge (for it must be what he chiefly intended in the choice of this text) to observe the testimony which, I think, he bore to some of the most precious and peculiar principles of our holy religion, in making these words his own; for this will be for your edifying, if it be not your own fault.

Christ and heaven are the peculiarities of the gospel; there, and there only, do we find the doctrine of a mediator betwen GOD and man, and of eternal life; it is by that light only, that these great things are discovered, which were hid from ages and generations; it is on the truth of that word, that our belief of these does intirely depend. Much of GOD and his glorious attributes and perfections may be learned by the light of nature; and many excellent truths concerning him may easily be spelled out of the book of the creatures. Many who learnt no higher than that book, said great things concerning the Creator; much likewise of the present pleasure and advantages of virtue, may be learned from the dictates of natural conscience, and the universal experience of mankind: but it is only by the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that crown and center of all divine revelation, that life and immortality are brought to light; by it only we come to be acquainted with Christ and heaven, heaven as our end, and CHRIST as our way; the knowledge of these is that true wisdom of which the *depth saith, It is not in me; the sea saith, it is not in me;* and *which the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal.* These are the things of the Spirit of GOD which the mere animal man receiveth not. It is only by the New Testament, that blessed character of divine grace, that we come to be interested in CHRIST, and intitled through him to eternal life, which makes the christian merchandise better than the merchandise of silver.

These are the two things which the faith of a christian in a special manner fastens upon; the great Saviour, and the great salvation wrought out by him; these the eye of faith looks upon; these the hand of faith lays hold on. What is the faith we live by, but the faith of the Son of God, and that faith *is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* What else is true christianity but a believing dependance upon the mediation of CHRIST, with a devotedness to his conduct and government in every thing; and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed, with a careful and diligent preparation of ourselves for that glory.

O what a holy fire of love to Christ, and desire toward heaven was kindled by this faith in the breast of this good man; how did he himself feel it glow; how did those who conversed with him see it flame; how did he breathe Christ, and breathe toward heaven, even to the last breath. Let us submit to the power of the same faith, and we shall experience the fruits of it. There was another Scripture which his heart was much upon, when he saw the day approaching; and that included Christ and heaven too, it was that close of the apostle's triumph over death and the grave, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory;* (that is, brings us to heaven, for till we come thither, we have not quite overcome) *through our Lord Jesus Christ:* but in this he chose to express to you the faith in which he died, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Give me leave to improve the dying testimony of this great scholar and christian, for the honour of pure christianity, and the first principles of it. In many causes one aged witness is worth twenty young ones; we have here an aged witness to produce on religion's side, who has affirmed it upon his death, *that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life is,* what may be looked for, with the greatest assurance and desire by all the faithful servants of JESUS CHRIST. *Ask thy father then, and he will shew thee, thine elders, and they will tell thee,* that they have found, and so wilt thou, no righteousness and strength to be depended upon but in Christ; no happiness and life, but in heaven. Those who plead religion's cause have antiquity on their side, and the wisdom and experience of the ancients, and may boast as Eliphaz does, *With us are the grey-headed, and very aged men.* The longer men live in the world, the more experience they have of its vanity, and insufficiency to make them happy, and that drives them to set their hearts more on heaven; and the more experience they have of their own weakness and inability to help themselves, and that drives them to rest more upon Jesus Christ,

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Christ, and his mercy and grace. Let this recommend religion to us, that those speak well of it who have had a long acquaintance with it. Polycarp, that blessed martyr, who, in the first ages of the church, sealed the truth with his blood at Smyrna, being vehemently urged by the proconsul to renounce his religion, and as an evidence of it to speak ill of Christ, replied to this purpose: "Fourscore and six years, I have served Christ, and have always found him a good master, how then can I speak ill of him now?" Here was one who somewhat longer even to his 89th year had been drawing in Christ's yoke, and witnessed from his own experience, that it was an easy yoke; and that in the service of CHRIST he was borne up and comforted, living and dying with the expectation of his mercy, even to eternal life.

There are six great truths contained in this text, at least by implication, which he did in effect bear his testimony to in the choice of it, and they are not matters of nice and curious speculation, which exercise the wits of the learned, nor matters of doubtful disputation, or strifes of words, which too often engage the passions of the litigious; no, he was none of those who troubled the minds of the disciples with such things, but was himself filled and desired to fill others with the great things of GOD, the weighty matters of the law and gospel, which are all our salvation, and therefore should be all our desire; nor did he spend his zeal upon any thing but what all good christians are agreed in, whatever different sentiments they may have, and govern themselves by in lesser things. *Call therefore, if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the saints will you turn?* Turn to which you will, of whatever denomination (for, far be it, far be it from us to think, that those of our own are the only ones) and you will find they all agree in these principles of the oracles of GOD, which I gather from this text, which he who is gone bore his dying testimony to, and which, if we, that survive, were but more governed by, we should be every way better both in heart and life; and more loving and charitable to those we differ from in lesser matters, since the things wherein we differ are so few and small in comparison with the many and great things wherein we are agreed.

1. That there is another life after this. This is plainly implied in the mention which the text makes of eternal life; for we are sure that this present life is not eternal; it is short and transient and hastening away: and they who say, they look for eternal life, declare plainly that they believe there is another country to which they must remove, and in which they must reside, besides this through which they are now passing. And I the rather lay this down first, because our deceased father particularly appointed, that the motto engraven in the rings to be given at his funeral, should be this, "There is a life after this." GOD by his Spirit engrave it in all our hearts. With this word he comforted himself while he lived, and designed to instruct and admonish us, who for a little while are left behind. The plainest truths are the most precious, and carrying with them the most convincing evidence, should be the most powerful, and have the most commanding influence upon us; such a one as this, worthy indeed to be written in gold, and to be to us as the signet on our right hand, ever with us, and continually before us.

And do we indeed believe, that there is a future state, a life after this? That besides this world of sense we are conversant with, there is a world of spirits we are allied to; and must have our everlasting abode in; that when we have passed through this world of work and probation, we must certainly go to another world of recompence and retribution, and must receive *according to the things done in the body?* We say, we believe the life of the world to come: but we think of it so seldom, so slightly, though sure, though near, though just at the door, we consider it so little, and are so little influenced by it in the management of ourselves, that it may well be asked, Do we indeed believe it? *Shew me thy faith by thy works.*

Do we believe there is another world, that we must all be shortly lodged in for eternity? What! and yet so fond of this world, as if we were to be here always? And so mindless of that, as if we had nothing to do in preparation for it? What! and yet do so much every day to unfit us for that life, and so little to acquaint ourselves with the employments and enjoyments of it? What! and yet think so little of death, which will very certainly, and may very suddenly remove us to that world? O that we were all more confirmed in our belief of another world! and were so wise as to consider our *latter end:* or, as it may be read, our *future state.* Then should we pass more safely and comfortably through this world, and at length out of it.

It is sad to see many, even when they are under the sensible symptoms of their approaching change, and already taken in the custody of death's messengers, still full of this life, solicitous about it, in love with it, and very loth to think of parting with it, or to hear talk of another. Our deceased father has set us a better example, and by his weanedness from this life, shewed how much his eye and heart were upon another. Often has he charged his friends, those at a distance by letter, and those about him by word of mouth, not to pray for the continuance of his life; though it was as far as any man's of his age, from being made either uneasy to himself, or unprofitable to others: by which it appears he was, *satur dierum—full of days:* according to that promise made to them, who set their love on God, with long life was he satisfied. And what was the language of Job's corruptions concerning his present state, was the language of his graces; *I loath it, I would not live always* in this world, *having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

2. That in the other life, there is a state of perfect and perpetual bliss, prepared for and secured to all good christians, who live and die in the fear of GOD, and in the faith of CHRIST. The eternal life the text speaks of, is not only an immortal being; the damned in hell shall have that for the perpetuating of their misery, their worm dies not, therefore they die not; but an immortal blessedness, adequate to the enlarged capacities, and commensurate to the never-failing duration of that immortal being.

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We may firmly believe upon the credit of eternal truth, which all the saints in all ages have set their seals to, and ventured their souls upon; that all those, who, *by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality,* shall *obtain eternal life.* There is an everlasting perfection of joy and satisfaction, which all those that are duly prepared for it in this world, shall certainly be put in the possession of in the other world, consisting in the immediate vision, and complete fruition of GOD, as their GOD; a crown of immortal glory that will never wither; a kingdom that cannot be moved; an inheritance such as never was on earth; no, not in Canaan, no not in *Eden* itself; *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,* reserved in heaven for all obedient believers; the prospect of which, is now a sufficient balance; and the enjoyment of which will then be an abundant recompence of all their services, sufferings, and self-denials; all their toils, all their griefs, all their losses, heaven will make amends for all.

And do we indeed believe this? Why then are we so careless to make sure our title to this happiness? Why do we take so little pains to work out our salvation? Why do we so eagerly pursue the good things of this world, as if they were the best things, and rest in them as if they were our portion and our heritage for ever? Have we any good hope, through grace, of his happiness, why then do we go mourning from day to day under the burthen of worldly crosses, as if the glory to be revealed, had not enough in it to countervail the sufferings of this present time? Let the experiences of the saints, who have, not only been kept from fainting by believing that they shall see the goodness of the Lord in that land of the living, but in the prospect of it, have been enabled to rejoice in tribulation, direct and encourage us to build our hope on the same foundation, and draw our joy from the same fountain.

3. That our present state is a state of expectation; even the greatest and best saints in this world, are still looking for something yet to come, which will make them greater and better. It is certainly true, we are not yet entered into rest, we are not at home. How well soever it is with us in this world, and how easy soever and well pleased we are in our present state, there is still something we are to look for, and wait for; something above this world, something beyond it: the best are not so holy as they would be, nor reckon themselves to have attained, or to be already perfect; but they are still pressing forward toward the mark: the most comforted are not so happy as they would be, and expect to be, when that which is perfect is come. They who deal with GOD deal upon trust, for something out of sight and in reversion, after one life; and must wait till the harvest for the return of their seed, and till the evening for the reward of their work, not of *debt* but of *free grace.*

With what a generous contempt should we look down upon the body and the world, if this truth were duly considered? What have we here; and whom have we here, that we should call this our rest? Though the human soul is conscious to itself of an innate inclination to its body, yet the sanctified soul being touched with the loadstone of divine love is conscious to itself of a predominant inclination to its GOD, and its kindred in the upper-world, and therefore, even in the body, when it acts like itself, and agreeable to the principles of its new nature, it complains it is not in its center, in its element; it is not what it would be, nor where it would be. Instead of reposing itself and being pleased, it groans, being burthened, longing to be absent from the body, as well as it loves it, that it may be present with the Lord. The delights of sense, and all the amusements and entertainments this earth can afford, are the despised crowds through which the soul, thus big with expectation, presses forward in pursuit of everlasting joys. Even holy ordinances, though a day in them is better than a thousand elsewhere on earth, yet they are but the high-ways through which we pass along to this eternal life, and go from strength to strength, till we appear before God in the heavenly Jerusalem: they are but means in order to a further end, in the use of which we are still looking, still waiting for the consolation of Israel.

This faithful servant of GOD was much in this expecting frame, that text on which he preached at my father's funeral almost twelve years ago, he seemed to have much upon his heart, and often repeated it, *We which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.* And the last sermon he preached the day before he sickened, and not twenty days before his death was to the same purpose, on those words of the lamenting prophet, *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord;* I perceive by the notes of it, it was newly meditated; he intimates towards the close, that he had been upheld many years by that hoping, and quiet waiting for divine salvation, and had found peace, and holy security in that way; and his notes conclude with Hab. 2. 3, 4. *The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Thus did he encourage his own faith and patience to hold out yet a little while; and his last breath here concurred with that of the dying Patriarch, when he was blessing his sons, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,* Gen. 49. 18.

4. That we have all need of divine mercy, are for ever undone without it, and must depend upon that for all the good we hope for, here or hereafter. We must never expect life, much less eternal life, but through mercy, infinite mercy. We all lie at God's mercy, he has all the advantages both of law and strength against us, our destruction would be no wrong or injustice to us, no difficulty or loss to him.—We are sinners, miserable sinners; are charged with guilt, and cannot deny the charge, cannot confess and justify, cannot give security to answer the law; nor have we any arts to evade either its cognizance or its sentence; we have no plea to put in that will stand us in any stead; though we thought ourselves righteous, yet durst we not answer; for GOD knows that ill by us which we know not by ourselves, and therefore we must make supplication to our Judge,[a] and cast ourselves entirely upon his mercy; which we need

[a] Job 9. 15

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not be afraid to do, for he has proclaimed his name *Gracious and Merciful*, and is particularly pleased with those who hope in his mercy,[a] and in obedience to his will humbly refer themselves to it.

All our comfort and happiness we must look for from the mercy of GOD, that mercy which is so often said to endure for ever, because the fruits of it are everlasting. The chosen vessels are said to be *vessels of mercy*;[b] and the people who are taken into covenant with GOD, are said to *obtain mercy*.[c] It is *according to his mercy* that he hath saved us,[d] and hath *begotten us again to a lively hope*.[e] Blessed Paul himself attributes both his fidelity, and his constancy to divine mercy; *I obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*;[f] and *as we have received mercy we faint not*.[g] Thus even the New Testament which brings in the everlasting righteousness, yet teaches us still to have an eye to everlasting *mercy*, for pardon and peace, for grace and glory. The poor Publican's prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner*,[h] is what the best saints have set their heartiest amen to, and have blessed GOD, that we find it upon record in the gospels as an answered prayer, and that he who prayed it with a humble, broken, penitent, and obedient heart *went to his house justified*.

Thus this good man finished his course, under a deep sense of his need of the mercy of GOD. I shall not forget with what solemnity he said to me, when I was with him a few days before he died, and he was so weak, that he could say but little; "Here I lie, endeavouring to renew my repentance for all my sins, from my beginning to this day, and I would not think, that my weakness and illness should excuse me from the exercise of repentance." And when I was praying by him, that GOD would support and strengthen him, he softly put me in mind to pray, that his sins might be forgiven him. It is related both of St. Austin and of Archbishop Usher, those two great men in their day, that on their deathbeds they lamented their sins of omission. Those who thus humble themselves shall be exalted.

5. That it is only from Christ, and through Christ, and in Christ; that we poor sinners can hope to find mercy. The mercy we must be saved by, if we be saved, is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is that we must have an eye to, it is that we must depend upon for eternal life: mercy put into the hand of a Mediator, procured by him for us, conferred by him upon us; he received the gifts of mercy for men, he gave the gifts of mercy to men,[i] even the rebellious. The Father has set him at his right hand; for by him he reaches forth his mercy to the children of men, and he is so intirely intrusted with the disposal, that it is called his mercy.

The mercy of Christ appears very illustrious in his whole undertaking from first to last; it was in his love, and in his pity, that he redeemed us, that he took this ruin under his hand. He assumed our nature, that he might be touched with a compassionate feeling of our infirmities. All his miracles were acts of mercy as well as acts of power, and instances of his kindness and goodwill toward men. All the invitations he gave to poor sinners to come to him, and the promises he has made for their encouragement, are the breathings of his mercy. In all his offices, his mercy shines. Is he a Prophet? He can have compassion on the ignorant;[a] and they who learn of him, will find him meek and lowly. Is he a Priest? He is a merciful as well as faithful High-Priest.[b] Is he a King? He comes to us meek and having salvation.[c] It is the mercy of the Redeemer that runs through the whole work of redemption, and is the support and joy of the redeemed. The apostle speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ,[d] as one of the most precious and powerful considerations with all good christians, by which they ought to be influenced as much as by any thing.

The great design of the gospel is to exalt Christ, by shewing, that all the favours we are now to expect from GOD pass through his hands; and we are beholden to him for them. It is through his blood that we receive forgiveness of sins; he is our peace, and from his fulness we receive grace for grace. The Father has committed not only *all judgment*, but *all mercy* to the Son, that all men might honour the Son; by applying themselves to him, and resting on him; to whom the Father has given power over all flesh, on purpose, that he might give eternal life; and all the preparatives for it, and earnests of it to as many as were given him. Would we receive mercy, we must go to CHRIST for it; for he is *all in all*. All our springs are in him, and we must acknowledge our obligations not only to his merit, but to his mercy; and that great love wherewith he loved us; for it is owing to his rich mercy, that we have interest in his merit, and benefit by it, and this we ought to be made more and more sensible of, that we may find ourselves for ever engaged to love him, and live to him; and to cast all our crowns at his feet. Thus is boasting effectually excluded, and all flesh forbidden to glory in his presence. *It is of the Lord's mercies*, the Lord CHRIST's mercies *that we are not consumed*, that we are not firebrands in hell, and it is *because his compassions fail not*, and are *new every morning*, that we continue hitherto, that we are supported under our burthens; comforted in our sorrows, have our daily infirmities pardoned, and the willingness of the spirit accepted, notwithstanding the weakness of the flesh: and if ever we get to heaven, that must be called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will eternally remind the glorified saints how miserable they had been if Christ had not stood their friend. The best man in the world when he comes to have his everlasting state determined, will certainly be undone if CHRIST be not merciful to him. And therefore St. Paul prays for Onesiphorus, who by his charity had lent to the LORD, not that he might have justice done him, but that he might find mercy of the Lord in that day.[e] If the merciful be blessed, it is not because they are men of merit, but because they obtain mercy with the Lord JESUS; *Son of David, have mercy on us*; *Jesus Master have mercy on us*; must be the breathings of our souls, even to the last; living, dying, and in the judgment.

This was it that our deceased father was full of. To

[a] Ps. 3. 18. [b] Rom. 9. 23. [c] 1 Pet. 2. 10. [d] Tit. 3. 5. [e] 1 Pet. 1. 3. [f] 1 Cor. 7. 25. [g] 2 Cor. 4. 1. [h] Luke 18. 13. [i] Ps. 68. 18.

[a] Heb. 5. 2. [b] Heb. 2. 17. [c] Zech. 9. 9. [d] 2 Cor. 10 1. [e] 2 Tim. 1. 18. [f] Mat. 5. 7.

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him to live was CHRIST; the mercy of CHRIST, and the merit of CHRIST. It was but a few weeks before he died, that he gave this thesis to a candidate for the ministry, to be maintained at his trial for his ordination, *Justitia qua coram Deo sistimus est justitia Christi Mediatoris—That we cannot appear before* GOD *in any righteousness of our own, but* CHRIST's *merit is our only righteousness*, and for that we are ever indebted to his mercy. "None but Christ; none but Christ."

6. That the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is as necessary to the finishing of the work of our salvation, as it was to the beginning of it. We not only receive the mercy of CHRIST in our justification, sanctification, and present comforts; but we look for it still, even unto eternal life; we depend upon that to bring us to heaven, to preserve us to that kingdom, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Christ's mercy may be looked for even to eternal life; for whom he loves, he loves to the end, loves them into heaven, that world of everlasting love; for his gifts and callings are without repentance. The vessels of mercy shall be vessels of honour; and though they commit iniquity, they shall be brought to repentance, so that mercy shall not depart from them. Grace in the soul is the work of God's own hands, which he will not forsake, because his mercy endures for ever, and he will perfect that which concerns us. As for God his work is perfect; it began in mere mercy, rescuing a malefactor from death, but that mercy will proceed till it crowns a friend and favourite with endless glory. *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*

Let this mercy therefore be depended upon to the last, and let us have our eye ever towards it; let not the strongest and most experienced christians think their own hands sufficient for them, or imagine that if Christ's mercy will but help them *so far*, they can then shift for themselves; no, if that mercy be not drawn out to eternal life, we are undone. If the same who is the author, be not the finisher of our faith and hope, they will never be perfected in vision and fruition. If goodness and mercy do not follow us *all* our days, even to the last, we shall never reach to dwell in the house of the Lord. To it therefore let us commit the great trust against that day, and depend upon the same kind and mighty hand that laid the foundation of this great work, and fastened the corner-stone of it at length to bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, and eternity itself will be short enough to be spent in crying, *Grace, Grace to it.*

And thus I have briefly touched upon those great truths, to which it should seem this faithful witness designed to bear his dying testimony in chusing this text, and we know that his witness is true, and I hope we believe, not for his saying only, but that we have heard them ourselves, tasted the sweetness, and felt the power of them in our own hearts; which is the most convincing evidence to us of the truth of them.

But if indeed we receive these truths in the light and love of them.

(1.) Let us bless God, that they are so clearly revealed to us in the Scripture. Blessed are our eyes for they see the joyful light, our ears for they hear the joyful sound of Christ and Heaven; things not only hid from the wise and prudent, who despised them, but from prophets and kings that *desired* to see them, and might not. Bless God that we see eternal life set before us, and not set out of our reach, while we see Christ undertaking for us, able to save to the uttermost, and as willing as he is able.

Let us therefore give diligence to get the knowledge of these great things, and grow in our acquaintance with them: let us more firmly believe the gospel-doctrines concerning Christ and Heaven, for they are faithful sayings, and more familiarly converse with them, for they are worthy of all acceptation. Let men of learning learn Christ; let men of business understand this business; for without this, the most learned men at their end will be fools, and the richest men at their end will be beggars—beggars in vain. The gospel of Christ is the same to the wise and the unwise, to the Greek and the Barbarian. The greatest wits and statesmen are not above the knowledge of CHRIST and Heaven, and that knowledge is not above the capacity of the meanest who seek it faithfully. Set your hearts therefore unto all the words which *are* testified among you this day, Deut. 32. 46. for believe it, they are matters of life and death.

(2.) Let us bless GOD that they are so well attested by the experiences of wise and good men. Though our faith stands not upon any human testimony, yet it is an encouragement to us to venture our souls upon the same foundation, that so many have to their unspeakable satisfaction, ventured theirs.—Some who have traversed the vast region of human learning, have owned with Solomon, that the increase of it has been but the increase of sorrow, and they have found no true joy, but in the doctrine of CHRIST. Mr. Selden was confessedly one of the greatest scholars of his age, and on his death-bed expressed himself to this purpose to archbishop Usher—That he had in his time taken a great deal of pains in searching after knowledge, had surveyed most parts of the learning of the sons of men; but in all the books and manuscripts he was master of, he found nothing wherein he could rest his soul, save the Holy Scripture, and that passage was especially comfortable to him, *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope*, Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13. We have now parted with one who was as well acquainted with books and men, and had improved as much by that acquaintance, as perhaps any man I ever knew; yet he counts all but loss, that he may know Christ, and win Christ, and be found in him; and that which you see gave him the greatest satisfaction in his dying moments, was an expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Look upon it as the testimony of a minister, who has often in CHRIST's name called upon you to lay hold on eternal life; and to make that sure. Now you see he urged you to nothing else, but what he did himself: he directed you to CHRIST and his mercy, and there he reposed himself. Therefore the ministry is committed to men like ourselves, because they having souls to save as well as we, we may hope, they will deal for our souls as for their own, and direct us to build upon no other foundation

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foundation than what they themselves build upon; and will speak, what they themselves have seen, and testify what they have themselves known. Your ministers who are gone, embarked for another world in the same vessel which they have often persuaded you to embark in, and have thereby shewed they were in earnest with you.

But if we receive the witness of men, the witness of GOD is greater; men may be deceived, but GOD cannot: by faith receive his testimony, and so set to your seal that he is true: *and this is the record*, it is the sum total which all I have said amounts to, *that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

II. I come now to consider this text as recommended to us, with design not only to express the workings of his heart towards CHRIST and Heaven, but to impress the like workings on our hearts. And so the words come in here as an exhortation to this duty of looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The former is in order to this. They who have themselves tasted of the mercy and grace of CHRIST, cannot but desire that others also may taste of it. True grace hates monopolies, and desires not to eat its morsels alone. Sinners entice you to cast in your lot among them, and tell you, you shall find all precious substance, and fill your houses with spoil; but they lay wait for their own blood, and their end will certainly be bitter as wormwood; hearken to the invitations of the sons and heirs of heaven, and be persuaded to cast in your lot among them, for *yet there is room;* in CHRIST and eternal life, there is enough for all, enough for each, enough for you, and you will all be welcome. Your deceased Pastor was himself so fully convinced of the reality and certainty of unseen things, that he earnestly desired you also might be convinced of them, and that none of you might perish in ignorance and unbelief concerning them. He had such pleasure in looking for this eternal life, and such satisfaction in relying on CHRIST for it, that he wished you the same pleasure, the same satisfaction. It yielded him solid substantial comfort on his death-bed, which renewed the inward man, even then when the outward man was decaying. Then he said with thankfulness, that through the grace of God, he had abundance of peace; and that his heart was as full of joy as it could hold. Let this encourage you to follow him and others, who are now through faith and patience, inheriting the promises. He had hope in his death, and you have reason to think, he is now happy; be you holy and you shall be happy too. Heaven is not intended only for good ministers, but for all good christians who now have their conversation in heaven. The crown of righteousness shall be given, not only to such great men as St. Paul was, but to all those who love Christ's appearing; who love his first appearing, and are thankful for it; his second appearing, and long for it. CHRIST has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and excluded none, who do not exclude themselves; put in for it therefore, and resolve not to take up short of it. Would you die the death of the righteous? live their life. Would you have your last end like theirs? Let your present way be like theirs. Follow their faith, who made Christ the end of their conversation, who, what he was to them yesterday, will be the same to us to-day, and to them and us for ever. Whatever you heard or saw in your aged minister that was instructive and exemplary, transcribe it into your own hearts and lives, and thus let him still live among you; and then death which has parted him from you a while, to make you amends, will shortly fetch you to him.

When he ordered that this text should be preached upon at his funeral, he withal gave direction, that I should take some notice of the foregoing words, and observe something from them for your instruction. And, I think, this will be the most proper place to do it in order to your attaining a well-grounded hope of eternal life. The context is this, (v. 20, 21.) *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God;* and then *continue looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* From all which, I shall now in the close, give you some directions, and I beseech you, suffer the word of exhortation, and submit to it. Now though Providence has prepared the ground, (and those hearts are hard indeed, that will not be softened by the death of two such ministers so near together) I would hope, the seed of the word might take root, and bring forth fruit.

1. Lay a good foundation in holy faith, and the love of God. This is supposed in those exhortations to *build up ourselves on our most holy faith*, and to *keep ourselves in the love of God.* See that you be well principled, that the root of the matter be found in you, else you cannot be fruitful in the fruits of righteousness. Let our holy faith in Christ lead us to the love of God, as reconciled to us through him.

Firmly believe the doctrine of CHRIST, embrace it, rely upon it; be delivered into it as into a mould; receive the impressions of it, and submit to the commanding constraining power of it. Let your faith particularly receive CHRIST, and rest upon him as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and resign yourselves to him to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. Let it be a faith unfeigned, and not a bare profession, a faith that purifies the heart, then it is a holy faith. The doctrine we believe is holy, let us be sanctified by it. It is faith that overcomes the world, quenches the fiery darts of satan, realizes unseen things, establishes the heart, and keeps us from fainting; neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but this holy faith is all in all. We have no benefit by divine revelation, that great blessing of the world, without faith, no more than we have by the light of the sun without eyes. The word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith.

Let this faith work by love, such a reigning love of GOD in your hearts, as will eat out all sinful self-love, and the love of the world, and will kindle in you a holy fire of devotion to GOD, and zeal for his honour in every thing; such a love as will make the keeping of all his commandments easy to you, and particularly that of brotherly love; get this love shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, and do all you do in religion from that principle.

2. Build upon this foundation, else in vain was the

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foundation laid. Ye beloved, who have escaped the snares of the scorners, he is speaking of in the verses before, and are contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jud. 3. think it not enough, that you have and hold the true religion, but be still building up yourselves on your most holy faith.

Proceed upon the good principles that through grace, are laid, and act in conformity to them, as those who in all you say and do are governed by conscience, and the fear and love of GOD. Proceed in the good practices you have begun, and never grow weary of well-doing. You have still need of helps for your souls, bless GOD there are such to be had who will build, and will help you to build up yourselves upon the good foundations of faith and love, which your ministers who are gone have laid among you.

Go forth, therefore, and go on in the strength of CHRIST, in the work and warfare of your Christianity. Be daily improving in knowledge, in wisdom, in every grace, and reckon not yourselves to have apprehended. You have daily lessons to learn, be getting forward in your learning: daily work to do, be still doing it, and rid ground in your journey heaven-wards. Have you begun well? Let nothing hinder you. Have you gone on well hitherto? Lose not the things which you have wrought, the things which you have gained. We are clogged with so many corruptions, and surrounded with so many temptations, that if we do not get ground, we certainly lose ground; like a boat on the river, if it be not rowed up the stream, it will of itself go down the stream. *Non progredi est regredi,—Not to advance is to retreat.* Aim high therefore, and press forward; having such a prize set before you. Run with patience the race set before you. Hold fast CHRIST as the foundation, which will stand the storm, and then carry your building as high as heaven above the storm. Let your motto be *Plus ultra,—Onward.*

3. Be constant and inward with GOD in prayer. Would you build up yourselves on your most holy faith, pray much, and pray in the Holy Ghost, for except the Lord build the spiritual house, they labour in vain who build it. We can do nothing for ourselves of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God, to him therefore we must continually apply ourselves; he has promised grace to help in every time of need, but he will for this be inquired of by the House of Israel. Ask and it shall be given you, not otherwise: ask in faith, ask in earnest, ask and seek by endeavour, ask and knock with constancy and importunity; as become Jacob's seed, and Jacob's GOD will not let it be in vain. By prayer give glory to GOD, and then you may expect to receive grace from him, and would be every way better did you pray more, and more to the purpose. Let all your comforts draw you, and all your crosses drive you to your knees, and especially let your deficiencies in faith engage you to pray for the increase of it, and the fulfilling of the work of faith with power. You would profit more by the word of faith, if you did pray more for a blessing upon it. You will not sit down to meat, why then will you set down to a sermon, the food of your souls, without craving a blessing. Praying contributes no less to our edification in faith, than hearing does, indeed it does more, for it engages GOD on our side.

And whenever you pray, see that it be in the Holy Ghost; pray, under the Spirit's influence and operation, who makes intercession in us, and helps our praying infirmities. Let your spirits be employed in the duty, and in order thereunto see it necessary to depend upon GOD's Spirit. It is not his inspiration, as a Spirit of prophecy that we are to expect, but his conduct and strength, his light and heat, as a Spirit of adoption, a Spirit of grace and supplication.

4. Take heed of every thing that tends to quench the fire of holy love, and would cast you out of GOD's favour. This is intended in that branch of the exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of* GOD. We must not only pray, but watch, and make it our constant care and endeavour to preserve both the good work of GOD in us, and the good will of GOD toward us.

Let us keep ourselves in love with GOD, as the most beautiful Being, and the most bountiful Benefactor. Take heed of every thing, that would hinder the operations of this love. Let not the pleasures of a prosperous condition draw off your love from GOD, nor divert it to lying vanities: nor let the sorrows of an afflicted condition cool your love towards GOD, nor occasion you to entertain any hard thoughts of him. The love of GOD is that fire on the altar, with which all our sacrifices must be kindled; let it not go out for want of being blown, and stirred up by pious and devout meditations on the grace of GOD, which are the fuel of pious and devout affections.

Let us keep our interest in the love of GOD, and beware of saying or doing any thing to forfeit it. Has GOD graciously condescended to take you into covenant and communion with himself, be sure you keep his commandments, that you may abide in his love; and may not lose or lessen your interest in him. Carefully avoid sin, all appearances of it, and approaches to it, for fear of offending GOD, and incurring his displeasure. You are upon your good behaviour, see that you behave yourselves well, that no man take your crown. If you throw yourselves out of GOD's love, to whom will you betake yourselves? You have lost your best friend, have made him your enemy, and who then can befriend you? Be solicitous therefore to please God, and let it be the top of your ambition to be accepted of him. Keep in the way of your duty: keep close to holy ordinances, and live in brotherly love, then you keep yourselves in the love of GOD.

Keep ἑαυτὸς—*one another* in the love of GOD; so it may be read; watch over one another; edify one another; do all you can to prevent others from falling into sin, and to recover them from it; to provoke one another to love and to good works, and not to provoke one another's passions; let hand join in hand to promote every thing that is good, that you may strengthen and encourage one another in all the instances of holy love, and so may keep one another in the love of GOD. It was Cain who said, *Am I my brother's keeper.*

5. Lay hold on eternal life; it is set before you not only as the visible heavens to be looked upon, but as a prize to be run for, and fought for: it is offered to you;

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it may be your's upon very easy terms, it will be your's unless you put it away from you. Many a time you have had the offers of it made you, and now once more: give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you have through grace, made sure your title to it. Believe the reality of it; prefer it before all the delights of sense and time: consent to the conditions upon which it is offered: be willing to part with all for it: set your hearts upon it, and keep it always in your eye.

It is life, my brethren, it is the life of your souls, it is eternal life that you are urged to lay hold on. A life on the other side death; but a life that has no death on the other side it. Your present lives are dying lives, and so are the lives of all your friends; the lives of your ministers, you see are so: we cannot take any fast hold of this life, or of any of the enjoyments of it: place your happiness therefore in eternal life, seek and secure it there. Your ministers, who preached to you the words of that life, are one after another gone before you to the enjoyment of it: let their death do that which their life has not done, to draw your hearts upward, upward, toward GOD; forward, forward, toward heaven.

6. Let Jesus Christ be all in all to you. In every thing wherein you have to do with GOD, depend upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; and in all things let him have the pre-eminence with you. Remember, you are christians; but in vain are you called so, if you rest in mere natural religion, and relish not the truth, as it is in Jesus. If CHRIST be of no account with you, Christ will be of no effect to you; and then you are undone. If you leave CHRIST out of your religion, who is indeed the *alpha* and the *omega* of it, what comfort can you find in it? What benefit can you expect from it here or hereafter? If you look for that in yourselves, that righteousness, and that strength, which is to be had in CHRIST only, you must thank yourselves when the disappointment proves fatal. He who is sinking, if he embrace himself, perishes, but if he lays hold on the hand reached out to him, he may be helped. You are disciples of CHRIST, devoted to CHRIST, dependants on CHRIST, as therefore you have received him, so walk in him: you have need of him daily, make daily use of him. He is the true christian, in whom Christ is formed, and he the growing christian, who grows up into Christ in all things.

Your ministers were of St. Paul's spirit, to them to live was Christ, to preach CHRIST; nor did they desire to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let the same mind, therefore, be in you, and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Live upon the mercy of CHRIST; see yourselves lost without it; and cast yourselves upon it: let that be your stay, and stay yourselves upon it; let that be your comfort, and comfort yourselves with it. Be ready to your own dependance on CHRIST, and your obligations to him, CHRIST is a christian's all, and therefore, blessed be GOD for JESUS CHRIST. Let that be the burthen of every song.

Lastly, Live in the believing hopes and expecations of eternal life through the mercy of Christ. If by the grace of GOD, you have taken some care, some pains to make it sure, (I hope I speak to many who have done it,) take the comfort of it. Be still looking for the mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST to eternal life; and with patience wait for it. Let actual thoughts and expectations of eternal life, be the daily entertainment of your souls. Look upon it as real, as near, as your's; and please yourselves with the prospect of it. How often do our foolish idle fancies build us castles in the air, and please us with the imagination of things uncertain, unlikely, impossible! When at the same time, if we would set our faith on work, that would entertain us with the delightful contemplation of real bliss, which we shall very shortly be in the possession of; and which will so far exceed our present conceptions of it, that we need not fear, lest (as it is with the things of this world) the raised expectation of them, should be a drawback upon the enjoyment of them, and lessen the pleasure of it. But on the contrary, the more we converse with it in faith and hope, the better prepared we shall be for it, and the more will the capacities of the sanctified soul be enlarged to take in those joys. What! sirs, do we hope to be in heaven quickly, to be there eternally, and yet think so seldom of it, and please ourselves so little with the foresight of its glories, and the foretaste of its pleasures. Let us raise our expectations, for the things are neither doubtful, nor distant, nor despicable; but sure, and great, and very near: and the hope of them, if built on CHRIST, will not make us ashamed.

Let our hopes and expectations of eternal life, wean us from this world, and take our affections off from it. What an inconsiderable point is this earth, to one who has his conversation in heaven! How trifling are the things that are seen, that are temporal and transitory, to one who keeps his eye and heart on the things that are not seen, that are eternal. Let this hope purify us from all the pollutions of sin, and pacify all the tumults of our spirits, that we may be found of Christ in peace. Let it engage and quicken us to the utmost diligence in the service of GOD: it is sure worth while, to take pains in that work, which no less than eternal life will be the recompence of. Do we hope for the mercy of Christ? Let us then put on, as the elect of GOD, bowels of compassion, and upon all occasions shew mercy, as those who hope to find mercy. And since temporal death must be our passage to this eternal life, let our expectations of it not only take off the terror of death, but make it welcome to us. Why should we make any difficulty of putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, in order to our removal to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; rather let us hasten to meet with cheerfulness that messenger which will fetch us to life; though it come under the name of death; and all the days of our appointed time, continue waiting till it come, with reference to the burthens and troubles of this life, waiting with a holy patience; and yet, with reference to the joy set before us, (if I may so speak) with a holy impatience: *Why are his chariot-wheels so long a coming?* Let us have our eye to this eternal life, when we pray daily, *Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come.*

A concise

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A concise Account of the LIFE *of the* REV. MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS.

IF my information be right, his grandfather was a Frenchman, and was brought over into England by Sir Francis Leak, (whose descendants were Lords Deincourt, afterwards Earls of Scarsdale) who did honourably for him, because in France upon some occasion or other, he had been instrumental to safe his life.

Our Mr. Tallents was born in Nov. 1619, at a little town called Pelsley, not far off Chesterfield, in Derbyshire.

There is this remarkable concerning his family; that his parents, who were religious good people, both died when their children were very young; he, who was the eldest of six, was then but fourteen years of age; but of all those six children, not one died for above seventy years after: but (be it observed to the glory of GOD, as the orphans' GOD, whose providence takes up, when father and mother forsake) they all lived in reputation and comfort, were eminently religious, and considering what was left among them, wonderfully prospered in the world.

His father's eldest brother, whose name he bore, was a clergyman, and was a wise and tender father to these orphans; he was, first, Chaplain to my Lord Deincourt, and tutor to his sons, and was, afterwards, presented by him to a good living; this nephew of his, and another, he bred scholars. The other was Mr. Philip Tallents, a very worthy conformist in Lincolnshire, who died not long since, and an entire and close affection there was between the two brothers, notwithstanding the difference of their sentiments in some things.

His uncle sent him first to the free-school at Mansfield, afterwards to that of Newark, where he made such great progress in learning, that one of his masters sent his uncle word, "He was not a silver, but a golden talent."

He spoke sometimes of a sermon he heard, when he was very young, on these words, (Ps. 119. 113.) *I hate vain thoughts;* which much affected him, and gave him occasion to ask a good grandmother he had, "Whether the devil could know our thoughts?" And he was much satisfied when she told him, "*No,* GOD *only knoweth our thoughts.*"

When he was about sixteen years of age, he was sent to Cambridge by his uncle, and was entered first in Peter-House; but after some time he was removed thence, whilst he was under-graduate, to Magdalen College, to be sub-tutor to two or three sons of the Earl of Suffolk, who, we think, were successively Earls of Suffolk, and the third, the present Earl.

Soon after he came to Magdalen College, it pleased GOD to call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him. I find not any account of the work of GOD upon his heart, under his own hand, which were to be wished, nor can I recollect the steps of it, as he has sometimes related them to me. He sometimes said pleasantly to his friends, "When I began to be serious, I soon became a notorious Puritan; for which I bless GOD's holy name."

I have heard him speak of the strong temptations to infidelity, with which he was assaulted, and which, for some time, he grappled with; but by divine grace he got over them. It was an easy thing, he would say, to believe the Being of GOD, and his providence, and the principles of natural religion; but to believe that JESUS CHRIST, who was crucified at Jerusalem, is the Son of GOD, and my Redeemer and Saviour; and to rest upon him alone for righteousness and life, this is a hard thing. But this was it which he was all his days abundantly filled with, and more and more confirmed in, that *Christ is all in all.* There was nothing which he more frequently, nor more earnestly pressed in all his preaching, than this, as having himself experienced not only the comfort of it, but the power and efficacy of it to promote sanctification and a holy life. Christ is the life of our souls, and the foundation of all true religion: and yet if we look into the world, and much more into our own hearts, we shall find that we are least acquainted with him, and are easily drawn from him. We are apt to rest upon our own works, to trust in our own strength and righteousness. Nature in some sort teaches us to do many good things; and when we do amiss, to be sorry for it; and to ask pardon of GOD, because he is good and merciful; and thus we hope to be accepted of GOD, though we lay aside CHRIST, if not in words, yet in the actings of our souls and spirits, whereas we are made accepted only in the Beloved; and no pardon and salvation is to be had, but by JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God. To cleave to CHRIST alone and live by him, is both honourable, and pleasing to God, and makes us have high thoughts of forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with GOD: and without this, we are even fit to turn Quakers. He called it a golden saying of St. Austin, *In causâ duorum Hominum per quorum unum sub peccato venditi sumus, per alterum liberamur, tota consistit Christiano Religio,—the transaction of two men is the sum of the Christian religion, by one of whom we are sold under sin, by the other we are redeemed.* And quoted Damasus's creed for it, *In hujus morte & sanguine credimus emundatos nos,* &c.—*In whose death and blood we believe that we are cleansed.*

But to return. About the year 1642, he went to travel in France, and other foreign parts, as tutor to the Earl of Suffolk's sons, and I think was abroad with them above two years; and there he improved himself very much with the conversation of the learned men he met with; and was always very communicative of the observations he made. I have often heard him say, that what he saw abroad with his own eyes of the Popish religion, and what conferences he had with its advocates, added much to his conviction of the falsehood and wickedness of it, and confirmed him in the Protestant religion.

Upon his return from his travels, he was made Fellow of Magdalen College, by the interest of the Earl of Suffolk. Dr. Fuller, in his History of the University of Cambridge, says, That the mastership of that College is neither in the gift of the crown, nor the choice of the College, but at the disposal of the Earls of Suffolk, hereditary

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reditary patrons of that foundation. He afterwards became Senior Fellow, and President, or Vice-Master of the College. Having entered upon his Fellowship, he became an eminent tutor in the College, among many others, very many, Sir Robert Sawyer, afterwards Attorney General was his pupil, and Dr. Burton.

In the latter end of the year 1645, he began to preach in Cambridge. His first sermon (as I take it) was on Rom. 8. 31. *What shall we then say to these things?* in which he endeavoured to encourage others with the doctrine of CHRIST's mediation, which had been so great a support and comfort to him; over that sermon, as one who aimed to be an experimental preacher, he wrote those words of the Psalmist, when he had obtained the joy of GOD's salvation. *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* He preached often in the College Chapel, and at St. Mary's.

He was solemnly ordained to the ministry at London, Nov. 29, 1648, in the parish church of St. Mary Wolnoth, by the third classical presbytery in the province of London, being called (so the letters of his ordination run) to the work of the ministry in the University of Cambridge, as Fellow of Magdalen College there; he is therefore solemnly set apart to the office of a preaching presbyter, and work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands.

The University of Cambridge, being authorized by Queen Elizabeth to chuse every year twelve Doctors or Graduates, who should have power to preach in all parts of England or Ireland, without license from the Ordinaries, Mr. Tallents was chosen one of them, and was so empowered by an instrument under the university seal, bearing date Oct. 6, 1649.

In the year 1652, he left the University, and came to Shrewsbury to be minister of St. Mary's church. Being to come into the country, he refused to take his degree of Bachelor of Divinity (though I think he performed his exercises for it) because that might have been an occasion of his being forced to take place of many in the country, who were his seniors in the ministry.

Now he applied himself entirely to the work of the ministry, and laid out himself to do good to the souls of those who were committed to his charge. And though he had been near twenty years an academic, and intimately conversant with all sorts of learning, yet he preached as one who would seem to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified, studiously accommodating himself to the capacities of his hearers, and delivering to them the great things of GOD, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

He was much honoured and respected by all the ministers of those parts, and his judgment and advice sought and valued by many. The character Mr. Baxter gives of him in his Memoirs, is, "That he was a good scholar, a godly blameless divine, and that he was most eminent for extraordinary prudence, and moderation and peaceableness toward all;" and we know that this record is true; and that he was that just and righteous man whom Solomon describes, (Pro. 10. 31, 32.) *Whose mouth bringeth forth wisdom*, and whose *lips know what is acceptable*,—what is apposite.

Soon after he came to Shrewsbury, he married the daughter of ——— Clive of Walford, Esq. by whom he had one son, bred a scholar at Cambridge, but did not prove a comfort to him. Grace does not always run in the blood. Here there was no reason to fear it did not: but his days were not long in the land.

In the year 1656, there was a public dispute in the parish church of Ellesmere in Shropshire, between Mr. Porter (that eminent divine) minister of Whitchurch, and one Mr. Haggar, an Anabaptist, concerning Infant-Baptism, occasioned by a sermon Mr. Porter had preached on that subject at the lecture of Ellesmere: in which dispute, Mr. Tallents was pitched upon to be moderator. An account of that dispute was then printed, in which it appears, that as Mr. Porter abundantly confirmed the doctrine he had preached to the satisfaction of all indifferent persons, and plainly made out the right which the infant seed of believers have to baptism, and so did his part as a disputant, so Mr. Tallents did his as moderator, beginning and ending with prayer, and directing the progress of the dispute (which continued five hours) with prudence and candour, that is, like himself.

In the year 1658, his dear wife died, after she had lived with him but four or five years; thus is our mountain shaken many times, when we think it stands strong, and shall not be moved. He buried her in the same grave, in which he himself was buried fifty years after.

When the king was restored in the year 1660, he not only shewed an entire satisfaction in that resettlement of the government, after its foundations had been long out of course, and a sincere affection to the King, as the presbyterians throughout the kingdom did, but intimated likewise his readiness to conform as far he could with a good conscience, to the changes that were then made in the church. He therefore read (as I think I have been told) some parts of the liturgy at that time.

But when the act of uniformity took place on Bartholomew day, 1662, his conscience being dissatisfied with the terms of conformity thereby insisted on, he was necessitated to quit his place which was his livelihood, and (which was more grievous to him, and many others) his work and usefulness which were his life. He has sometimes observed, that before the wars the puritans generally made a shift to conform and come into the church, notwithstanding the hard usage they foresaw (by the trouble frequently given to those of that character) they were likely to meet with in it. To prevent which, for the future, two new barriers or fortifications were erected by the act of uniformity to keep them out; one was the declaration, "that it is unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the king:" and this fort they who erected it, about twenty-six years after were obliged to quit, as not tenable; for when they had broken through it, by joining with those who took up arms against King James, and setting the Prince of Orange upon the throne, they silently took away that declaration, both out of the uniformity act, and that of corporations, by an act in the first of King Willam and Queen Mary: trusting to the other as sufficient to answer their intention, which was the declaration of an unfeigned assent and consent to all, and every thing contained

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tained in the book entitled "The Book of Common Prayer," &c. (And the act of uniformity itself, is the first article in the contents of the book so entitled, and must therefore be unfeignedly consented to) which declaration still remains to many tender consciences such an objection against conformity as they cannot get over.

Mr. Tallents, as long as he lived, generally observed Bartholomew day every year, as a day of humiliation and prayer, either publicly, or in private, especially toward his latter end. "A day to bring to remembrance," so he used to call it. On this occasion, he sometimes called people wisely to consider the work of God; to consider the condition of those ministers who were then silenced, how they were hated, despised, and imprisoned, and what great hardships they and their families were reduced to: how sad it was with the people, who were deprived of those helps for their souls which they had greatly valued, and been edified by, and how they sat down at first as men astonished. "Consider," (said he) "that though men were the instruments of it, it was the work of God. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord? It is the Lord that hath covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud.* It was our Father, it was our dear Lord and Master who made this breach upon us. He did it righteously for our sins; the sins of us his ministers. It was not for our sins that men put us out, but it was for our sins that GOD put us out: who of us have not acknowledged this? It was for the sins of the good people who loved us, who did not profit as they might have done. It was for the sins of those who hated us, and were set against us, who desired to be rid of such preaching and praying, and said, *Prophesy not, therefore they shall not prophesy.* Yet we hope many of us got good by our sufferings, were purified by them, and our hearts made better by our sadness. GOD would shew us, that he can carry on his work another way, and multiply his people, even when they are in affliction; and make even the sufferings of his ministers, to turn to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ."

He sometimes observed with thankfulness the care GOD took of his ejected ones, how wonderfully he provided for them, so as to keep them alive, as the disciples who were sent out without purse or scrip: and yet when they were asked, *Lacked you any thing?* answered, *Nothing, Lord!* Especially, that they obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

One remark more I shall take notice of which he made upon the silencing of the ministers; "Lord," (said he) "what poor weak creatures are we; when some applaud this as an excellent deed, and yet others look upon it as a great sin."

But as he was truly conscientious in his non-conformity, and entirely satisfied in the reasons of it; so he was eminently moderate in it; and let his moderation be known unto all men: he loved all good people of every denomination, and took all occasions to witness against bigotry on all sides.

For the most part, he attended the public ministry, and the Liturgy both morning and afternoon, and preached only in the evening, and on the week days, as he had opportunity, and fell not into any constant stated work for some years (as I think) after he was silenced, waiting to see what GOD would do with him.

In the year 1670, he went to travel in France a second time, as tutor to two young gentlemen, Mr. Boscawen and Mr. Hambden, with whom he spent about two years and a half in making the complete tour of that kingdom and the parts adjacent. We find among his papers a very exact journal of all his motions and observations from the day he set out from London, to the day he returned. There we find him at Diep, Roan, Caen, Alenson, Angiers, Nantes, Saumur, Tours, Orleans, Thoulouse, Monpellier, Nismes, Marseilles, Thoulon, Lyons, Geneva, Bern, Basil, Zurich, Strasburgh, and at length at Paris: of these, and abundance of other places, he gives a very particular account, describing the rarities both of nature and art; their civil government, the churches, and religious houses; and especially an account of the protestants and their churches; the learned men in every place, and his conferences with them, and the informations he received from them; in recording which, there appears a great deal of care. Had he put his last hand to this journal, and published it then; I doubt not, but it would have been both an acceptable entertainment to the world, and a considerable reputation to him: but his great modesty concealed it, not only from the world, but from his intimate friends; for I know not of any to whom he communicated it: so far was he from the ostentation of a traveller; so little did he value himself upon these accomplishments, which many would have been proud of; and so much was he taken up with the better country, that is, the heavenly. Yet when there was occasion, he failed not to inform and entertain his friends with his observations he made when he was abroad. Mr. Boscawen one of the gentlemen that he travelled with, died at Strasburgh of the small pox, to his great grief.

While he was at Paris, where he continued some months, he wrote a pretty large treatise, giving a particular description of the roman catholic religion, by comparing their books which he carefully read, and their practice, which he carefully observed, with each other. He gives an account, 1. Of their doctrine and opinions, chiefly from the Council of Trent, which he gives an abstract of: also from the canon law, and the writings of their doctors. 2. Of their worship and ceremonies: which he gives an account of by their books, put out by order of their Popes, &c. of which the pontifical, ritual, breviary, and missal are the chief: also by their ordinary practice in public and private: their extraordinary devotions in processions, jubilees, confrairies, &c. and by their religious orders of men and women. 3. Of the means they use to support it, to confirm their own, win upon others, and overcome those who will not be won upon by them: and lastly, of the several sorts of religions, or religious orders among them. Of all which, he says, *Vidisse est Confutasse—The appearance itself is a sufficient confutation.* He adds some of his thoughts on that question. Whether those who are devout in the romish religion may be saved? and concludes their case highly dangerous, because they are

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are idolaters; but expresses himself with great tenderness and compassion, bearing them record that many of them have a zeal for GOD, though not according to knowledge. He shews in the close the folly and wickedness of those protestants who make light of popery, and think there is no great hurt in it.

This treatise is dedicated to the Reverend Mr. Samuel Hildersham, (son of Mr. Arthur Hildersham) to whom he was nephew by marriage.

At his return from his travels in the year 1673, he found the dissenters in England blessed with some breathing time from the extreme persecutions with which for so many years they had been harrassed, and their assemblies tolerated. This soon brought him back to Shrewsbury; for no employment, no entertainment was in his account comparable to that of preaching the gospel, for the honour of CHRIST, and the salvation of precious souls; when, therefore, a door of opportunity was opened for that, among the people he had formerly stood in the relation of a pastor to, he presently embraced it, though it was no way to his secular advantage, and though it broke him off very much from his conversation with scholars and great men. Herein he was a follower of the faith of Moses, who though he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians visited his brethren the children of Israel, and was content to take his lot with them.

Mr. John Bryan, (the son of Dr. Bryan of Coventry) was turned out from St. Chad's church Shrewsbury, and under his ministry the presbyterian dissenters there sat down, a pious man, and a good preacher. With him Mr. Tallents joined, and they divided the work between them: the congregation meeting in the house of that eminent christian, Mrs. Hunt, relict of Col. Hunt, member of parliament. Much good was now done in that place by the ministry of these two worthy men.

Mr. Tallents had formerly for the use of his pupils, drawn up a scheme of general chronology, which he had found of great use to them in reading history. This, having leisure for close study, now he was again settled in Shrewsbury, he set himself to enlarge, which he did to that degree of fulness and exactness, that it very well deserves the title under which it is known to the world. *A View of Universal History.* It cost him abundance of pains, more than can be imagined, to bring it to perfection, and to put it into that curious form in which it now appears: he was very exact in comparing his authors, and careful to avoid mistakes; every line there was the product of more study than perhaps some pages of another nature would be. He was very intent upon it, and applied himself to it with great industry. If any came to speak with him in his studying hours, he would desire them to dispatch their business in as few words as they could, that he might return to his business, which was his great delight, next to the immediate service of GOD, and the work of his ministry, which he always preferred. I remember with what affection he would bless GOD with his family, on a Lord's Day morning, that on that day we were to lay aside our studies and our books, and give ourselves to communion with GOD in holy joy and praise.

Those chronological tables which give that view of universal history, were finely engraven on sixteen copper plates in his own house, and published about the year 1684, made up either in books or maps. How well they were received, and how much they are and will be valued by the learned world, I need not say. Some of his friends were very urgent with him to publish them in Latin, for the benefit of foreigners, but he said he intended them chiefly for the benefit of the nobility and gentry of our own nation, that they might have things which lay dispersed, set before them in a clear and short view. It is certain there is nothing in them of partiality, or that looked designed to serve any party, but plain truth as far as it can be discovered.

I find among his papers many chronological disquisitions, and historical remarks; some seem to be drawn up in preparation for those tables, others for the illustration of them, but a vast deal of learning there is in them. That which encourages him to take pains herein was the exceeding great use and benefit of history; that it shews us God's ways and dealings with his church and people, and the nations of the world: it helps us to understand the prophecies of Scripture; and it raises us above that narrowness of spirit, which most are subject to, and keeps us from thinking that there is no religion but in our own way; besides, that it gives great light to all kinds of knowledge and learning. If he would have been prevailed with to publish annotations upon his tables, and such historical dissertations, as I find he had furnished himself with materials for, I doubt not but they would have been both very acceptable and very useful.

About the year 1683, the meetings in Shrewsbury were suppressed, and he was then forced again into obscurity; and durst not be seen there, for fear of the five mile act, which Mr. Bryan was brought into trouble upon. But in the year 1685, his dear wife going to Shrewsbury on some occasion, and dying suddenly there, he ventured thither to the last office of respect to her, which opportunity his enemies laid hold of, and it being just at the time of the Duke of Monmouth's attempt in the west, under pretence of that he was taken up, and sent prisoner to Chester Castle, but upon the defeat of that attempt he was enlarged, and retired to London, where he lived very privately. Solomon speaks of a time when a *man is hid*, such a man.

But at the coming out of the liberty for dissenters in 1687, he returned to Shrewsbury, and joined with Mr. Bryan in the ministry there; and burning and shining lights they were in that place. And now they confined not themselves to the evening of the Sabbath, as formerly; but some time after this revival of their liberty, they began to keep their meetings at the same time with the public worship, both parts of the day.

Upon occasion of that indulgence, he wrote for his own satisfaction, a pretty large tract, which we find among his papers concerning compelling people to the Christian religion, and punishing those who err in it. All agree, that those may be restrained and punished, who go against the light and law of nature, and disturb the civil government. But he undertakes to prove, that the magistrate

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gistrate is not to force Jews and heathens to embrace CHRIST's truth; nor those who err in matters of faith and worship, to own the right; nor to punish or destroy them if they will not: but that the same weapons are now to be used for the preserving and reforming of the church, which the apostles used for the planting of it; which were not carnal but spiritual; and yet mighty through God to pull down strong holds. He largely examines, not only the arguments, but the authorities on both sides, and concludes, that Christ builds his church by faith and love, not by craft, violence, and persecution.

When King William and Queen Mary were happily settled on the throne, and each side seemed to come to a good temper, to promote it, he published a small tract of two or three sheets, which he called "Sure and large foundations." The design of which was to promote catholic christianity, and catholic charity, as the only healing methods.

Some overtures being made in that reign towards a comprehension, some worthy gentlemen who greatly valued his judgment, sent for him up to London, to discourse with him concerning it; particularly concerning the re-ordaining of those who were ordained by presbyters. Upon mature deliberation, he declared, he could not for his part submit to it; and drew up his reasons at large, which we find among his papers.

He not only pleaded for, but earnestly pressed occasional conformity, as a token of the charity we have for those with whom we cannot statedly join, long before such a noise was made about it, with reference to offices: and it was his opinion, that as the dissenters, to shew their charity, ought occasionally to hear the church ministers, and join with them in their worship; so the church ministers ought occasionally to hear the dissenters, and join with them in their worship; supposing that if they understood one another better, they would love one another better, and be brought nearer together.

In October 1690, good Mrs. Hunt died, a great example in her place of serious piety, and all christian virtues; lively and unwearied in the exercises of devotion, abounding in every thing that was good, free and charitable, and very active to promote religion, and the power of godliness, without any regard to parties. Upon her death, the meeting removed to Mr. Tallents's house about one year, while they were building and fitting up a very decent place for the purpose, which they entered upon, Oct. 25, 1691, Mr. Tallents preaching the first sermon on Isa. 57. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.* He caused it to be written upon the walls of the meeting-place, that it was built, "not for a faction or a party; but for promoting repentance and faith, in communion with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Adding that Scripture with which the French churches usually begin their public worship, *Our help stands in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* He sometimes told his hearers, "If you come to be a people only differing from others in some opinions, but grow proud and carnal, and worldly and sensual, GOD will pull your place down; and let him pull it down."

He took all occasions to declare how much he hated from his heart the limiting of CHRIST's church to a particular opinion or party. We are far from thinking, said he, ourselves the only preachers, and condemning all others; as some do in effect, *Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?* (1 Kings 22. 24.) No, we rejoice that CHRIST is preached by many others: but we cannot think, there are so many good preachers, as that there is no need of us, or that we should be laid aside or forbidden; and therefore we say as Elihu, without reflecting on others, *We also will speak*; we will throw in our mite; for we are called to the work, and therefore will lay out what GOD has given us, since the ministration of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. He made it his great business to preach CHRIST, and faith in Christ, as the great principle of holiness, which he said, he feared many spoke of very dimly, and very coldly.

I cannot avoid taking notice here of a most impudent and malicious calumny, which the enemies of this good man cast upon him, "That he was a popish priest:" but if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, much more them of his household. When he was at London in the year 1686, it happened that a desk he had left at Shrewsbury was opened by mistake, in which, among other things, was a piece of an old white damask bed scolloped, and a plain pair of slippers, and a book, in which was entered the name of his pupils in Magdalen College: a malicious fellow that was there, reported, that "he saw in a desk of Mr. Tallents such vestments as priests say mass in, full of crosses and images, and I know not what, and a book in which were the names of such as were admitted into the order of Jesuits." When Mr. Tallents came down, and found this base slander industriously spread to his prejudice, he had the fellow before the Mayor, produced the things that were found in the desk, and so convicted him of falsehood and malice; but because he was a poor man, gave him no other trouble but that of a check from the mayor: yet there were those who would do all they could to support the slander; and one at length who happened to say it in the company of divers, again and again, "Tallents is a jesuit, and he hath read mass at St. Omer's, and I will prove it." There being full evidence of this man's speaking these words, Mr. Tallents was advised to bring an action against him; which he did, and it was tried at Shrewsbury assizes in 1693, and the man was cast; but he being poor, the jury brought in but fifty shillings damages.

In the year 1701, he buried his fourth wife, with whom he he had lived about fourteen years in much comfort; upon which he left off house-keeping, and went to be a tabler; but still having care of the poor families of many, when he had none of his own.

In the year 1704, he wrote his excellent History of Schism, for the promoting of christian moderation, and the communion of saints. He was in the eighty-fifth year of his age when he wrote that book, and as it is the product of a great deal of learning, so it is the result of a great deal of thought of a mind deeply tinctured with christian piety and charity, that found itself much aggrieved

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grieved to hear many, who may justly be thought to fear GOD, and work righteousness, anathematized, and condemned to the pit of hell for some mistakes (to say the worst) concerning church government and ceremonies. All the point that book aimed at the gaining of, was "It is possible a dissenter may be saved." A very modest postulatum, one would think, and easily granted to heathens and papists. But it seems, it might not be granted to the dissenters, at least, not without reluctance; for the book was answered by one *S. G.* with a great deal of passion and indignation, upon Mr. Dodwell's principles. Mr. Tallents, like a christian, a scholar, and a gentleman, answered it with fair reasoning, and abundance of candour and meekness. *S. G.* replied with more falsehood and bitterness than before, with the most base misrepresentations, and most scurrilous reflections that could be; some of Mr. Tallents' friends offered to expose and banter him, but he would by no means suffer it; and would himself have been at the pains mildly to shew him his mistakes, but that some of his friends reminded him of the old observation—"He that fights with a dunghill, though he be a conqueror, is sure to come off dirtied; and one worthy gentleman, who upon enquiry found out now who this *S. G.* was, sent Mr. Tallents an account of his character, adding, that it was one of the greatest honours ever done him, that he had once thought him worthy of his notice, and treated him with so much civility and respect, but that he would by no means have him trouble himself with him a second time. Answer not such a writer, according to his writing.

Let us now observe something concerning him, and his character and conversation, which may be of use to us.

1. In all his address and conversation, he was a great example of giving honour to whom honour was due, and love to whom love. To persons of rank and figure, he was in the highest degree respectful and complaisant, nor have I ever known any more observant of the rules of decency, nor with a better grace, which was a great ornament to his learning and piety. To his intimate friends, he was most affectionate and endearing; with what expressions of love he used to embrace them, and lay them in his bosom, how dear they were to him as his own soul, how he would be pleased and revived with the sight of them, and how naturally he cared for their state, must never be forgotten by those who were blessed with his friendship. To his inferiors he was remarkably condescending, would hear their complaints with great patience and tenderness, and with great freedom and familiarity, discourse with those who desired his advice in their affairs, relating to this world or the other.

2. In his old age, he retained the learning both of the school, and of the academy to admiration; and would readily repeat verbatim, observable passages of a great length out of the classic authors, as there was occasion for the entertainment of his friends. Those who would be thus rich when they are old, must take pains when they are young. He had something to communicate to those who conversed with him, concerning all sorts of learning, but history was his master-piece, and in that no man more ready. He sometimes advised young students to trace learning to its fountains, and though they read new books, yet to keep the old ones by them, and dwell most upon them.

3. He abounded very much in pious ejaculations, as one who had learned to *pray always, to pray without ceasing*, and to intermix prayer and praise not only with the slumbers of the night (which I have reason to think he did) but with the conversation of the day. When he was in serious talk with his friends, how often would he send his heart to heaven, and direct their's also that way, in such devout and holy breathings as these, "God look on us!" "God pity us!" When he heard that his friends he enquired after were in health and prosperity, with what seriousness and solemnity would he lift up his eyes and hands, and say, "God be praised!" If he heard of the afflictions of any of them, "GOD relieve them, refresh them, comfort them!" If of the falls of any, "GOD give them repentance!" If of the deaths of any, "*GOD fit us to die!*" When he sent his service unto his friends, he would usually add an ejaculatory prayer for them, "GOD do them good!" "The LORD refresh their souls with his love!" adding sometimes, "and my poor dry soul too!" As the slighty careless use of the expressions of prayer, as by-words, is an evidence of a vain mind, not possessed with a due reverence of GOD and his great name, and is really a profaning of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow to the LORD their GOD; so the serious and devout use of them, with the indications of a due attention and affection, is an evidence of the dominion of grace and holiness in the heart: and it is pity when the former is so much in use among the profane, his enemies who take his name in vain, the latter should be so little in use among professors, his friends, who desire to give unto him the glory due unto his name. Of this instance of devotion, Mr. Tallents was a great example.

4. He was very happy in counselling and advising his friends who applied themselves to him, according as their case and condition was, their temper, or their distemper. He knew how to speak a word in season to the weak; to the weary, to the wilful, to comfort with all tenderness, and yet to rebuke with all authority, and faithfulness: and how to express, at the same time, a just indication against a sin, and yet a due compassion for sinners.

He sometimes expressed his fear concerning many weak, melancholy christians, that they had tired themselves in the exercises of devotion; and would advise such to compose and quiet themselves, and keep their minds as calm and sedate as may be, and not aim to put them always upon the stretch. He would sometimes pleasantly say, "The quietest are the best christians." And certainly we must take heed of placing religion too much in the passions and pangs even of holy love, for we truly honour and enjoy GOD not only in the elevations of the soul toward him, but the repose of the soul in him. *Return to thy rest, O my soul,* and be *at home,* be *at ease* in GOD.

And as to the external performances of religion he sometimes said, "Let the work of GOD be done, and done well, but with as little noise as may be:" *The kingdom of God comes not with observation.*

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5. He was eminent for his charity; was charitable in his judgment, and censures of others, and made the best of every body: charitable in forgiving injuries, and passing by affronts; and charitable to the poor, ready, very ready to every good work; not only exciting the charity of others, but exerting his own, to his power, yea, and beyond his power; sparing from himself to supply others: he was as dead to the wealth of this world as most men I ever knew, knowing no good in it, but doing good with it. The little he left behind him (much of which too he left to the poor, having no children) is an evidence for him, (as it was for Calvin at Geneva) that he had no way of laying up what he had, but by laying it out in works of charity, which is the surest way of laying up θεμέλιον καλὸν,—*a good security*, pawn or pledge (so some understand it, 1 Tim. 6. 19.) *for the time to come*, and so *lay hold on eternal life*. He was particularly kind and charitable to strangers in distress, whom we must not be forgetful to entertain, (yet with prudence and caution) because though some thereby have entertained devils incarnate, yet others thereby have entertained angels unawares, Heb. 13. 2.

6. His preaching was very plain and familiar, but very affectionate, and that which manifestly came from the heart, and therefore was most likely to reach to the heart. He studied not words but things, remembering that of Minucius Felix, *Quo imperitior sermo, eo illustrior Ratio est,—The discourse would be lucid in proportion to its simplicity;* and that oftentimes there is most power and demonstration of the Spirit there where is least of the enticing words of man's wisdom. His explications were clear; his reasonings strong and convincing; and his quotations of Scripture, very pertinent, and sometimes surprising.

I find a sermon on Jer. 3. 4. *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father?* Which he begins thus, "My brethren, what shall I speak to you this day from the LORD, for your spiritual encouragement, and strengthening in the ways of the LORD? We meet together for this end, and we have gracious promises, that he will be with us to teach and strengthen us: I have it in my heart at this time, to tell you, that you are to look upon GOD as your Father, and to hold that fast in your hearts."

Another thus; "I would fain speak a good word today concerning JESUS CHRIST, for the good of you here present, and of my own soul."

Another thus; "What I have now to say, is that which has somewhat affected me in my own private thoughts; and I hope, may affect and work upon you for good, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He would often in his preaching, speak with application to himself. "This word is to me, O that it may reach my heart." He frequently intermixed pious ejaculations with his preaching, and sometimes recommended it to others; as that which was both proper to affect the hearers, and the way to fetch in divine grace for the making of what he said effectual.

In times of distress, and fear, and expectation, he comforted himself and his friends, not only with the doctrine of God's universal providence, (many of the heathen encouraged themselves with that) but he fetched his support chiefly from those principles which are purely christian, as most proper for us, and most powerful, *That we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour,* (Heb. 2. 9.) and, *that he nourisheth and cherisheth his Church*; and not only protects, but *guards it,* Eph. 5. 29.

He was very frequent and earnest in pressing the necessity of brotherly love among christians in the several instances of it, and reproving what is contrary to and destructive to it; love was the air he breathed in.

I remember once, when I came to visit him not long ago, he told me, he had been preaching the day before concerning the Holy Ghost, and had observed, among other things, that he thought it was a defect among us, that we only prayed for the Holy Spirit (as we are directed, Luke 11. 13. and did not pray, so much as we should to the Holy Spirit, for his gifts, and graces, and comforts, which we ought to do; for he is God, and therefore to be prayed to: and he mentioned the Litany for an example, *O God, the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon us.*

He earnestly pressed young ministers to preach CHRIST much, and the mystery of the gospel, wherein (says he) if I may judge of others by myself, we are generally so ignorant, and live so little by it; that enlightens, softens, humbles, sweetens the heart, and makes it truly fruitful and thankful.

He was much upon it in several sermons not long before he died, to shew, that CHRIST our Lord merited for us, not only in his death, though chiefly then, but also in the obedience of his life: both his life and his death, were exemplary to us, and meritorious for us.

7. I must observe; that he was in his judgment, much for extolling free-grace, and the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness to us for our justification, and the operation of the Spirit in us for our sanctification. A little before his death, he said that Scripture, Isa. 55. 1. *Without money, and without price,* had often been his comfort and support; "For" (said he) "I have nothing but a poor naked soul to bring to Christ." He also said sometimes, that we must take heed of resting too much upon our covenanting with GOD; for it is by his promises to us, that we partake of a divine nature, not by our's to him.

It was not long before his death that he wrote thus to me: I insert it both as a specimen of his letter to his friends, and an intimation of his sentiments in these things. "I send this by one that is a poor, melancholy, afflicted, grieved, but I think, a holy woman: I hope I got good by my discourse with her. Alas, we are generally secure and dull, and any that are awakened indeed, and under temptations, are useful to such. Lately reading Luther's life in Melchior Adamus, besides other things, I find an excellent passage concerning justification by faith, which sets the matter most lively before us. *Nemo pro nostris peccatis mortuus est nisi solus Jesus Christus Filius Dei; iterum iterumque dico solus et unus Jesus Dei Filius à peccatis nos redemit; et impossibile est ut Christum aliter quam sola fide amplectar, &c.—No one has died for our sins but Jesus Christ the Son of God; I repeat it, only Jesus Christ the Son of*

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of God has redeemed us from our sins; and I cannot receive Christ any other way than by reposing all confidence in him. And shall we join our sufferings or obedience to his? yet he died to purchase a holy people to himself, requires holiness in his, works it in them, by the ways he appoints; and through holiness which he makes necessary to salvation will bring them to it. Farewell, dear Sir, our God I trust will carry us on through faith to salvation. Let us pray for it in faith; go on, rejoice in the Lord: abound in his work: and pray for poor old dull me, that I may not be altogether useless, but may finish my short course with joy."

Take his sense of this with application to himself, as it is found in a paper written with his own hand. "I prayed much for the pardon of my sins, so great and many even to this day, for great mercies and forgivenesses; that righteousness may be imputed to me. Rom. 4. 11, 23. That I may be justified as holy Abraham was by a righteousness imputed; as holy David was, having my sins covered, that is, by Christ's atonement; as all the saints have been, not by their own works and righteousness (which is but rags) but by the righteousness of Christ wrought for us, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and be found in that. Let me live by that, and have peace with God by it: if others despise it, let me highly praise it: if others cast it away, let me live by that: if others speak against it, let me make my boast of it; let it be my joy, my crown, my life, my peace, my glorying, my all. Let his Spirit be imparted to me, to sanctify, to rule me; his righteousness be imputed to me; this is all my hope, that I may be found in the crowd, among the many thousands of God's people, (Numb. 10. 36.) whom he cares for and loves, though but among the least of them, a little member of that great body." Such as these were the constant breathings of his pious soul.

Let me add one thing upon this, that though he differed much from Mr. Baxter, concerning justification and other things, yet he highly valued that great man for his learning and piety, and the service he had done the Church by his practical writings, and often spoke of him with great respect and affection.

He took occasion sometimes to speak the hopes he had of the flourishing of the Christian Church in the latter days: that the Jews should be converted, the papal antichristian kingdom destroyed, and religion, in the power of it, should prevail; he grounded his hopes on the prophecies of the New Testament: "And," said he, "when GOD shall repair the breaches of his Church, and build it up greatly, the subtilties of the schools, and many canons of councils, and customs of old, will be laid aside, and a great simplicity in things of faith and worship, shall be owned and practised: no more conditions shall be made for communion of churches, than Christ makes for communion with him: and uniformity in smaller matters, shall not be made necessary to unity."

We have now nothing to do, but to give some account of the end of this good man's conversation. It pleased that GOD, in whose hand our times are, to lengthen or shorten as he pleases, to continue him long a burning and a shining light in his church; purely to his good providence it must be attributed, and not to any thing that appeared extraordinary either in his constitution or management of himself. Moses observed, that in his time, if men lived to be four-score years, even their strength was then commonly labour and sorrow: but here was one who went almost nine years beyond that, and yet his strength did not seem to be labour and sorrow, but he continued both cheerful and useful to the last, even in those evil days, of which men commonly say they have no pleasure in them; he had the pleasure of looking backward upon the grace of GOD bestowed upon him, and forward upon the glory of GOD prepared for him, and little of bodily pain and distemper to be an allay to his pleasure. Thus in his advanced years he continued to walk humbly with GOD in holy security and serenity of mind, and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed.

In the year 1699, Mr. Bryon, who had long been his fellow-labourer in Shrewsbury, finished his course with joy: thereupon Mr. James Owen of Oswestry was chosen to join with him in the work of the ministry there; but it pleased GOD to put an end to his most useful life and labours in April 1706. Upon his death they chose Dr. Benion, then minister at Broad-Oak, who came and settled among them that year, and was every way agreeable both to Mr. Tallents and to the people, but *Te tantum terris ostendunt Fata nec ultra esse sinunt*, he had soon finished his testimony, and was remanded (Mar. 4. 1707-8,) when he had been but a year and three quarters at Shrewsbury. He was very dear to Mr. Tallents, and as a son with the father, so did he serve with him in the gospel: and his death did accordingly go very near him, he scarce looked up with any cheerfulness after.

He had had a very little sickness; but as he grew into years, complained sometimes of faintness, and feebleness, and shortness of breathing, which obliged him to favour himself a little in his work: and if he had spent himself but in discourse with his friends, he found it requisite to retire and repose himself a little.

On Wednesday, Mar. 24, about a fortnight after the Doctor was buried, as he was washing him, and for ought appeared as well as he used to be, he fainted away of a sudden, and had fallen to the ground, if those about him had not been immediately aware of it and helped him. In a little time he came to himself, and the next day wrote a letter in his bed, made some alterations in his will, gave directions about his funeral, and then addressed himself to his dying work, with the holy cheerfulness that became so good a christian, as one who had nothing else to do but to die. Sometimes he intimated, that if it were the will of GOD, he could desire to live a little while to see the congregation well settled under another minister, and there was sometimes hope of his recovery, and that he might yet have been instrumental therein: but the wise GOD, whose judgments are a great deep, ordered otherwise, that he should leave them just at a time when they most needed him. Many a time after Dr. Benion's death, he prayed earnestly to GOD to provide good ministers for that congregation, which

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which lay so near his heart. And since his death, we have seen his prayers answered: but GOD will shew that he can do his own work without the agency even of those instruments that we think necessary, and depend most upon. He uses the service of many, but needs the service of none.

And though to abide in the flesh might well be thought, especially at that juncture, more profitable for them, yet he soon got over that difficulty, and left the care of the sheep to the great Shepherd, who when he has work to do will never want fit instruments to do it with. He therefore prayed, that if his work were done, he might be, by the grace of GOD, not only willing, but desirous to depart, and to be with CHRIST, which he knew to be far better.

He charged all about him, that they should not pray for his life; but that he might be enabled patiently to wait for his change.

When he came to himself, by GOD's blessing on the use of means, from that fainting fit, with which his illness began, he said to those about him, "Why did you not let a poor old man go away quietly?" He often expressed his repentance for sin, and his reliance on CHRIST alone; and some days before he died, he blessed GOD that he was more full of inward comfort and joy, than he was able to express.

He complained very little either of pain or sickness, but gradually decayed, and burnt lower and lower like a candle in the socket. He often prayed to GOD for a blessing on those about him, and said, "Here I lie waiting, waiting." After some time he began to think it long, that he had not his release, and to cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly:* but he knew God's time is the best, and therefore would wait with patience for it, for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie.

On Lord's day, Apr. 11, 1708, he said he would have those about him go to worship GOD in the solemn assembly, and would have only one to stay with him. That day he took more refreshment, and seemed to be more revived, than he had been of some time before. Divers savoury words dropped from him; and he continued very sensible, calling upon GOD, till about nine or ten o'clock that evening, when he sweetly slept in Jesus, and on that day of rest, entered into his everlasting rest. Praised be that GOD by whose grace he was enabled to finish well.

On Thursday following, (Apr. 15.) the dear remains were solemnly deposited in St. Mary's Church, and a sermon preached at his own meeting-place the same evening on that sad occasion, and many, very many did him honour at his death, as they did to Jehoiada (who died in a good old age) *because he had done good in Israel.*

A paper was found after his death, appointing what Epitaph should be inscribed on his grave-stone, and expressing the year of his life then current; intimating, that he did not expect to out-live that year.

Reliquiæ D. Francisci Tallents, Olim Col. Magd. Cant. Sen. Socij, Postea Concionatoris Publici in hâc Ecclesiâ ab Ann. 1652. *ad Aug.* 24, 1662. *Qui post varios Labores, expectans misericordiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi in vitam Æternam, tandem decessit Anno Ætatis suæ* 89. *Mense Die—*

The remains of D. F. Tallents, formerly Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, afterwards preacher in this church from 1652 *to Aug.* 24, 1662: *who, after various labours, expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life, died in the* 89*th year of his age.*

A SERMON *preached at the Funeral of* MR. SAMUEL LAWRENCE,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT NANTWICH IN CHESHIRE,
With a concise ACCOUNT of his LIFE.

PHIL. 2. 27.

Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

O That the occasion of our meeting here to day had been such, that this whole verse had been applicable to it! If when our Dear Brother, (whose remains we have just now laid in the silent grave) was sick, nigh unto death, God had heard our prayers, had seen our tears, had ordered the sun of life to go back, or rather the shadow of it, (for it is but a shadow) and had added to his days, as to Hezekiah's, and we had been met here to return thanks for his recovery, with what pleasure should I have applied this whole verse to such a joyful occasion; *For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and* spared him, and *not on him only, but on me also,* and on you likewise, and on many others, *lest we should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

But alas, this is not our case; it is not a song of praise that is this day put into our mouths, but a song of lamentation; nor is the case any longer within reach of prayer; while our friend was yet alive, we wept and made supplication, for we said, *Who can tell but God will yet be gracious to us, and he shall live.* We pleaded, *Shall Jonathan die,* 1 Sam. 14. 45. who has been instrumental of so much good to the souls of many, who is such a blessing to Israel, and likely to be more so, likely in a course of nature to be long so? But now he is dead, though we desire patiently to submit to the holy will of God, and to reconcile ourselves to this dark dispensation, acknowledging that God is just in this which he has brought upon us, yet we think we may have liberty to bemoan ourselves, under so sore a breach made upon our comforts; nay, we think it is our duty, when we

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sow such precious seed, sow it in corruption and dishonour, though we believe it shall be raised again in glory and incorruption, yet to bear it forth weeping, and to sow it in tears. If Jonathan be fallen, we cannot but say, *We are distressed for him,* for *very pleasant has he been unto us,* and therefore very painful must it needs be to have him thus suddenly rent from us, in the midst of his great usefulness.

We have occasion then at present to make use only of the last words of the verse, *Sorrow upon sorrow.* That which Paul dreaded, but it was by the mercy of God prevented, in the case of Epaphroditus, we feel, we have, I am sure I feel, I have *sorrow upon sorrow,* a complication, an addition of sorrows, which ought to be no surprise to us in this vale of tears, this lower region, where the clouds return after the rain, in a world where we are bid to expect tribulation, and to count upon it.

Our observation from the text, with application to the present sad occasion, though it be only implied, yet rises easily and naturally; if Epaphroditus had died, Paul, who was now already in great distress, by reason of his removal and distance from his friends at Philippi, would have had sorrow upon sorrow; the sorrow of burying one friend, upon the sorrow of being separated from many more; and therefore when such a one as Epaphroditus was, is removed from us by death, we have sorrow upon sorrow; that is, we have *great sorrow,* many sorrows included in this one; and sometimes Providence so orders the circumstances of this affliction, that it is to those who are nearly interested in the case (as Paul was in that of Epaphroditus) one sorrow added to another, like Job's messengers; as the waves of the sea; *Deep calling unto deep.* Broken with breach upon breach.

To accommodate this to our present purpose, we must consider who this Epaphroditus was, whose death would have been so great a grief to St. Paul. He was an Evangelist; not only in the larger signification of the word, a *preacher of the gospel,* a *bringer of good tidings,* but in its more peculiar sense, he was an assistant to the apostles in founding and planting churches; such was Timothy, Titus, Silas, and others, who were sometimes the apostles' companions and associates in their itinerant work, sometimes their substitutes and agents; whom they sent where they could not come, or left where they could not stay, to set in order the things that were wanting; to settle the churches which the apostles had planted under the conduct of their ordinary pastors and teachers, and then to leave them. This Epaphroditus is the same with that Epaphras, Col. 1. 7. who first preached the gospel at Colosse, and planted a church there; afterwards was for some time at Philippi, and watered the church there; and was now at Rome, sent thither by the Philippians on an errand to St. Paul, and sent back by St. Paul to them with this epistle.

Now we may look upon this good man,

1. As a dear friend of Paul's, and one whom he had a great love and value for. He calls him here, (v. 25.) His brother and companion in labour, and his fellow-soldier; and, (Col. 1. 7.) his Dear fellow-servant. St. Paul was the chief of the apostles, excelled them all in gifts and graces, and usefulness, was a Prime Minister of State in Christ's kingdom, yet see his humility; he accepts the help of Epaphroditus, who was every way his inferior, makes use of it, rejoices in it, and is afraid of being deprived of it; much more reason have we to acknowledge the need we have of our brethren's help, and to be thankful for it, to see the advantage we have by it for the strengthening of our hands, and the carrying on of our work, and to see what losers we are by their removal; nay we are ignorant of ourselves, if we esteem not others better than ourselves, and reckon not that we could be better spared.

Paul calls Epaphroditus his brother, for all we are brethren; all true christians, all faithful ministers are so, for they have all one and the same Father, and all belong to one and the same family. He calls him his *Companion in labour,* for he was engaged in the same work; and his *fellow-soldier,* for he was engaged in the same warfare; and the share he had with him in services and sufferings increased Paul's affection to him; if he be his fellow-servant, and be such a one as he should be, he is a *dear fellow-servant,* Paul's heart is upon him, and he loves him as his own soul. It becomes the servants of Jesus Christ, not only to love their Master, but to love their fellow-servants, to call them their *dear fellow-servants,* not jealous of their rivalship, or envious at their success, but taking pleasure in them and their prosperity. Fellow-soldiers who have ventured their lives together, should thereby have their hearts knit together. Epaphroditus was upon this account dear to Paul, who, therefore, could scarce bear the thoughts of parting with him.

2. As a faithful servant to the churches, whose care was not confined to one church, but was extended to many; he laid out himself to promote every thing that was good among christians; he is your messenger, one that you have employed, and put a confidence in, one that you have made your representative, that manages the affairs of your church so wisely, so well. Epaphroditus, as it should seem, was now sent by the Philippians to Rome to attend Paul, to see what he wanted, and to bring him some supplies which they had collected for him.

This was he who was *sick, nigh unto death,* and if he had died, it would have been an occasion of great sorrow to Paul, for though Paul was a man who had the command of his passions, yet he was not a stock or a stone, or a stoic void of passion; our Lord Jesus himself was not; because he loved Lazarus, he wept over his grave, John 11. 35, 36. and has warranted us to do so; and here we have occasion for it. Though we pretend not to compare our friends and fellow-servants *with,* yet we hope we may compare them *to* St. Paul's friends and fellow-servants; they walk (though not *passibus æquis—with equal steps*) in the same spirit, and in the same steps, and therefore we ought to be in like manner affected with their removal.

Doct. The death of faithful ministers is just cause for sorrow, and sometime especially it is so circumstanced, that it becomes sorrow upon sorrow.

I. The

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I. The death of faithful ministers is just cause for sorrow; parting with them is a very mournful thing, yea, though they have continued long in their usefulness, and some may think it is time they should go off to make room for others, yet in that case their death is to be lamented, as Elisha's was by the king of Israel, 2 Kings 13. 14. though he was then very old, and we had heard nothing of him a great while; and we must thus shew that we have esteemed them highly in love for their work's sake. Yea though they should die martyrs, and should themselves rejoice to be offered up, yet in that case, as in Stephen's, *devout men* will *make great lamentation for* them;[a] much more is it to be lamented when there is not that gain to the church by their deaths, and might long have been in all probability great gain to the church by their lives. It is justly reckoned an argument of great stupidity, if, when such men are taken away, we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. Observe,

1. Ministers, faithful ministers are subject to the stroke of death as well as others. They know themselves, and we know that they must certainly and shortly put off this their tabernacle; *Our fathers where are they? and the prophets do they live for ever?* We see they do not.

They are not exempted from death, for the treasure is put into earthen vessels; they also are formed out of the clay, though they are to us in God's stead, and they must return to their dust; they are indeed called the angels of the churches, such is the dignity of their office, but alas we find them mortal dying men; and when they are subject to like passions as others, it is not strange they are subject to like strokes as others; the law made men priests, and the gospel makes men ministers, who had infirmity, and therefore could not continue, could not continue long, by reason of death, which must be and will be where sin is.

Nay, they are exposed more than others; death is working in them, when life in you; their work wastes them, their sorrows wear them; and they gladly spend, and cannot but be spent for you. A wicked world is ready to say, Away with them, they are not worthy to live;[b] a gracious God says, Away with them, the ungrateful world is not worthy of them;[c] so that the point seems to be agreed, that good men must not live long in this world.

2. Death is the occasion of grief; ordinarily it is so; when man goes to his long home the mourners go about the streets. The house where death is, is called the house of mourning; it is so unless either those who are removed were, or those who are left behind are, void of natural affection. There was a great cry throughout Egypt, when there was not a house in which there was not one dead.[d] It is death reigning in this world as it does, that makes it a vale of tears, in heaven, and there only, where there is no more *death*, all tears are wiped away from men's eyes.

3. The death of good ministers ought to be in a special manner mourned for; this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, as much as any death. Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, were men that all Israel went into real mourning for. The death of ministers makes God's house a house of mourning, and sensibly affects those who are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it is a burthen; then the ways of Zion mourn, when the guides and overseers in those ways are removed; then her elders put on sackcloth, when those who were the ornaments of the elder's seat are removed.

(1.) It is matter of sorrow to the people; they were the messengers of the churches, God's messengers to them by the word; messengers of good tidings, whose feet upon that account were beautiful; they were their messengers to God by prayer, who many a time went to the throne of grace on their errands, spread their case before the Lord, and made intercession for them, and were helpers of their joy; they were interpreters; now the removal of such ought to be sadly lamented, because it breaks in upon the intercourse we have with heaven, the keeping up of which is so much our business, and so much our bliss in our present state.

When these messengers are called away by death, you ought to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep.

[1.] Because of the love which we hope you bare to them, that you may testify and express it. They loved you, and *travailed in birth again for you*, till they saw some good evidence of Christ's being formed in you; you know how they exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his children; how near their hearts your spiritual welfare lay, what a grief it was to them when any of you walked disorderly, and how much your well doing was their joy; you have perceived what a tender concern they have had for you, *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* What a fear they have been in concerning you, lest you should come short, lest you should seem to come short; many have been the proofs of their love to you, and it may be your own hearts tell you, that while they were with you, you gave them not the proofs you should have given them of your love to them, you were wanting in your duty; you did not attend on their ministry so constantly, nor attend to it so carefully as you should have done; your profiting did not appear, but the contrary, and this grieved the hearts of those who should have had joy of you; will you testify your love to them now they are gone, by bewailing the removal of them? Thus at length shew the value you had for them, and make up what has been wanting in the instances of your love to them. Let their deaths be lamented, to shew that their lives were desired.

[2.] Because of the loss which you know you have of them, and not you only, but others also; for their usefulness is extensive, and their lives a blessing to many. The loss of a faithful minister is a public loss; we are to reckon those our best friends who are our *soul's friends*, and therefore the loss of such friends, the greatest loss of that kind.

You here have lost one who long approved himself a skilful faithful friend to your souls; one who was excellently well qualified for the service of your faith, and the help and furtherance of your holiness and joy; he was one who knew how to divide the word of truth aright, and

[a] Acts 8. 2. [b] Acts 22. 22. [c] Heb. 11. 38. [d] Ex. 12. 30.

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and to give each of you your portion of meat in due season. He was one, who to my knowledge, in his youth, laid in a good stock of useful learning, and which is more, knew how to make use of it. He was a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and could bring out of his treasury things new and old, for the improvement of the most grown Christians, and yet both in his preaching and in his conversation, knew how to condescend and accommodate himself to the capacity of the meanest, to feed the babes with milk, and the grown men with strong meat. He preached to you in a method, that you might see the truths you are to believe, and the duties you are to do in their order, and their reference to each other, which will render the one more intelligible, and the other more practicable. He preached to you in his conversation, which was of a piece with his doctrine; he was an example to the believers in every thing that is praiseworthy, and was both a burning and a shining light. That which he aimed at was your profit, as one who naturally cared for your state.

O that you would sorrow after a godly sort, would sorrow according to God, and with an eye to him for the death of one who was so much your helper in the things of God; that you would sorrow for the loss your poor children sustain by his death, the lambs of your flock, whom he fed with food convenient for them; in his public catechising. I trust there are many of you to whom he was, through grace, a spiritual father, who by his ministry were brought savingly to Christ; such have reason to lament the taking away of one quite out of their reach with whom they might have consulted concerning their progress in the way to heaven, but whom they can now not only not hear, but not hear from. But especially, O that you would sorrow for your sins, your carelessness and unfruitfulness under his ministry, which has separated between you and your minister, and has provoked God to deprive you of such a privilege. All our tears should be turned into this channel.

(2.) It is matter of sorrow to us who are ministers; for they were our companions, our fellow servants, who laboured with us in the same work; our fellow soldiers, who exposed themselves with us in the same warfare. Though St. Paul had as little need of help as any minister ever had, though the Holy Ghost was given by his hands, so that if one was removed, he knew which way to expect the raising up of another, yet the death of a faithful minister was very much his sorrow; and much more reason there is why it should be our's.

[1.] We have cause for it. Our hands are this day weak through our own infirmities, and they are weakened by such providences, so that the work is either not done, or not so well done; we are disheartened and discouraged, and drive heavily when thus our chariot wheels are taken off. We need help, we need such help, and at every turn shall find the want of it, and reflect with sorrow upon the withering of such a hand, as was so much our right hand.

Much is required to make an able minister of the New Testament, abundance of gifts and graces, study and experience, a good head, and a good heart; it is long ere a minister grows up to maturity, the choicest fruits ripen slowly; many hopeful buds and blossoms are blasted, and those that promised fair disappoint us, and never bring forth fruit to perfection; many are plucked off by death, while they are yet in the blossom, they come forth like a flower, and are cut down in the beginning of their usefulness; and therefore to be deprived of such a one as we have now lost, who was beginning, and but beginning to be an elder in age, as well as an elder in office, who was grown by observation and experience fit to be a father to the sons of the prophets, and a very wise and tender one he was, and thereby to strengthen the hands of his brethren, who was a great example of humility, consideration, and conscientiousness, *this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation*, especially when (according to the reason there given) among all the branches of our vine there are so few that are *strong rods* for *sceptres to rule*.

Let the priests the Lord's ministers mourn between the temple and the altar, for there, in the courts of the Lord's house they will find a loss of him who was so good a helper with them in the service of the tabernacle. We have lost one who laboured in the word and doctrine, and ought therefore to be accounted worthy of double honour, of honour while he lived, the honour of being beloved; and of honour at his death, the honour of being lamented.

[2.] It will do us good. It will be for our spiritual benefit, not only to admit but to enforce the impressions of sorrow upon this occasion. By the sadness arising from this stroke of divine providence, our hearts and our lives may be made better, and we may have reason to say, *It was good for us to go to such a house of mourning*, though it is bad for us that such houses of mourning are made among us. That which makes so much against us, if we be duly affected with it, may by the grace of God be made to work for us; *out of the eater may come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness:* we whose business it is to teach others to improve such providences, are ourselves inexcusable, if we do not lay them to heart, as the living are concerned to do.

If we sorrow aright for the death of our brethren, it will help to fix upon our minds that seriousness which is so necessary to every Christian, and, especially, to a minister, and to mortify that lightness and airiness which very much unfits for the employments and enjoyments of the spiritual and divine life. This sadness will help to compose our vain minds, and dispose them for serious work, and to preserve that decorum upon our whole behaviour which becomes our profession, and will contribute so much to the great ends of it. That really does us good which helps to make us grave and sober-minded, and our spirits are wretchedly dissipated, if this will not do it.

It will stir us up to double our diligence in our Master's work; do we grieve for the loss of them who are removed? Let us endeavour in some measure to make up the loss by laying out ourselves so much the more in the service of Christ, and the souls of men; let us pray better, and preach better, and live better, that we may each of us do something toward filling up the gap. In two scriptures we find the consideration of this, that death

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death is a period to the usefulness of good men in this world, urged as an argument with the survivors to abound so much the more in honouring God, one is Ps. 115. 17, 18. *The dead praise not the Lord,* as they did while they were alive; *neither any that go down into silence.* Praying, praising, preaching lips are closed in the grave, but we will bless the Lord, because they cannot do it, we will do it the more fervently, the more constantly, and will endeavour that it may be done by a seed, by a succession of saints, when we also are gone, from this time forth and for evermore. The other is in Hezekiah's writing, Isa. 38. 18, 19. *The grave cannot praise thee,* as the pulpit does, *death cannot celebrate thee,* nor the congregation of the dead, as the assembly of God's Israel does; and therefore *the living, the living they shall praise thee,* with so much the more life and liveliness; and that the work may not sink and die in our hands, *the fathers to the children shall make known thy truth,* that they may be praising God on earth, when we are praising him in heaven.

It will put us in mind of our latter end, of the period that will then be put to our work, and the account that must then be given up of it. They are gone and we are going, and we know not whose turn it will be to go next; probably our's who were nearest in age, who, therefore, are the more concerned to take the alarm. When our fathers are removed in a full age, we are perhaps tempted to think it will be many years before it comes to our turn to be gathered to them, and so to think of death as a thing at a distance; but when our brethren are removed, those who were brought up with us, and are of the same standing, we are bid to think of dying, not only as certain, but as very near; *Behold the judge standeth before the door;* this forbids us to say in our hearts, *Our Lord delays his coming,* and speaks aloud in our ears, *The Lord is at hand.* Moses and Aaron are much of an age, there is but three years between them, and therefore when Aaron is dead, God puts Moses in mind of following him quickly: *Thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered,* Num. 27. 13. You commonly say to those who are but a very little younger than you, "When I die for age, you must quake for fear;" yet if you have made sure your interest in Christ, you will see cause not to quake for fear, but to sing for joy; but when those of the same age with us die, though not for age, it is a call to us to think of dying,—of dying shortly. Why may not our strength be weakened in the way, and our days shortened, as their's were; and the number of our months be cut off in the midst? O that this consideration might be so impressed upon us who are ministers, that we might by it be quickened and engaged to apply ourselves more closely and vigorously to our great business, that we may finish comfortably and well. Our blessed Lord stirred up himself with this consideration, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work.* The nearer our time draws to an end, the more concerned we are to fill it up with duty, and with that which will turn to a good account, that we may give up our account with joy. And if thus we sow in these tears, the harvest hereafter will be pleasant; if the good lessons which these providences teach us be taken out and well learned, we shall have reason to say, that *Sorrow is better than laughter;* and that our loss is not only their gain, but our gain too. Our dear brother *being dead, yet speaketh,* thus speaketh, "*Therefore be ye also ready,* and in order to that, be ye also busy, be always abounding in the Lord." We have no time to lose who have so much work to go through, and have lost so much time already. Let us not under colour of prolonging our lives indulge our ease, lest by so saving our lives we lose them; the more uncertain life is, the more need we have to spend it well, for that is the way to end it well; and *blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.*

II. Sometimes the death of faithful ministers is so circumstanced, that it is sorrow upon sorrow; that was the thing St. Paul dreaded in the death of Epaphroditus, and it is what we feel at this time. God renews his witnesses against us, and multiplies our wounds.

1. When many breaches of this kind are made upon us about the same time, then we have sorrow upon sorrow. Death is always reigning in every place, and every week brings in its bills of mortality, but we reckon it a sore and signal judgment, if an epidemical distemper makes the numbers of the dead in a little time more than usual; it is true the prophets do not live for ever, the labourers must be called out of the vineyard, when they shall have accomplished as a hireling their day. But when many are removed in a little time in the same country, and those most of them in the midst of their days, and usefulness, we must be very stupid, if we hear not the voice of God in it. I can name about * seventeen dissenting ministers here within our neighbourhood, and acquaintance, who have been removed in little more than seven years; many of them I have done this mournful office for, that I am now doing for this dear brother of mine, and of them all, only two that (as I think) were above 55 years old, and those two were considerably above 80, Mr. Tallents and Mr. Cope; six or seven I take to have been about 50, and the rest under 40. And is not this sorrow upon sorrow? Have not the deaths of our brethren in the ministry been brought us by Job's messengers? *While one is yet speaking, comes in another.*

And what shall we say to these things? What is this that God has done unto us? What is it that God would have us to do? What is it that he says to us by these repeated strokes of the same rod, what is the meaning of it? And what the mind of him who has appointed it?

(1.) God does hereby plainly reprove us for our former stupidity and senselessness, under the breaches of this kind that were made upon us; good men, good ministers have been taken from us, and we have not considered it, and laid it to heart as we ought to have done; and therefore God has proceeded in this controversy with us, for when he judges he will overcome, will

* Mr. Cope of Haslington, in 1704. Mr. Chorlton of Manchester, 1705. Mr. Latham of Wem, and Mr. Owen of Salop, Mr. Holland of Lostock, Mr. Long of Wrexam, in 1706. Mr. Tallents and Dr. Benion, both of Salop, and Mr. Jonathan Harvy of Chester, 1708. Mr. Low of Knutsford, and Mr. Evans of Oswestry, in 1709. Mr. Nailor of St. Ellens, 1710. Dr. Peyton of Stafford, Mr. Brian of Newcastle, Mr. Jenkin Thomas of Wrexam, and Mr. Eaton of Manchester, in 1711. and now Mr. Lawrence in 1712.

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humble the unhumbled. If the work be not done, and the point gained by one affliction, another may reasonably be expected. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see.* When one good minister has been taken away, perhaps we have been tempted to think, the matter is not great, there is *more than enough;* but God will make us know that we have none to spare, and that if we depend upon our numbers he can soon lessen them.

We have not been duly affected with the losses of this kind which other congregations have sustained, as if we were not concerned in them, nor were in danger of the like; as if our mountain stood so strong that it could not be moved, and we have thereby provoked God to come nearer us, and to make us feel the smart of that rod upon our own back, which we have not heard the voice of upon the back of others. It is a method God takes in other afflictions, those must be made to suffer, who will not be made to sympathise; for sooner or later, one way or other, God will be heard, he will be heeded.

(2.) God does hereby plainly warn us of judgments coming. We are to look upon it, as a sad token of his displeasure against us; nay, if we make not a right improvement of it, it is well if it prove not a bad omen of his departure from us. The removal of so many candles out of their places, is a step towards, and a threatening of the removal of the candlestick itself out of its place; which we have deserved, because we have *left our first love*, and have not *repented and done our first works.* God designs by these providences to awaken us out of our security, that we may not flatter ourselves with a conceit, that to-morrow will be as this day; and to stir us up to our duty, which is to prepare to meet our God; to stand in the gap which is hereby made, and make good the breach against the judgments which threaten by it to pour in upon us.

Hear ye the Lord's controversy, which he has with his people, and which *he will plead; Hear ye the Lord's voice,* crying to the city, to the country, and *see his name in it.* Why? How does it appear that God is contending with us? The prophet gives you an instance of it soon after, *The good man is perished out of the earth,* and *I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits*—stript of my glory. What is to be said at such a time? We must not only say as the prophet there, *Woe is me,* but as the Psalmist on the like occasion, *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, the faithful fail;* when we are bemoaning our losses, we must apply ourselves to him, who is alone able to make them up; when godly, faithful people cease and fail, it is high time to cry, *Help, Lord.*

Let the good impressions of such providences as these abide with us, and let them not wear off; we are apt to be affected with them for the present, but we soon forget them, and *settle upon our lees* again, as those, who having been at ease from our youth, are desirous still to be so; which makes it necessary, that God in his providence should be still emptying us from vessel to vessel, shifting hands with us, for otherwise *our taste remaineth in us, and our scent is not changed,* Jer. 48. 11. Let us take heed lest by returning to our former security; we provoke God to proceed in his controversy; but by daily prayers to God, let us endeavour to turn away his wrath, and by a continual good improvement of the many breaches of this kind that have been made upon us, let us stand between the living ministers and the dead, that this plague may be staid. *O lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left,* an earnest prayer that God would not make a full end, but would spare his people, and spare his ministers to them, according to the multitude of his mercies.

2. When we have this sorrow mingled with other sorrows; when grief for the death of our ministers is added to other grievances, so that there is a complication of griefs, then we have sorrow upon sorrow. This would have been Paul's case if Epaphroditus had died; he was now in sorrow, not so much for his own sufferings, he knew how to glory and rejoice in them, but because he was absent from the Philippians, and others of his friends who were dear to him, and wanted to know their state; and especially, because he saw a general decay of serious godliness among ministers and christians; *Some preach Christ of envy and strife, and all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's*; this was Paul's sorrow, and if now he had lost Epaphroditus, one who *preached Christ out of love* to him, and who *naturally cared for the state* of souls, it would have been sorrow upon sorrow; and this also is our case.

How far my own present grief which lies heavy upon me, beyond what I could have thought, directed my thoughts upon this sad occasion to this melancholy theme of sorrow upon sorrow, I shall not say, the heart best knows its own bitterness, and feels most from its own burthen; but upon many accounts of common concern, we may truly call this sorrow upon sorrow.

(1.) The abounding of atheism and infidelity, vice and prophaneness in our land is our sorrow; we behold the transgressors and are grieved; I am sure we ought to be so; to see them so numerous, so impudent; and rivers of tears should run down our eyes, because there are so few that keep God's law, and so many who break it. The general corruption of men's principles and manners, the abounding of impiety and immorality, and the inefficacy of the endeavours used for reformation, are matter of sorrow to all good people; righteous souls are vexed from day to day, as Lot's was with the filthy conversation of the unrighteous; and we hope there is a remnant who mourn in secret, and cover their faces for that wickedness which is committed openly, and goes barefaced; that sigh and cry for the abominations of the land; that blush before God for that wickedness for which they that are guilty of it will not blush before men. It is sad to see, and to hear how God's name is profaned, his law broken, his word vilified, his sabbath polluted, his creatures abused, how men wrong and abuse, how they *bite and devour one another.*

And if this be a sorrow, as certainly it is, the taking away of those from the midst of us, who were, in their places, God's witnesses against the wickedness of the wicked, who helped to put vice out of countenance, and to make iniquity stop her mouth; who, by the Spirit of the Lord, lifted up a standard against this enemy who

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comes in like a flood; the silencing of the faithful watchmen, who warned the wicked in God's name to turn from his wicked way, must needs be sorrow upon sorrow. Men of probity and sincerity could never be worse spared than now, when men speak vanity every one to his neighbour, and there are so few who can be confided in.

(2.) The decay of serious piety, among those who make a profession of it, is our sorrow; it may justly grieve us to see not only how iniquity abounds, but how the love of many waxed cold; love to their God, to their Bibles, to their brethren, devout affections ebb and abate: the *kindness of our youth* is forgotten, and that of *our espousals;* it is our sorrow, to see so little of the power of godliness among those who retain the form of it; to see family-worship neglected, sabbath-time trifled away, Bibles and good books seldom looked into, religious conference forgotten and quite laid aside, solemn assemblies indifferently attended, and the word preached carelessly heard; it is sad to see how little there is among us of the pious zeal and strictness of the good old puritans; how the things that remain are ready to die, and our works are not found filled up before God; but what a woeful deficiency there is of what should be, and a woeful degeneracy from what has been among professors.

And if this be a sorrow, surely it may well be reckoned sorrow upon sorrow, when those are taken away by death, in whom so much of serious piety was kept up, and by whose means we might hope to see it, through the grace of God in some measure revived. It adds to our grief, to see a family beheaded, and by that means broken up, and scattered, in which God's name was so constantly called upon, his word read and opened, and his praises sung; now when in so many houses the altar of the Lord is broken down, or gone to decay. When we have been bewailing the defection and backsliding of many who began in the Spirit, then to follow those to their graves, who not only, still held fast their integrity themselves, but we hoped might have been instrumental to reduce and recover those that were gone astray. This may well be called, sorrow upon sorrow.

(3.) The contempt cast upon the religious assemblies which we adhere to, and in which we think we have met with God, is our sorrow. It is made the character of those whom God has distinguishing favours in reserve for, that they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it is a burthen; and a great many solemn assemblies there are among us on which we have reason to say, God has put honour, that yet are loaded with reproach, and exceedingly filled with the scorning of those who are at ease. The assemblies of those who we know to be united by holy faith and love to Christ, and through him to his church, are reproached as by schism cut off from the Church, and therefore from Christ and the covenant, and the hope of salvation, for no other reason but because their ministers were ordained as Timothy was, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and not by a diocesan bishop. The assemblies of those who we know to be peaceable and quiet in the land are reproached without any colour of reason, like the assemblies of the primitive Christians, as factious, and seditious, and hurtful to kings and provinces. The masters of those assemblies, though we know them to be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, skilful in the word of righteousness, yet are reproached by many as unlearned and ignorant men. Many such as these are the reproaches of the solemn assemblies, which are our sorrow, because when thus, like Nazareth, they are put into an ill name, unthinking people are prejudiced against them, and are easily persuaded that no good thing can come out of them. There is a late reproach put upon our assemblies by the law, which makes it highly penal for one in any place of trust or power to be seen in them: and this reproach adds to our brethren; *Hear, O our God, for we are* suspected, *we are despised*, and both without cause; and this is our sorrow; we quarrel not with those who give us this hard treatment, we pray God to forgive them; but *as a sword in our bones* are these reproaches.

And now to have those taken away who were so much the glory of our assemblies, and helped to answer them who reproached us, and to put to silence their ignorance; to be stript of our ornaments now, of those whose good report of all men made them a credit to us, even our enemies themselves being judges, this is sorrow upon sorrow; for we know not what to say when we are asked, What will ye do now; where is your glory? But that, *our God* is still *our glory*, our *everlasting glory*.

(4.) The judgments of God that threaten our land, and the difficult trembling posture of the affairs of the protestant churches abroad are our sorrow; it grieves us to see the desolations of the sanctuary, to hear the groans of God's Israel in Egypt; by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small, and his interests neglected? The enemies of the reformed churches are many and mighty, and violent against them; their friends few and feeble, and cool toward them. It is our sorrow that there are such heats and ferments among ourselves; we have reason to fear the desolations which a kingdom divided against itself is threatened with: we are biting and devouring one another, widening matters in differenoe, and exasperating one another's spirits; *firebrands, arrows and death* are thrown about, and discord among other tares sown in God's field; all who wish well to the honour of Christ, and the interests of his kingdom among men, grieve to see it.

And is it not then sorrow upon sorrow, at this time to have one removed from us who was and would have been a peace-maker with God by his prayers, who stood in the gap as an intercessor, to turn away his wrath: who had an interest in heaven, and improved it for a sinful people, who was and would have been a peace-maker with men too, by his Christian temper and moderation, who studied the things which make for peace, who placed his religion in the essentials of it, and there spent his zeal? Now the dividing spirit so much prevails, it is sad to lose one who was of such a healing spirit. Now so many are bringing oil to our flames, which is our sorrow, it is sorrow upon sorrow to see the hand withered that was bringing water to them, and the earthen vessel broken that

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that held that water. It is ill with the patient, if, when his disease is at the height, those physicians are removed who best understood his case, and the method of his cure.

Let us now make some application of this;

1. See what this world is; it is a *vale of tears;* it is a *Bochim,* a place of *weepers,* and we must expect no other but a sorrowful passage through it. It is well if in Christ we have peace and joy, in the world we must have trouble and grief. In the upper world there is a perfect and perpetual serenity, it is all clear and calm there; but in these lower regions the clouds are still returning after the rain, and we must expect sorrow upon sorrow. Look which way we will, and we see the tears of the oppressed, some upon one account, and some upon another, and many times they have no comforter. We see families in tears, congregations in tears, churches, nations in tears; how melancholy is the state of human life! What a constant series of griefs are we attended with through this wilderness! The end of one trouble is commonly the beginning of another, *Deep calls unto deep.* Nay, troubles often come in company, and the beginning of one is the preface to another, and we are not to think it strange; it is what others have had experience of, and we have had notice of.

The larger our acquaintance is, and the more friends we have, the more happy we think ourselves, and we have cause to do so, what greater pleasure or comfort is there on earth, than an agreeable friendship? And yet the more we have of this comfort, the more sorrow we are exposed to; the more dear friends we have, the more we have to sympathise with, and the more we have to part with; if it adds something to our pleasure that we rejoice with those we love when they rejoice, it adds more to our pain, that by the same rule we weep with them when they weep; but considering how many more men's griefs are than their joys in this world, and that in both we must be partakers with our friends, we must conclude that by the increase of our friendships, our joys rise not in proportion to our griefs, unless that we conceive a secret pleasure in contributing something toward the comfort of our afflicted friends and their families, by our sincere and affectionate sympathy with them.

And is this world so full of sorrows, *sorrows upon sorrows?* We see it is; what is there in it then that should court either our love to it, or our stay in it? Why should our affections be set upon good things beneath, when we see them liable to so many sorrowful changes? Why should they not be set upon good things above, which though they may perhaps admit of an endless increase, yet know no change; nor are in any danger of being lost? Why should we be fond of a continuance here, where the longer we stay, the more sorrows we shall have to share in, and not rather covet to remove to that world, whence sorrow is for ever banished, where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and joy upon joy shall draw out the bliss parallel to the line of eternity itself.

2. Let one sorrow help to make another sorrow that comes with it the more tolerable, and to prepare and fit us for another that may come after it. As the more we do for God, the more we may do, one duty will fit us for another; so the more we bear from God, the more we may bear, and the better we may bear it; for *tribulation works patience.* Those who have not known sorrow, find it hard to be reconciled to it, and are apt to fret at it, and to double it by struggling with it; but those who have experienced sorrow upon sorrow, like their Master who was a *man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,* can converse familiarly with their afflictions, whereby not only the terror of them is taken off, but abundance of advantage is gained by them.

Let the frequent returns of our sorrows keep us from security, and keep up in us a lively expectation of trouble, that let it come ever so suddenly it may be no surprise to us. We must never say, surely this trouble will excuse us from another, or that now we have had our share; no, it is still less than what we deserve, and perhaps less than what we need; we should rather argue, have I had this sorrow? What good use shall I make of it, that by it I may be the better prepared for the next. If our sorrows wean us from the world, and loosen our hearts from it; if they make us serious and thoughtful of another world; if they endear Christ to us, and make him more precious, by giving us an experimental acquaintance with the powers and pleasures of his grace; then when sorrow comes upon sorrow we may bear them cheerfully; *Patience works experience,* and *experience a hope* that *makes not ashamed.*

And if we thus improve our sorrows, though as to the troubles themselves of this present time, we must remember that we are but girding on the harness, and must not boast as though the warfare were accomplished, and we had put it off, yet as to any real hurt or injury that the troubles can do us, we may boast as though we had put off the harness, for in all these things, not only we shall be, but we are already more than conquerors through him who loved us and died for us.

3. When God pursues one sorrow with another, let us follow the sorrow for affliction with a godly sorrow for sin, and that is a sorrow upon sorrow which will be an evidence for us that the affliction comes from love, is designed for our good, and does us the good that is designed us; and will prepare us for such a deliverance out of our affliction, as will be a mercy indeed to us.

When we sorrow for the death of our friends, particularly of our ministers, we should at the same time sorrow for our sins, by which we have provoked God thus to contend with us. We are therefore deprived of the comfort of our relations, because we have not done the duty of them, when, therefore, we lament the effect, we should lament the cause.

4. When we have sorrow upon sorrow upon the account of affliction, let us not by our own folly add any more sorrow to it; nor by the productions of the root of bitterness in our hearts, make the bitter cup to be more bitter to us than really it is. If, in any distress, we trespass yet more against the Lord, as that King Ahaz did, 2 Chr. 28. 22. we make the distress more than double. *Sin upon sorrow* will be worse than *sorrow upon sorrow;* and will be wormwood and gall in the affliction and misery.

Now

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Now you here have sorrow for the death of your minister. If you should grow cool to holy ordinances, as if your religion were buried with your minister, or as if no other minister could teach you, and shew you the way to Christ and heaven now he is gone; if this should be made use of as a pretence for your carelessness and lukewarmness in the service of God, that you have not the minister you have been used to, and so your hearts be hardened by the providence that should soften them, then it will indeed be sorrow upon sorrow. But I hope better things of you, my brethren, and that we shall yet have joy concerning you; that as those who have been so well taught, and so long under the inspection of such an overseer, you will continue your zeal in religion, and your love and unity among yourselves, and we may *hear of your affairs*, that *your conversation is as becomes the gospel*, and that *ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

5. Let us study to answer God's end in visiting us thus with sorrow upon sorrow, and accommodate ourselves to the intentions of these providences. By the sadness of our countenances on such occasions as these let our hearts be made better, every way better. Every rod has a voice, which we are concerned to hear, and understand the meaning of; every affliction is sent upon an errand, and he who sends the errand expects to have an answer; what answer will you return this day to this messenger? Or rather to God's call by it.

This sorrow is appointed us, this sorrow upon sorrow, to put us upon considering the uncertainty of the continuance of our opportunities; *Yet a little while is the light with you*; places have their time for enjoying the gospel which will come to an end, and then other places have their turn. Ministers are burning and shining lights, but it is only for a season that we rejoice in their light; which is a good reason why we should walk and work while we have the light, while it is yet called to-day, because the night comes, and before the night comes wherein no man can work.

It is designed to bring us off from looking at men, and instruments, as though by their own power they could do us service, or had done it; no, they are only the earthen vessels in which the treasure was deposited, and they are broke and thrown aside, to give us a sensible conviction, that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of them. We are thus taught to cease from man, from wise and good and useful men, whose breath at their best state is in their nostrils, and will not be there long; let our dependance therefore be not on them, but on Christ, who makes them that to us that they are; let us sit down with delight under the shadow, not of these gourds, that come up in a night, and perish in a night, but of that Rock of Ages that abides for ever. Let us not bind up our religion, and the comfort of it in our ministers, for God therefore shews us the end of their conversation among us, that we may cleave so much the closer to Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will be the same to the successors in the ministry, that he was to their predecessors, and make them the same to us, if it be not our own fault.

6. Let us be earnest with God in prayer that he would not proceed in his controversy with us, and that we may not have any more sorrow upon sorrow of this kind. Go forth to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and humble yourselves under his mighty hand, and pray and seek his face. He expects his praying people should now appear in the breach, to turn away his wrath; and justly *wonders* if at such a time there be *no intercessor;* and shall not each of us then be intercessors, as the prophet Ezekiel was when he fell upon his face, and cried with a loud voice, as one in earnest, *Ah, Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?* And as the prophet Amos was, when he prayed, *O Lord God, cease I beseech thee, by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small.*

O that by this providence we might be stirred up to pray more, and pray better, to pray more earnestly, as Christ himself did when he was in his agony. When we have lost a praying friend we are concerned the more to pray for ourselves. Pray that the light of God's countenance may shine upon us through these dark dispensations, and that whatever friends and helpers he takes away from us, he would not himself turn away from us, nor take away his mercy and his truth.

7. Even when we have sorrow upon sorrow, yet let us not sorrow as those who have no hope; but take hold of the comforts and encouragements which God hath provided for his own people, in their multiplied and most aggravated sorrows, that they may not be unmixed sorrows and unallayed. As the righteous have hope in their death, so have their friends also who are left behind in tears.

(1.) We have hope concerning him whom we have lost, that he is removed unspeakably to his own advantage, for to those to whom to live is Christ, to die is not only no loss, but great gain. This country has a mighty loss of him, but he has no loss of it, who is gone to the better country, that is, the heavenly, to better work, and better pleasures, and better friends. Those are safely and honourably lodged who are received into the mansions in our Father's house, those everlasting habitations; those who have a good repose, and sleep sweetly who sleep in Jesus. What honours here are comparable to their's, to whom our Lord Jesus says, *Well done, good and faithful servant;* or what pleasure comparable to their's who *enter into the joy of their Lord.* Let this yield us pleasing thoughts when we are afflicting ourselves for the loss of one we loved. We sorrow for the body, that that is lodged in a land of darkness and silence; but the soul is the man, and that is gone thither where its eyes are opened to an everlasting light, and its lips opened in songs of everlasting praise; and therefore if we loved him we would rejoice. He who so often complained of knowing but in part, and prophesying but in part, is now made perfect, and sees face to face.

(2.) We have hopes that God will do our souls good by this providence, that he will sanctify it to us, and make it a means of our sanctification; and that the impressions of it will not be soon lost, will never be quite lost.

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lost. You of this place and neighbourhood will, I hope, be quickened hereby to consider your latter end, and with the utmost diligence to prepare for it. You see, that in the midst of life we are in death, and that we are often obliged to remove hence upon very short warning. When you saw your minister last in the pulpit, and heard him discourse so excellently of the intercession of Christ, you little thought it was the last sermon you should hear him preach, and that within a few days you should see him laid in the dust; but so it proves; and God by it calls aloud to you, *Therefore be ye also ready*, be ye always ready, for you see that *at such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man comes.*

And as this providence will I hope, through grace, do you good, by quickening you to prepare for death, so I hope it may be of use to you to help you above the fear of death; those who are ready to die should be willing to die, and they have the more reason to be so, when they see their friends go cheerfully before them down into the darksome valley of the shadow of death, and even then fear no evil. Your ministers who while they lived, shewed you the way to heaven through the paths of life, when they die shew you the way thither through the regions of death, and go before you through that Jordan, as the priests did before Israel bearing the ark of the covenant. Be ye, therefore, followers of them, who are now *through faith and patience inheriting the promises.*

(3.) We have hope, that God will take care of the beheaded family, that is most sensibly touched by this breach. He was one who blessed his household, that was every way a blessing to it, and therefore his death is killing to it; we sorrow with them, and grieve for their loss; but we depend upon the word of God, that he will be a Husband to the widow, and a Father to the fatherless children; *Jehovah jireh—The Lord will provide;* and *in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen*, Gen. 22. 14.; the orphans who are left with him, shall not be left by him, not left comfortless, but he will come unto them, and take care of them; and let the widow trust in him, and she shall not be made ashamed of her hope. To the aged mother likewise, who has lived to see sorrow upon sorrow, God will be better than ten sons,—than ten such sons.

(4.) We have hope, that God will provide well for the congregation, and that that shall not be destitute and dispersed, as sheep having no shepherd, but they and their's shall still be led into the green pastures, and fed beside the still waters. You have been loving and respectful to your minister, and many of you have been his comfort and hope, and I trust will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord; and you have reason to expect that God will send you another faithful guide in the good ways of the Lord. I have reason to think he has a blessing in reserve for you, by which he will carry on his good work among you. St. Paul, when he was in prison, comforted himself with this, that though he was bound, the word of the Lord was not bound; and when faithful ministers are laid in their graves this may be our comfort, though they are buried, the word of the Lord is not buried. When you change your minister, you do not change your master; you shall have another preacher, but thanks be to God not another Bible, or another Gospel.

(5.) We have hope, that though we have parted with a dear friend in sorrow, with many such in sorrow upon sorrow, yet the day is coming when we shall meet again, shall meet with them all again in joy, in everlasting joy. The hope of this gives the strongest allay to our griefs. *If in this life only we had hope in Christ*, and were to fetch our reliefs in such cases as these, from within the confines of time, *we were of all men the most miserable;* but we have hope in Christ, that those who now sleep in him, he will shortly bring with him; and will bring us to meet them; we who remain and are left behind for a while, shall be brought to be companions with them in the kingdom, as we have been in the patience and tribulation of Jesus Christ. We *look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come*, and in the believing expectation thereof we comfort ourselves, and one another.

Now God calls to weeping and mourning, it is a comfort to us to see so many sad countenances and wet eyes in this solemn assembly, for thus we answer God's calls; but when God calls us to joy, into his joy, what a pleasant sight will it be to see the *general assembly and church of the first-born*, and ourselves in it, and not one weeping eye, or dejected countenance, or sorrowful spirit among all the holy myriads; there shall be no sorrow, nor any occasion for it; nay, there shall be everlasting joy, and everlasting cause for it. The streams ever running, because their springs ever full and overflowing.

Our assembly is now breaking up and scattering, and it is not likely that we should ever be all together again in this world; but this is our comfort, if we be found the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, we shall shortly be gathered together unto him, with all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect: and that assembly shall never be broken up or scattered; we shall meet and part no more. The best we can here hope for is, to go in and out with the sheep of Christ, and to find pasture; but if we can but get to heaven, we shall be pillars in the temple of our God, and shall go no more out. The Lord bring us all safe thither in due time; and in the mean time the Lord watch over us, *The Lord watch between us, when we are absent the one from the other.*[a]

[a] Gen. 31. 49.

A concise

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A concise Account of the LIFE *of* MR. SAMUEL LAWRENCE.

HE was born in *Wem*, a little market-town in Shropshire, and, as appears by the register, was baptised Nov. 5, 1661. He was the only son of Mr. William Lawrence, and Sarah his wife; his good mother is still living; his father was a very eminent christian, and much respected and valued by all good people who knew him. My father preached his funeral sermon at Wem, Feb. 26, 1694-5, on Luke 23. 28. *Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.* Whence he shewed, that when a good man dies, there is no reason we should weep for him, but there is reason we should weep for ourselves. Certainly (said he) this was a good man, and is manifest in the consciences of you all, and of all who knew him, that he was so; *Weep not for him* therefore, for his death is an out-let to all the evils of this world, and an in-let to all the happiness of the other world.

Looking over my father's notes of that sermon upon this occasion, it has so affected me, that I must beg the reader's pardon, if I insert the heads of it, the subject being so near a kin (though I little thought of it) to mine at the son's funeral.

" It is said of Abel, that *being dead he yet speaketh.* If our deceased friend and brother who is dead could be heard speaking, this is what he would say, " My dear wife and children, my dear brothers and sisters, and other relations, my dear neighbours and friends, *Weep not for me,* for you have something else to do with your tears, bestow them where they will turn to a better account, weep for yourselves. But why not for thee, dear husband, father, brother, friend, why not for thee? Did we not love thee? You did, and for that very reason, *weep not for me.*"

" I. For, consider the evils I am freed from. I had a sickly crazy body, especially toward my latter end, wearisome days and nights were appointed to me; what would I have given many a time for an hour's rest; but now all this is at an end; I shall be no more sick, no more pained, my head shall now ake no more. And are you sorry for this?"

" I had my share also of losses and crosses in my worldly affairs; I had one house burned over my head, and almost all that was in it, in a few minutes, and have had the care and trouble of building and furnishing another; but now farewell all such cares. And are you sorry for this?"

" You know, that as long as I was able, I was laborious in my particular calling, I never eat the bread of idleness, but of honest diligence: but now all that toil is over, I am got to bed, where I rest from my labours, from all my labours of that kind, never to return to them again. And will you grieve for this?"

" A great deal of pains I have taken in travelling and attending upon holy ordinances, on sabbath-days, on week-days, sometimes above and beyond strength; but I am now where I have communion with God at the spring head, without the conduit-pipes of ordinances. And will you grieve for this?"

" You, all of you have, and I doubt not but some of you feel a body of death, I am sure I did, and many a time it made me cry out. *O wretched man that I am!* You know what I mean, the corrupt nature, the carnal mind, the sin that dwells in us, a proneness to evil, a backwardness to good; but death has eased me of that burthen, when the breath went out of the body, that indwelling sin went out of the soul, when the house was pulled down, there was an end of the leprosy that was in the walls; what all the praying and hearing, the sabbaths and sacraments, the care and watchfulness of forty years would not do, death has done at one blow. *Weep not for me* then."

" I had daily grief in my heart for my own sins, for the sins of others, and for the afflictions of my friends, and for the troubles of the church of God, but now all tears, even those of godly sorrow, are wiped away from mine eyes; therefore let none be in your's upon my account."

" And lastly, the bitterness of death is past with me; I have shot the gulf, that last enemy, that son of Anak is vanquished, and I am triumphing. *O Death, where is thy sting!* And therefore, *weep not for me.*"

" II. But this is not all, If you consider the happiness, I am entered into that fair palace in which death was but a dark entry, you would not weep for me, but rejoice rather."

" Would you know where I am? I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansion prepared for me there. I am where I would be, where I have long and often desired to be; no longer on a stormy sea, but in a safe and quiet harbour; my working time is done, and I am resting; my sowing time is done, and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of harvest."

" Would you know how it is with me? I am made perfect in holiness; grace is swallowed up in glory; the top-stone of the building is brought forth."

" Would you know what I am doing? I see God, I see him as he is, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face; and the sight is transforming, it makes me like him. I am in the sweet enjoyment of my blessed Redeemer, my Head and Husband whom my soul loved, and for whose sake I was willing to part with all; I am here bathing myself at the spring-head of heavenly pleasures and joys unutterable, and therefore weep not for me. I am here keeping a perpetual sabbath, what that is, judge by your short sabbaths; I am here singing Hallelujah's incessantly to him who sits upon the throne, and rest not day or night from praising him."

" Would you know what company I have? Blessed company, better than the best on earth; here are holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; I am set down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, with blessed Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, and all the saints; and here I meet with

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with many of my old acquaintance, that I fasted and prayed with, who got before me hither."

"And, lastly, will you consider how long this is to continue; it is a garland that never withers; a crown of glory that fades not away; after millions of millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now; and therefore weep not for me."

"It is true, the body must turn to rottenness and putrefaction, the worms must feed sweetly upon it, but that also sleeps in Jesus: it still remains united to him, and shall shortly be raised again incorruptible, like the glorious body of Jesus Christ, more glorious than the noon-day sun."

"But though you have no reason to weep for him who is gone, you have abundant reason to weep for yourselves and for your children."

"Weep for your sins, the cause of this and all your other griefs; that is the right channel for your tears to run in. O that I knew what to say, to make sin bitter to you this day! Shall I tell you it kills your friends; it killed your Saviour; it threatens to kill your souls."

"Weep for your loss, the loss of a godly neighbour; a good member of your society, a praying member, and a profitable one; every way useful among you. I cannot say he loved your nation, and built you a synagogue; but he found you one when you needed one; his house was your synagogue, his doors, his heart were open to you."

"Weep for your children who are coming into a tempting troublesome world, and going abroad into it; weep for yourselves who are yet in the midst of it, cumbered, tempted, absent from the Lord."

"Weep for the evil to come upon yourselves and your children, which the taking away of such men is a threatening omen of."

"But is there not something else to be done besides weeping? There is: we must acknowledge the hand of God in the removal of such men; must be thankful to God that we had them so long; must search and try our ways and turn again to the Lord; weep and pray for ourselves and our children; weep and prepare to follow; weep and hope; and if thus we sow in tears, we shall shortly reap in joy; everlasting joy."

These were the heads of what my father enlarged upon in that sermon; and the reading of it affected me the more, because it was but the year after, that it became applicable to himself; and Mr. Tallents, when he preached my father's funeral sermon, made mention of Mr. William Lawrence's death, and spoke very respectfully of him.

But to return to our subject from which we too soon digressed; his father's elder brother was Mr. Edward Lawrence, an eminent minister in Shropshire first, and afterwards in London. A man of great integrity, and a substantial judicious preacher; who, to keep the peace of his conscience, left a good living, and threw himself, and his numerous family upon Divine Providence.

His book called *Christ's power over bodily diseases*, has been and will be of great use to many for their comfort in sickness, and their improvement of it. This nephew of his in many things resembled him much, and the comfort he had in him was the more valued by him, because of the great grief he had in some of his own children, which he let the world know something of in a book he published, called *Parents groans over wicked children*. He died in November 1695.

Having given this account of his family and relations, we come next to give some account of his childhood and youth, as we have it from those who then knew him. He was betimes inclined to learning, and was very mindless of the sports and toys that children usually are addicted to. When he was very little, his parents sent him to school, more to be out of the way of danger, than in expectation he would learn any thing; but before they were aware he had learned his letters, and by the year's end could read very well in his bible. So intent was he upon his book, that his parents would hire him to play for a while, but he would presently return to his book.

Much sooner than most children do, he entered upon his learning of the Latin tongue, at the Free School in Wem, under Mr. Roderick and his two ushers; at a time when that school flourished much. There he made such proficiency when he was very young, and advanced so fast, that his masters loved him, and others admired him. The time that most of his school-fellows spent in play, he spent in reading; and was so earnest in pursuing learning, and so careful to perform the exercises of the school, that he would scarce allow time to dress himself.

His master Mr. Roderick removing, and another coming in his place, who did not take so much pains, our young scholar complained to his parents, that he was not forwarded in learning as he had been, and therefore desired he might be removed to Newport, where there was at that time a flourishing school under Mr. Edwards; and he was so, and there improved very much in his learning.

His inclinations to piety were as early as his inclinations to learning; and he was not only free from the common follies and vanities of childhood and youth, but was forward to the exercises of devotion. He began betimes to pray in secret, and would be up early to redeem time for it. So much seriousness and conscientiousness appeared in him in his childhood, that some who knew him then would say, they thought he was sanctified from the womb.

After he had got what learning was to be got at Newport school, he spent some time under the inspection of my father at Broak Oak, and some with Mr. Tallents at Shrewsbury; and a considerable time he spent with some other hopeful young men under Mr. Malden at Alkinton near Whitchurch; where he improved himself very much in Greek and Hebrew. He continued there till Mr. Malden's death in June 1681.

Soon after that he was sent up to London, where after some little time spent with his uncle, he was put under the tuition of that famous instructor of youth, Mr. Charles Moreton, whose private academy at Newington Green flourished very much at that time, and was a nursery of many who have since done worthily, and been famous in their generation. There he went through a course

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course of university learning, and carried himself so as to gain the respects of all who observed him.

There he staid till the iniquity of the times forced Mr. Moreton to break up his academy, and to remove himself for safety and liberty to New England, as many such men were necessitated to do in the last age.

When he left Mr. Moreton, he was recommended to Mr. Singleton to be assistant to him in teaching a grammar school in Clerkenwell Close, and was very acceptable both to him, and to the relations of the young gentlemen who were his scholars.

After he had spent two or three years there, he was recommended to the Lady Irby, relict of Sir Anthony Irby, who lived in Dean's Yard in Westminster, to be her domestic chaplain; when she first saw him, he was so young, and looked so much younger than he was, that she asked, "What! Have they sent me a child for my chaplain?" But upon trial she soon found he was no child in understanding. A great deal of love and respect he gained by his prudent and pious carriage in that family. Upon his first coming thither, when some of his friends spoke with concern for him, how he would have courage, being young and modest, to go through his work, and were afraid he would be dashed; when, as often, there were persons of quality present at their family worship; he said it did not at all affect him, for "I have a greater presence to mind than their's."

While he was at my Lady Irby's, the liberty for dissenters commenced in 1687, and a door of opportunity was opened to them just twenty-five years after it was shut by the act of uniformity; and soon after the opening of it was legally confirmed upon the revolution. And it has been kept open twenty-five years, and blessed be God, no man has been able to shut it. Upon the setting up of the meetings publicly then, Mr. Lawrence began to preach, and frequently assisted Mr. Alsop, on sacrament days, and upon other occasions, his meeting lying very near to my Lady's; and his first performances in that work were very acceptable.

One thing I must here take notice of to his honour; (and it is the more so, that notwithstanding my great intimacy with him at London at that time, I do not remember ever to have known it till now, that I am acquainted with it by his surviving relations) his father had his house and goods burnt in that dreadful fire which consumed the whole town of Wem, in March 1676-7. The rebuilding and refurnishing of it was a great expence to him; notwithstanding which he brought up his son to learning, which the son had such a grateful sense of, that as soon as ever he came into a capacity of maintaining himself, and with a frugal management of sparing something, all he could spare before he married, he sent to his father, amounting at times to a very considerable sum. He was one who had learned according to the apostle's rule, *to shew piety at home*, and to *requite his parents*. Those who knew him well, have said they wanted words to express his respect to his parents and love to his relations.

In the year 1688, he came down into the country to see his relations, and a society of dissenters in and about Nantwich in Cheshire being then in quest of a minister, after several motions made to them had miscarried, desired Mr. Lawrence to come and spend a Lord's Day with them, which he did to their great and universal satisfaction; so that they unanimously chose him to be their minister; and after some time taken to consider of it, and consult his friends, he accepted it; but went first to London to take leave of his friends there. The Lady Irby was extremely loath to part with her chaplain, and was very angry with Mr. Baxter and my father for persuading him to go to Nantwich. But thither he came in September that year. In the beginning of November following he was publicly ordained to the ministry by a class of Lancashire ministers at Warrington; six more were ordained at the same time. Mr. Crompton preached, and Mr. Risely gave the exhortation. I remember the time by a good token, for when we were at Warrington, we received the news of the Prince of Orange's landing.

He is now settled at Nantwich, and some there will remember what manner of entering in he had among them; with what wisdom, industry, and zeal, he applied himself to his work, and how many precious souls he was instrumental of good to, what a free course the word of the Lord had there, and how it was glorified. His greatest encouragement there was at first; but he continued there to his death. Though if he had had bodily strength, and a voice proportionable to his other ministerial abilities, his friends would have removed him into a larger sphere of usefulness.

He preached constantly twice every Lord's-day, winter and summer, and read and expounded the Scriptures in order both parts of the day, the Old Testament in the morning, and the New in the afternoon; and catechised the children every Lord's-day, winter and summer, except sacrament days.

He constantly administered the Lord's Supper once a month with great solemnity and seriousness. The young people who were admitted to that ordinance, did, before the congregation, renew their baptismal covenant in that form which my father drew up, which is in his life, "I take God the Father to be my chief good and highest end; I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour; God the Holy Ghost to be my sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter. I take the word of God to be my rule in all my actions; and the people of God to be my people in all conditions; I do also give, devote, and dedicate my whole to God, all I am, all I have, and all I can do. And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever." And some he afterwards advised to write it over, and subscribe their names to it; which he said he would keep as a witness against them if they proved false to it. He lived to admit many to the Lord's Supper, whom he had himself baptised in their infancy.

He preached every Saturday about noon; it is the market-day; and so he gave an opportunity to the country people of spending an hour for their souls in the midst of their worldly business.

In baptising children, he generally received the child from the parent's own hand, and returned it to him again, with a solemn charge to bring it up in the fear of

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of God, and the faith of Christ; and frequently took occasion to declare that he did not baptize into a party, but into the Church of Christ.

He spent some time with the communicants on the Friday before every sacrament, to assist them in their preparation for that solemn ordinance; and was very ready to visit the sick and afflicted, and to assist the families of his friends in accommodating themselves to the providences of God that were concerning them.

He was a very solid, serious, judicious preacher; his discourses were generally short, but pithy and substantial, and well studied. His doctrine dropped as the dew, and distilled as the small rain; and he preached as one who truly aimed at the edification of those who heard him, and was in care to make them wiser and better.

When he began his ministry at Nantwich, that he might preach the more profitably, he resolved to preach in a method, that his hearers might see divine truths in their order and connexion with each other; he therefore entered upon a body of divinity, and preached it over largely, which took him up many years; when he had finished that, he preached over most, if not all of our Saviour's parables; after that went over many practical subjects, as the mortification of sin, living by faith, &c. And toward the latter end of his time, when most of those were dead who were his hearers, when he first came, and many young ones were grown up, he began to preach over a body of divinity a second time; but studied every sermon anew; nay, not so much as looking on his old notes, saying, he would not have his Master find him idle. He was in great care not to flag and grow remiss in his public performances; and would desire some of his hearers who were judicious, to tell him, if they observed any alteration for the worse in them.

He was one who loved his work, and his heart was in it. He was forward to embrace all opportunity of doing good. He frequently preached lectures on week-days in the country about; and funeral sermons many times gratis. He often preached when he laboured under bodily indispositions, which made the work very difficult, but would have served many a one for an excuse from it. When some advised him to consider his strength, and forbear preaching, he said, "I will use what strength I have in my Master's work, and do not desire to live a day longer than I may do him some service." It is not remembered that of all the time of his being at Nantwich, which was near twenty-four years, he was ever taken off from his work till the last sabbath of his life, by the sickness of which he died; and then, when he was so weak that he could scarce be helped out of his bed, he said he hoped through the goodness of God, he should be able to do his work the next sabbath, for, said he, "It is my delight;" but before that sabbath came, he was removed to better work.

Though he was thus diligent in all the parts of his work, yet he was so far from glorying in it, that he sometimes expressed himself thus: "O what reason have I to be humbled, that so much of my time runs waste, which I can give but little account of; and that I do no more in the service of God; but it is a comfort to me, that I do any thing."

Once being much fatigued with his work upon a Lord's-day, he lamentably said to those about him, "O how poorly do we serve and praise God, but it is a pleasure to think that we shall shortly do it better in heaven."

He was much concerned for the success of his ministry; and sometimes was dejected and cast down, because he saw not people so much affected with it, and wrought upon by it as he thought they had been formerly, though it was observed, that toward the latter end of his ministry, he grew rather more lively and affectionate in his performances.

The irregular walking of any of his hearers was a great grief to him, and went near his heart, and he would often sadly lament it in public, that the lives of many who are called Christians, are such a reproach to that worthy name by which they are called; and that the professors of this day came so far short of the strictness and seriousness of those he had formerly known.

He was faithful to those under his charge in giving private admonitions as there was occasion. He had an excellent faculty of giving reproof with authority and gravity, and yet with meekness and humility. He flattered none in any thing that was amiss, but where he thought it proper, freely told people of their faults, but therein governed himself according to the rule of that scripture, which I remember he preached an excellent sermon upon above twenty years ago, at a meeting of the Cheshire ministers, (2 Tim. 2. 24.) *The servants of the Lord must not strive.*

The tendency of his preaching was to bring people to Christ and Heaven; to Heaven as their end, and to Christ as their way. He said to one of the lambs of his flock, "Well, I hope you learn Christ, I preach Christ as plainly and well as I can;" he used this argument to persuade people to lay up their treasure in heaven, "If our treasure be on earth we are going from it, if it be in heaven we are going to it."

He discharged his duty as the master of a family, conscientiously and well; where he had a tent, God had an altar, on which the morning and evening lamb were duly offered; and with the burning of the incense in prayer and praise, the lamps were lighted in the reading and expounding of the scriptures; he was also constant in singing psalms with his family. The sermons he preached in public were repeated in his family, and a great deal of pains he took to teach his children and his household the way of the Lord, and to make religion and the service of God pleasant to them.

His whole conversation in the world was blameless and harmless, and without rebuke, and like Demetrius, he had a *good report of all men, and of the truth itself.* He was of a peaceable spirit, bearing and forgiving; and if sometimes a provocation ruffled him a little, he soon recovered himself with such a thought as this, "What have we grace for but to enable us to practise those duties which are most cross to flesh and blood."

He was a very good scholar, and very communicative of his knowledge, and delighted even from his youth

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in that communication which was good, and to the use of edifying. He was one of those wise men, who not only lay up knowledge, but use it aright, and whose lips feed many. He had a peculiar dexterity, which I have often admired in him, and been ready to envy him, in drawing on discourse with young scholars, that he might have opportunity of giving them instruction, which was always pertinent, and without affectation.

The year before he died he was providentially drawn in, as I may say, (partly by having a son of his own at home with him, after he had been some time at Glasgow, and partly to gratify two or three other very hopeful young men, who came and tabled near him in the town, for the benefit of his conversation) to read university learning, both philology and philosophy, and he not only took great delight in it, but made it to appear, as did the proficiency of those he read to, that he was well qualified for it, as I always thought him to be. And this made his death to be sorrow upon sorrow, that we lost one who was not only an excellent minister himself, but was just then beginning to be useful in training up ministers; and what he did he did gratis.

He constantly attended the meetings of the Cheshire ministers twice a year, and was much beloved and respected by them; was often chosen moderator, and his advice in any matter hearkened to as much as any one's.

In his non-conformity, he was considerate and conscientious, he was so far from being determined to it by custom and education, and from being prejudiced in its favour, that if he could have been satisfied with the lawfulness of conformity, he would gladly have conformed; and he was tempted to it by some good preferment offered him in the church, which would have been more than double or treble to his temporal advantage; he studied the point with the greatest impartiality imaginable, but he could not conform without wronging his conscience, and therefore chose rather to suffer than to sin. But in his non-conformity he always expressed himself with great moderation, and a truly Christian temper, and was very careful to preserve his hearers from heat and bigotry, and to possess them with principles of catholic charity.

He was much confirmed in his non-conformity, by the late act against occasional conformity; and though he did not use to meddle with such things in the pulpit, yet upon occasion of that act, preaching then in course of Christ's kingly office, he said, "That was it which the dissenters were bearing their testimony to;" and so it is; for they believe, that though the church has a judicial power to see that the institutions of Christ be observed, and kept pure and entire, like the power of the judges and justices in the state, yet a legislative power to decree rites and ceremonies, like that of the sovereign and parliament in the state, is the prerogative of our Lord Jesus: and that no man, or company of men in the world has any such power.

It was but the day before he fell ill of his last sickness, that he happened in discourse to fall upon the question of non-conformity, and he expressed his admiration and lamentation, (as the learned Dr. Whitby does in his Protestant Reconciler, which he referred to) that the peace of the Church should be broken by the imposition of that which the imposers themselves acknowledge not to be necessary, nor required by Christ or his apostles; and that the imposition should be continued with an inflexible resolution not to part with those indifferent things, which they cannot but own they might lawfully do, when it would put an end to that which they call a damnable schism, and so (in their judgment) prevent the everlasting ruin of thousands; "Surely," says he, "never were precious souls so undervalued."

Thus he stood fast in the christian liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free, and witnessed against impositions in the things of God, though his constancy herein was much to the prejudice of his secular interest; and he would sometimes say, "If our cause be not just and good, surely we are the greatest fools in the world." But yet in the things that are Cæsar's, no man pressed more the duty of subjects to the powers that God has set over them. He usually observed the 8th of March, the day of the Queen's accession to the crown, and took that occasion to preach of the mercy of government, and particularly of the government we are under, and to press people under it to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

The afflictions he met with he was careful to get good by; they are sent (so he wrote to a friend on occasion of a pressing trouble he was under) to soften a hard heart, to humble for sin, the procuring cause of them; to quicken us in our duty; to shew us the vanity of the world, to remind us of our own death, and quicken us to prepare for it; if sanctified they are wholesome to us; O that these ends may be attained; that our griefs may have this kindly work upon us; that one affliction may fit us for another.

He lived in a lively apprehension of death approaching; and kept up such a constant expectation of it, that sudden death was no surprise or terror to him. Nay, he sometimes pleased himself with this thought, that at death he should go to see and enjoy God, and to admire him in all his works of creation, providence, and especially redemption, which, said he "I shall then see in the light of eternity."

Many other things worthy of notice might be said of him, but I shall here add nothing more, only that he finished well. Though he had no strong constitution at all, yet he enjoyed a good state of health for the most part; on the Lord's Day, (April 13,) he preached on that branch of Christ's priestly office, *Seeing he ever lives making intercession;* and exerted himself with more than ordinary vigour and liveliness, so that some of his hearers took notice of it, and asked him when he had done, how he bore that day's work, little thinking it was his last.

The Wednesday following he sickened of a fever, which at first did not seem at all threatening; on the Lord's Day he said he hoped he should be able to preach by the next Lord's Day. He had very good advice and assistance, but that night the distemper seized his head, and he was sometimes delirious; but when he spoke what was foreign and incoherent, yet it shewed that his heart

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heart was in heaven; for in his deliriums he would pray, and sometimes in Latin.

When he had his understanding, he said, he had good hope through grace that he should go to heaven. And some of the last words he was heard to say were "I do not fear, I do not fear." He died the 9th day of his fever, on Thursday, April 24, 1712, about ten at night, in the 51st year of his age. He was buried in the chancel of Nantwich church the Monday following, and was followed to his grave by a great many true mourners.

He left behind him a sorrowful widow, and three sons by his first wife, and two daughters by his second, and a dear and tender mother, in the 80th year of her age. And many good friends he left behind in a vale of tears, but is himself gone to a world of everlasting joy.

A SERMON *preached at Haberdashers-Hall, July 13th, 1712, on occasion of the Death of the Rev.* RICHARD STRETTON, M.A.

WITH A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

2 COR. 8. 16.

But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

A Thanksgiving text may seem very improper for a funeral sermon; especially for one who was so useful in his generation; who lived justly respected, and dies justly lamented. I confess it would have been very seasonable upon this occasion to call you, for God by this and other the like providences calls us all, calls us aloud, (whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear) to weeping and to mourning; not for those who are gone to the regions of bliss and joy above, weep not for them, but for ourselves and for our children, that are left behind in these lower regions of sin and woe. Even when our Saviour said with an air of triumph, *Now I am no more in the world,* he said with an air of tenderness, *But these are in the world;* to teach us, though not to envy those who have got the victory, yet to pity ourselves, and one another, who are yet in the conflict. And such an instance of stupidity it is, that God is justly and highly displeased at it, if when righteous and merciful men perish, and are taken away from our world, we do not consider it, and lay it to heart; for though it is a good to come in the other world that they remove to, a promised good, it is an evil to come in this world that they remove from, a threatened evil, in the apprehension of which it becomes us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. The removal of good men may be looked upon as an ill omen; when they are commanded off who stood in the gap, we have reason to fear the breaking in of a deluge of judgments upon us; and God hereby gives fair warning to a careless world, to prepare accordingly. We know what followed the calling of Lot out of Sodom, and of Noah into the ark.

But it is our duty in every thing to give thanks; whatever the will of God's providence is, this is the will of his precept in Christ Jesus concerning us; and it is such a duty as will well consist with all the instances of holy gracious mourning—even when we sorrow for sin, our own and others, yet we must rejoice in God, and have our heart disposed to his praises. That mourning is either not from a right principle, or exceeds due bounds, and is the sorrow of the world, that puts us out of tune for thanksgiving.—When we are ever so much burthened with the sense of guilt, we ought to say, *But thanks be to God,* there is rest in Christ; when we mourn for our afflictions, we may say, *But thanks be to God,* we are out of hell; nay, and *thanks be to God* these afflictions are designed to further us in our way to heaven. The truth is, we never want matter for praise, if we did not want a heart; and our comfort in God would be more abundant, if we did abound more in thanksgiving to God. And, therefore, I hope, you will not think this text at all unsuitable to this solemn occasion. Holy Job in his griefs blessed the name of the Lord, who had graciously given that which he had now taken away, Job 1. 21.; and who, even in taking away he was sure neither did him any wrong, nor meant him any hurt. And our blessed Saviour, when he wept over the grave of Lazarus whom he loved, lifted up even his weeping eyes to heaven, and said, *Father, I thank thee,* John 11. 35, 41.

Upon such an occasion as this, the removal of good men, and good ministers by death, such as while they lived were blessings to the world, and instruments of good to us, we may find matter for praise and thanksgiving upon the account both of their present happiness, and their past usefulness.

1. We may look up, and give thanks to God for what they are. For those who sleep in Jesus, we have reason to sorrow not only not as those who have no hope, but as those who have much comfort and satisfaction, to be a balance and allay to the sorrow. We have lost a useful good man, you here have lost a faithful minister, I and many others have lost a faithful friend, but thanks be to God, our loss is his gain; for so death is to them to whom to live is Christ, it is great gain, quick gain, everlasting gain; it is his blessedness, for so death is to them who die in the Lord. He rests from his labours, from the toil both of services and sufferings: with the body all its burthens are put off, and the soul has obtained its discharge from that work-house, from that prison-house, is set at liberty, is at peace, is at rest, and its business is no longer as it was here its labour. The best employments of the best souls while they are here in the body, are their labours, like Adam's tilling the ground

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ground after he had sinned, in the sweat of his face; but the employments of holy souls in their separate state, are like Adam's dressing the garden in his innocent estate, which he did without labour, and with complete and constant pleasure. But that is not all; thanks be to God he not only rests from his labours, but his works follow him; now he is freed from the toil of them, he receives the reward of them. They who work in the Lord's vineyard, and there bear the burthen and heat of the day, when the evening comes, not only retire to their repose, but receive their penny. Poor Job puts both together when he speaks of the servant's earnest desire, both of the shadow, and of the reward of his work, Job 7. 2.

Look up therefore and see with an eye of faith that joy of our Lord, that fulness of joy into which this good and faithful servant is now entered, that glory, that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, with which he is now crowned; and then you will see reason to rejoice with him, and to glory with him, and to say, *Thanks be to God,* who has given him the victory. If we loved him we would rejoice, and bless God for the happy exchange he has made, because he is gone to the Father; and as Christ said, *My Father is greater than I,* that is, my state with my Father will far excel my present state in glory, so we may say of him and others who have fought the good fight, and finished their course, it is better with them where they are, than where they were.

It is more a matter of thanksgiving when the lives of good men, though still great blessings to others, yet are become through the decays and infirmities of age burthens to themselves, and their souls begin to grow weary of them; which was the case here. Though old age carries with it both dignity and opportunity, though the hoary head be a crown of glory, yet even when it is found in the way of righteousness, the days are called *evil days,* and the years such as a man has little *pleasure in*; when the *light is darkened,* the *clouds return after the rain,* the *keepers of the house tremble,* and the *strong men bow themselves,* then to *put off the earthly house of this tabernacle,* when it is thus gone out of repair, and remove to the *building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,* is a blessed exchange; thanks be to God that one we loved so well has made that exchange: you lately heard him groaning being burthened, but now he is triumphing in his release, now he is singing Hallelujahs to him who sits on the throne: you lately saw him even dragging the chain of life, compassed about with infirmities, and full of pains; but now he is eased, now he is comforted, now he is full of delights, and is made to drink of the river of divine pleasures: you lately saw him weak, and scarce able to set one foot before another, but now he is among those who mount up with wings like eagles, who run and are not weary, who walk and are not faint.

This is the more to be rejoiced in, because it is a satisfaction to the longings of a gracious soul; it is what has have often wished for, what it has been long waiting for; and the longer it has continued in the body, the more welcome will the release, the exchange be. It has often looked through the lattice, and cried, *Why are his chariot wheels so long a coming?* How then does it triumph now, as that good man did, "He is come, he is come;" Canaan was a pleasant land indeed to those who had been forty years wandering in a wilderness. Though hope deferred, hope of heaven deferred maketh the heart sick, yet when at length the desire comes, it is so much the more a tree of life. Now thanks be to God, for the happy removal of our Christian friends from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, from the remainders of sin to the perfection of holiness, from the toilsome and hazardous services of Christ's camp on earth, to the pleasant and glorious services of his court in heaven. And especially thanks be to God for the good hope we any of us have through grace that we shall be with them shortly, shall be for ever with them. And if we have this hope in us, let us purify ourselves as they are pure.

2. We may look back, and give thanks to God for what they were. And that is the matter of thanksgiving which the text leads us to, and which therefore I must enlarge upon.

When those who have been in their day and place useful to us, to others, to many, and serviceable to the glory of God, are removed, and we see the end of their conversation, one of the great duties required of us is to give thanks to God that ever we had such friends, that by his grace they were made blessings to us, and that they were continued to us so long. This is a duty we are apt to forget, when God in his providence has made breaches upon our comforts, and to think that our sorrow for the death of our dear relations will be our excuse for the omission; whereas if at such a time we would intermix thanksgivings for former mercies with our complaints of present losses, it would redound very much both to God's glory, and to our own comfort.

We have now parted with one who faithfully served his generation according to the will of God, that in the sphere wherein divine providence had placed him was long a burning and shining light; of whom it might be said as of Jehoida, (who for this reason had honour done him at his death) *that he had done good in Israel,* 2 Chro. 24. 16. Now thanks be to God for him, and for all that good which God wrought in and by him.

But there is something more particular which I had an eye to in the choice of the text on this occasion; all who knew good Mr. Stretton, know this of him, that he was a very zealous active man to promote works of charity; that he was very liberal himself, and industrious to excite and engage the liberality of others; he was one who devised liberal things, and laid out himself in them, who had cases of compassion much at heart, relating both to the souls and bodies of men, and with pleasure took pains to get suitable relief for them. This was the grace, this the service in which he was eminent, in which he excelled, and which made him a very great blessing to many. Now this is that for which Titus is here praised, that he was an active man among the Corinthians to press and promote a charitable collection and contribution that now was going round among the churches of the Gentiles, for the relief of the poor saints in Judea; who were at this time great sufferers both by the iniquity, and in the calamity of their country: or rather,

God

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God is here praised, who made Titus instrumental in that good work among the Corinthians; as others were in other places.

I. It is here mentioned to the praise of Titus, that he had in his heart an earnest care for the Corinthians, and for their well-doing.

II. It is mentioned to the praise of God, that he put into his heart an earnest care for them; and so made him a blessing to them.

Now these two will very much consist together, the praising of Titus, and the praising of God for Titus. There is a debt of honour owing to those whom God makes use of as the instruments of his providence or grace in kindness to us or others; *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* St. Paul was far from giving flattering titles to any, and yet in this chapter he calls the brethren who were employed in this service, *The messengers,* the apostles *of the churches, and the glory of Christ.* And often in his epistles he takes occasion to give a good character, and a good report of those who had done well. If the good report Demetrius has, be founded in truth, St. John also is ready to bear record, and to attest it. But this must not intrench upon the honour due to God only; the praise must pass through the instruments to God, and in him all must centre, as the apostle here takes care it should. *Thanks be to God, which put this earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*

I. It is mentioned to the praise of Titus, that he had in his heart an earnest care for the Corinthians.

Observe, what service he did, was from a principle within, from something in his heart; there is the treasure, there is the fountain, whence the words and actions are fetched, or rather flow; if that be well fixed, and well furnished, all is well done. What is said of the servants of men, is true of all the servants of Christ, when they do the will of God acceptably, when they do it from the heart, for then with good will they do service. It was St. Paul's comfort that he served God *with his spirit in the gospel of his Son.* Nor is any work of piety or charity properly a good work, unless it be a heart work; if I *give all my goods to feed the poor,* and have not *love* seated in my *heart,* it profits nothing.

It was a principle of care that actuated him in this service. The word Σπουδὴ signifies *a close application* and intention of mind to the business he was employed in, a concern to have it done well, fear lest there should be any mistake or miscarriage in it, diligence, industry, and expedition, in the prosecution of it. What Titus found to do for the glory of God, and the good of the souls of men, he did it with all his might, and made a business of it. We translate it an *earnest care,* his heart was upon, and he left no stone unturned to bring it to a good issue.

It was the same earnest care; some copies read it Τοιαύτην,—*such an earnest care,* so great, so active, so constant; such a care as you were witnesses of the fruit of. But most copies read Τὴν αὐτὴν σπουδὴν,—*the same earnest care;* he had the same care for them that he had for other churches to whom he was nearer related, and with whom he was better acquainted; or, he had the same care that St. Paul himself had, who therefore calls him his partner, v. 23.

Now in the care, the earnest care, that Titus had for the churches, we are to consider him both in general as a minister of the gospel, and in particular as an agent in the work of charity.

1. Let us consider him as an evangelist, for so Timothy, and he, and many others were; he was an assistant to the apostles, both in planting churches, and in watering those that were planted, in forming them, and setting in order the things that were wanting in them; not fixed to one place, for then we should not find him employed in the same work in so many places as we do; but like Paul, like Christ himself, he went about doing good, and he gave himself wholly to it; he did it with an earnest care both to do much good, and to do it well, and to do it effectually, and to good purpose. Paul commends Timothy, another evangelist, for this, that he did *naturally care for the state of souls,*[a] for the state of the churches; and Epaphroditus, another evangelist, for this, that he *longed after them all,*[b] and had *a great zeal for them.*[c] They were men who had their heart in their work, and laid the success of it near their hearts.

That which Titus is here commended for, is the *earnest care* he had for those of the church of Corinth, and for their spiritual welfare. And concerning this we may observe,

(1.) Though Titus was not under any particular obligation to the Corinthians, as their settled pastor, yet he had an earnest care for them, and they were very much influenced by his care, and were very observant of what he said to them. He did not ask, What are they to me? nor was he asked, What he had to do to concern himself about them. For our Saviour has taught us in the parable of the good Samaritan, that we must look upon him as our neighbour, whom we have opportunity of shewing kindness to, or receiving kindness from, without distinction of nations in the world, or congregations in the Church, further than prudential considerations, and the rules of good order may direct. God is no respecter of persons in his bounty, nor must we be so in our's. Titus has an earnest care in his heart to make himself a blessing wherever he comes, and such should we have; we must study to serve some good purpose in every place where providence casts our lot; which is the meaning of Solomon's similitude, *If the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall be,* and be of some use or other. The more extensive our usefulness is, the more it resembles his goodness whose tender mercies are over all his works. Wherever we see a human face, we may conclude there is a human soul, and if we can do any thing, we must have compassion upon it, and help it, remembering who it was that said, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Did we duly consider the worth of precious souls, we would have an earnest care for them. We should look upon those about us, though they be all of them strangers to us, as our fellow-creatures, and partakers of the same nature with us, as our fellow-christians, and partakers of the same grace with us, they are or may be so, and then remember that

[a] Phil. 2. 20. [b] Phil. 2. 26. [c] Col. 4. 13.

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our rule is, *As we have opportunity to do good to all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith.*

(2.) Though Titus had many to take care of, many churches that he visited and interested himself in the affairs of, yet his care for each of them was an earnest care. The stream of his pious concern run broad, and yet it run deep; he loved many, and yet he loved much; and herein he walked as he had blessed Paul for an example, who took upon him daily the care of all the churches, and yet had such a tender affection for particular believers, that if any one were weak, it weakened him, if any one were offended, it made him burn. The extensiveness of his care abated nothing of the earnestness of it. When Paul said, that he would gladly spend and be spent for the Corinthians, he immediately adds concerning Titus, that he *walked in the same spirit, walked in the same steps.*

Some are made remiss and careless by the greatness of their undertaking, they grasp at too much, and then think that will excuse them in their neglects; but the more Titus had to do, the more closely and vigorously he applied himself to it; that though he could not be in two places at once, yet he might do two days work in one by a double diligence. What a great deal of good work may a good man do in his place, if he go on in it with an earnest care, like that of Titus here; a care to time things aright, to improve opportunities, to do the work of God with as little noise as may be, and to avoid every thing that is foreign to our business, or diverting from it. We should have an earnest care to husband well the thoughts of our heart, and the minutes of our time, that neither of them be idled away, and suffered to run waste, and then what a great deal of good might we bring about. Though a wise man would not thrust himself into a hurry of business, nor have more irons in the fire than he can look after, yet a good man would covet a fulness of business, according as his capacity is, that whenever his Master comes, he may be found doing.

(3.) Though there were others who had the care of the Corinthians, and whose business it was to direct, exhort, and quicken them, yet Titus shewed the same care for them that they did; not that he would intrude into other men's office, or take their work out of their hands, but he would strengthen their hands, and carry on their work, would second what they said, and add thereto many like words. He saw there was need of all the help that might be for the furtherance of the gospel there, and all little enough, and therefore was willing to lend a hand: and he did it with so much humility and love, as made it a great encouragement, and no disparagement to those who were statedly employed in the service of their souls. It becomes ministers thus to be fellow-helpers in the work of God, to carry it on with united force, joining hands and hearts in it: and the industry of others should not supersede, but quicken our's; their activity should not be an excuse for our sloth, but rather a spur to our diligence. Others are busy, let not us be idle; though we have but two talents, though we have but one to trade with, if we be diligent and faithful, we shall have as sure a reward as those who are intrusted with five.

You here have lost a minister who had a care, an earnest care for souls, and for their welfare in both worlds.

[1.] His care began at the right end, for it was in the first place about his own soul, and the prosperity and salvation of that. This charity must begin at home. Paul's charge to Timothy is, *Take heed to thyself* first, that thou mayest *save thyself*, 1 Tim. 4. 16. and those are not likely to do any thing to purpose for the souls of others, who are regardless of their own, to shew others the way to heaven, who walk not in it themselves. In vain were we made keepers of the vineyards, if our own vineyards we have not kept. You are witnesses for him who is gone, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably he walked among you; that his conversation in the world was in simplicity and godly sincerity, with plainness and integrity, and as became an Israelite indeed, without guile; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, as one whose earnest care it was, and the top of his ambition to approve himself to God, and to be accepted of him. Of him his praise was, and not of men.

His concern for his own spiritual and eternal welfare, expressed itself very much when he saw the day approaching, in his earnest desire to make sure work for another world: after serious enquiries into the state of his own soul, he said with a pleasing earnestness, to one who found him musing, and it seemed to be the result of many thoughts, "Well, if we stand in a covenant relation to God as our's, all is safe and well." He often expressed the admiring sense he had of the free grace of God in Christ to his soul; ascribed all the glory of his comforts and hopes to that grace, and in a dependance upon that, enjoyed a holy security and serenity of mind. Though he still maintained a godly jealousy of himself, and a humble fear lest he should seem to come short, yet he finished joyfully with this word, and it was one of the last words he was heard to say, *I know, the Lord is my Rock, and my God.* The assurance of this was it that enabled him to bid death welcome, and even in that darksome valley to fear no evil. Those cannot sink who have the Lord for their rock, to stay themselves upon; those cannot but be happy, eternally happy, who have him for their God. And, can you say, my brethren, can you say upon good grounds, that the Lord is your Rock, and your God? Have you covenanted with him, and devoted yourselves to him, and do you make it your constant care and business to please him? Your ministers have souls to save as well as you, and upon the same terms; and they call you to build upon no other foundation, but what they build upon themselves; to venture in no other vessel, but what they themselves venture in, into another world. O that the comfort which those have found in their dying moments, who have by faith made the Lord their Rock, their God, might engage you all this day, to avouch him for yours, and now to commit your spirits into his hand, to be sanctified and ruled by the word and Spirit of his grace, and then you may cheerfully at death commit your spirits into his hand to be received into everlasting habitations, may do it with a triumphant

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a triumphant confidence, knowing whom you have believed, even one who is able to keep what you have committed to him against that day; if the Lord be your Rock, and your God, he will be so to death, through death, and beyond death, and you may glory in him.

[2.] He had an earnest care for that particular congregation which was under his charge; you here can witness for him that he had a concern for your souls, and greatly longed after you all, even *travailed in birth again to see Christ formed in you.* He had indeed *Curam Animarum—The cure of souls,* and did not make his charge a sinecure. You know how constant he was with you, how rarely he was absent from you, scarce one Lord's day in a year; how he was in his element when he was in your service, and how solicitous to do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. You know how he laboured among you, even when he laboured under the burthens of old age, and how lively he was in praying and preaching, even when in other things his natural force was so much abated. He had sometimes observed to his friends, that his work and his strength kept pace together; when he went into the pulpit he seemed to have fresh supplies of strength and vigour, and to forget his weakness: but when he had done his work he became as at other times; which, as it was an evidence that his heart was in his work, so it was an instance of the fulfilling of the promises, *As the day, so shall the strength be;* and *They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; shall still bring forth fruit in old age,* even when the *youths faint and are weary, to shew that the Lord is upright.* What other proofs he gave of his earnest care for your souls, in visiting you, conversing with you, and watching over you, you would do well to recollect, that now you have lost him, you may still be gainers by his labours of love among you.

[3.] He had an earnest care for other congregations, and for the progress and success of the work of God in them. He had an earnest care for many congregations in this city, for their supply, their order, and the preservation of peace and love in them. One instance that I must not omit is, the earnest care he took about the morning-lecture, every day, kept up a fortnight at a place, and then removing to another: he has been long (as I have heard) the principal person who has concerned himself about it, and been active in it, to put it into a method, and to direct the removals of it; wherein he has done good service to the interests of religion in your city; for I hope wherever it comes it brings a blessing along with it, and many souls have had cause to bless God for it. And I trust now he is gone, God will put the same earnest care into the heart of some or other for the keeping up of that good work, that it may not suffer damage by his removal. Nor did his care confine itself to this city, and the congregations here, but he had an earnest care for many places in the country, at a great distance, to see them well provided for, and ministers conveniently settled. And though, being indisposed to travel, he seldom went in person into the country, yet by letter and applications here in this centre, he shewed what *a conflict he had,* as Paul speaks, for many who never *saw his face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love.* He was always ready to advise young ministers, and assist them with his interest, many of whom therefore with good reason called him Father, and will bless God who put such a care into his heart for them. Thus he did good at a distance, thus he did lasting good, the fruit whereof remains; and such good, large souls will covet to do. Those who have opportunity of helping young people into the world, of helping them into business, and do it, do good service not only to their own, but to the next generation; much more do they so, who forward the best employment, wherein the honour of Christ, and the welfare of the souls of men is so nearly interested, and so help to preserve the best entail.

Let us now see what improvement we may make of this part of Titus's care as a minister, thus in some measure copied out.

1. It sets a good example before ministers, whose hearts should in like manner be full of earnest care about the work they have to do, and the great trust committed to them; and happy were it for the church, if they were all thus. The ministry requires an earnest care, so great and important is the undertaking, and so many the difficulties that are to be grappled with, and got over; nothing will be brought to pass in it by a loose, careless, desultory mind, that has got a habit of trifling.

Let those who enter upon the work of the ministry seriously examine themselves, whether they can and will take care, and take pains, for if not, they will have reason to fear lest the work suffer by falling into their hands. The Hebrew phrase for being consecrated, is, having *the hand filled:* those who are employed to minister in holy things, Exod. 28. 41. have their hands full of work, and therefore need to have their heads and hearts full of care. Let those who are engaged in this work, make a business of it, or they make nothing of it. Mr. Perkins took it for his motto, *Minister verbi es, hoc age—Remember this, thou art a minister of the word.* We must take heed to the ministry we have received, that we fulfil it; must be in care to pray well, and preach well, and live well, in care to find out profitable matter, and acceptable words, words upon the wheels; in care to find out the truth, to understand it ourselves, to deliver it aright, and accommodate it to the capacities of those we speak to, must be in care to give good instructions, to set good examples, and at all times speak and act with circumspection. There is need of an earnest care in watching over ourselves, and over the flock, that we may approve ourselves to our Master, may guard against the tempter, that none of the souls committed to our charge may perish, or if they do, that their blood may not be required at our hand. The charge we have received, the necessities and worth of souls, the shortness and uncertainty of our opportunities of service, the many eyes that are upon us, especially his who is all eye, and above all, the account we must shortly give to the chief Shepherd, forbid us to trifle, and oblige us to go on in our work with an earnest care.

2. It

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2. It lays an engagement upon people, who have been or are under the care, the earnest care of faithful ministers. You here have long been well taken care of, and well provided for, the dresser of your vineyard has, through grace, done his part, and now he is removed, suffer the word of exhortation.

(1.) Examine yourselves how you have improved under his care, his earnest care for you, and whether your profiting has appeared in any proportion to the opportunities you have enjoyed: whether your growth in knowledge and grace has been answerable to the care that has been taken of you, and the pains that has been taken with you. What are you the better for all the good sermons you have heard here, all the sacraments you have received, and all the helps you have had for your souls, in season and out of season? You have had among you an aged witness for Christ, and his truths and ways: to you *days have spoken*, and the *multitude of years* has been *teaching you wisdom*, wherein you have had advantages above most of your neighbours; and it may justly be expected, that you should be above others a solid, serious, judicious people: and is it so? Many times *three years* God has come among you *seeking fruit*, and what has he found? Seeking fruit in your closets and families, in your callings and converse, the fruits of righteousness, and have you not frustrated his expectations? With some perhaps when he *looked for grapes, behold wild grapes.* Consider now with yourselves, whether you were the joy of your minister that is gone, or his grief. Whether by your fruitfulness you recompensed his care of you, or by your loose and careless walking you ill requited him for it. Are any of you yet barren in this vineyard, yet cumbering the ground? O that you would be alarmed by the death of your minister! You are all strangers to me, but you are known to God. And O that his word, which is quick and powerful, might take hold of your consciences! While your minister was with you, he interceeded for you, as well as laboured with you, *Lord, let the* barren fig-tree *alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it*: and is it yet barren? Know then that the death of your minister is a call to you to bring forth fruit at length, and then all shall be well; but if his life and labours having been in vain, his death be so too, you will have the more to answer for when the day comes that you will be cut down. He is now gone to give up his account, let each of you think what account can he give of me? If he give up his account with grief, that will be, as the apostle speaks, *unprofitable for you.* But I hope there are those, there are many among you, in whom he saw the fruit of his labour, and his earnest care, whom he thanked God for, as they for him, and who will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. And what a joyful meeting will there be between him and them in that day.

(2.) If ministers have and should have such an earnest care for your souls, should not you much more have an earnest, a more earnest care for your own souls? You are nearest to yourselves, and this is one talent you are each of you intrusted with; you have a precious soul to take care of, and what care do you take of it? What provision do you make for it? For its present cure and comfort, and for its future bliss? What care do you take to secure it from the enemies and evils to which it is exposed, and to supply its necessities? This is the charge given to every one of you, *Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.*—Keep thy heart above all keepings. Be in care to get necessary food and clothing for your souls, rest and refuge for them, and a portion for them that will last as long as they must last. Commit the keeping of them to Jesus Christ, as those who are in care to have that done for them which none but he can do. The care your ministers have taken, and do take, for your souls, though they are accepted of God in it, if they be sincere, yet it will be no advantage to you, if you take not care for your own souls, nay, it will come into the account against you, as an aggravation of your carelessness.

(3.) If ministers must have this earnest care for the souls of those under their charge, surely parents and masters of families ought to have some care, to have an earnest care for the spiritual welfare of those under their charge, their children, their servants, to restrain them from that which would be to the prejudice and ruin of their souls, and to provide that for them which is necessary to their well-being. You are in care for their bodies, to provide what is fit for them, you would think yourselves worse than infidels if you did not; and are not their souls more precious, and is not provision for them more necessary? Nature has put into your hearts an earnest care for their temporal lives, O that grace might in like manner principle you with a concern for their spiritual lives! Be in care to teach them the knowledge of God, that they may not perish through ignorance, in care by the most proper methods to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts; in care to make good your undertaking for them when you presented them to baptism, which was to bring them up into the nurture and admonition of the Lord; in care that they may not perish through any default of yours. There are many who are forward to condemn ministers for their neglects, who therein do but condemn themselves; who are non-residents in their own houses, or are blind and dumb there in the things of God, and are in no care that they and their houses should serve the Lord. But you, I hope, are of those who look well to the ways of their household, as those who must give an account of that stewardship.

2. We now come to consider Titus as an active instrument at this time in a work of charity that was on foot; and though ordinarily it was not fit that they who gave themselves to the word and prayer should serve tables, and therefore the collection and distribution of the Church's alms was committed to the deacons, who, to speak in the language of the Old Testament, had care of *the outward business of the house of God*; yet in an extraordinary case the apostles themselves were employed in service of that kind. We read of relief sent to the brethren who were in Judea, sent to the elders or ministers of the respective congregations, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, Acts 11. 29, 30. and of a contribution made by them of Macedonia and Achaia,

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Achaia, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom. 15. 26. It was in the promoting and carrying on of this good work that Titus discovered this earnest care for the Corinthians.

(1.) It is easy to apprehend that herein he shewed an earnest care for the poor saints at Jerusalem, for whose use this collection was made, and a great concern for them, that they should be speedily and plentifully relieved, in their present distress; and they would have reason to say, *Thanks be to God, that put into the heart of Titus this care* for us, and our families, for otherwise we might have perished. Titus heard what straights they were reduced to, and as one who put his soul into their souls' stead, laid out himself to get supply for them. Though Titus was a Greek, and was never circumcised, as Timothy was, and upon that account the saints at Jerusalem (many of whom retained too great an affection for the ceremonial law) were perhaps cool towards him, yet he was active to do them service, as Paul also was, though he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and saw some reason to doubt whether the service he had for Jerusalem would be accepted of the saints there, for as our love, so our liberality, must not be confined to those who are just of our own sentiment and way, but in this instance as well as others, we must be governed by a catholic charity, and as we have opportunity must do good to all men, but must in a particular manner distribute to the necessities of saints. We may suppose that this relief being sent to the elders, was intended chiefly for their support, because the people were poor, and persecuted, and in many places but few, and could not maintain them; so that it seems to have been not only an act of charity to the poor, but an act of piety towards God, being intended for the support of the gospel, and the recompence of those who had suffered loss for Christ's sake; for they were the believing Hebrews who had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb. 10. 34. This was the good work that Titus had this earnest care to help forward.

And it was good work of this kind that our deceased friend and father did abound in, did abide in to the last. He was himself ready to every good work, and willing to communicate to his power, yea, and beyond his power; what he did himself in charity he concealed, as much as possible, from those about him, and was so far from boasting of it, that according to our Saviour's rule, his left hand knew not what his right hand did: and he was not only liberal, but he devised liberal things; and had projects for doing good; his head was still working that way, as one who looked not on his own things only, or chiefly, but on the things of others; of other's souls, of other's bodies. I have been told that it was very much by his influence and management, that the fund which is kept up by many of the well-disposed congregations in this city, for the assistance and encouragement of ministers in the country, whose congregations are poor, was first set on foot: and there are many in all parts of the kingdom whose loins, nay, whose souls bless him, and the many others, both ministers and people, who promote and supply it, and bless God for him and them. If a cup of cold water given to prophets, to disciples, in the name of disciples and prophets, shall in no wise lose its reward, what a full reward shall be given from the Lord our God to those by whose generous liberality families of prophets are helped with food for the body, and congregations of disciples with food for the soul. And I have had opportunity of observing (and I think it was praise-worthy, and very exemplary) his diligent and constant attendance, not only upon the meetings for the prudent and regular distribution of that charity, but upon the week-day lecture, where he could have opportunity of meeting with ministers, to whom or by whom he might be serviceable; which shewed how much his heart was upon it to do good. He was very active, as I am informed, in furnishing poor ministers, and candidates for the ministry, with useful books: a great deal of money, and time, and pains, he bestowed this way; and herein his earnest care reached as far as the north of Scotland, large sums being procured by him for the erecting of libraries there; and an excellent method it was, both for the diffusing of knowledge to distant places, and the preserving of it to future ages. In his labours for carrying on that and other pious designs, he was indefatigable to the last, and his diligence kept pace with his earnest care. He had had an acquaintance with divers parts of the kingdom, was born in Leicestershire; the first fruits of his ministry were at Petworth in Sussex, from that place he was thrown out (from a curacy there) at the restoration. But upon that, Providence cast his lot in Yorkshire, where he continued about seventeen years, and then removed to this city. And what a blessing he was to that county, by his extensive benificence, and care for them, after his removal hither, I am told, there are many who will witness, who never saw his face.

(2.) It is as true, though not so easily apprehended, that Titus shewed as earnest a care for the Corinthians, whom he persuaded to do good, as for the saints at Jerusalem, whom he desired that this good might be done to. He appeared in this matter no less solicitous for those whom he applied himself to, than for those whose cause he pleaded. The churches of Macedonia had been very forward in bringing in their quota, to this contribution, even their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality: and this is called the *grace of God bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia*; the good work they did for God, was the effect of a good work he wrought in them, and that was an evidence of his good will towards them, and therefore is called *His grace bestowed on them*; for it is certain, instead of making God our debtor by any service we do to him, the more we do for him the more we are indebted to him for putting us into a capacity, and giving us an opportunity to honour him, and especially for inclining our hearts to do it, and accepting of us in the doing of it.

Now Titus had an earnest care for the Corinthians, that they who came not behind in any gift, might not come behind in this gift;[a] he was in care that they should not be slow in their contributions, because Paul

[a] 1 Cor. 1. 7.

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had boasted of them, that *Achaia was ready a year ago;*[a] and in care that they should not be illiberal in them, but that what was gathered should be considerable: he was in care that they should give like themselves. The Corinthians were generally a rich people, and lived great; whence it became a proverb,—*Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum—Every man cannot pretend to live at Corinth.* Now Titus was jealous of them, lest they should pinch their charity to feed their luxury, and therefore laid out himself among them, to persuade them to give handsomely upon this occasion, that it might not be said they had much, but they spent it upon themselves; they were rich in wealth, but poor in good works. He was in care they should give like other churches, and so preserve their reputation, and keep up the figure they made among the churches. The particular kindness he had for this church of Corinth, did not put him upon contriving how he might excuse them from this good work, or make it easy to them, that it might be the more kind to him; but on the contrary, because he loved them he was very earnest with them to do more than otherwise they would have done.

And thus this good man whom we have parted with, besides the good works he did at his own expence, laid out himself to provoke others to love, and to good works, to persuade them to it, and to bring about great designs of good by the assistance of many, which could not be compassed by one. He had an acquaintance with many considerable families, both in city and country, and an interest in them; which he improved not for himself, but for the public good. All who knew him valued him for his tried integrity, and that great plainness and sincerity which was remarkable in him; whatever he did, like Gaius, he did it faithfully, both to the brethren, and to strangers; and, therefore, what was put into his hands for the carrying on of any good work, was deposited with an entire satisfaction. He used to say, that he kept up his acquaintance with persons of estate and figure as long as he could improve it for the doing of good, and when it would no longer be made to serve that purpose, he let it drop; "for," said he, "I'll never adore a gilded post."

Now my text leads me to observe, that herein appeared his earnest care for those whose assistance he procured in works of charity; as much for their *doing-well,* as for the *well-doing* of those whom he procured assistance for. All agree that those he begged for have lost a friend, but I must tell you, that those he begged of have a great loss of him too; they have lost one who, even in that was a true friend, and one who had an earnest care for them. I doubt it will be hard to convince people of this; I fear there are many to whom their friends and ministers are scarce welcome, when they come to recommend objects of charity to them, and press them to give liberally, where the case is urgent; they are glad to see them, but not when they come on that errand; if they come to visit them when they are sick, to advise them when they are in distress, or to be any ways helpful to them, they take it as an instance of their earnest care for them; but if they come to them as Titus did to the Corinthians, to beg money of them for the poor saints, they are so far from looking upon it as an instance of their care for them, that they receive them with a stiffness and shyness, as if they came to impose upon them, and to pick their pockets; and if they do give, it is not with that cheerfulness that God delights in.

I would endeavour therefore for the amending of this matter, to make it out that those are to be accounted your friends, who, with prudence and discretion, propose to you proper objects of charity, and press you to give liberally to them, or for the encouragement of any work of piety; you are to take it kindly, and to reckon it an instance of their earnest care for you. Consider, it is not for themselves that they are thus solicitous, nor in hopes to make any advantage of it to themselves or their own families; nay, on the contrary, it may be a loss and damage to themselves; for with some at least the more they implore their interest for others, the less they have to implore upon their own account. They do not herein seek their own things, but as the Apostle here did, they studiously avoid that which might give occasion to any to blame them, in this abundance which is administered by them; they hope indeed to obtain an interest in God's blessing, and the saints' prayers, in both which they desire you may come in for a share. It is no pleasure to them to be troublesome to you, and those for whose supply they do solicit you, many times they are no more obliged to than you are, nor more concerned for than you ought to be, so that you have no reason to take unkindly the application they make to you. Nay, it is really for you, that they have this earnest care. Do they propose to you a pressing opportunity to do good? Do they follow it with a pressing importunity? You ought to take it as a kindness to yourselves, and to thank God that he has put that earnest care in their hearts for you. For,

[1.] They would have you to do that which is your duty, a plain, necessary, and great duty, which God requires of all those whom he has intrusted with this world's goods. To love mercy is the good you are as much obliged to as to do justly. To relieve and succour the widows and fatherless in their affliction, is an essential branch of pure religion and undefiled. It is a necessary proof of the love both of God, and of your neighbour, dwelling in you. You are God's tenants, and this is the rent you have to pay, a quit-rent, not a rack-rent, and you are to account it a kindness to have your rent called for, for you will get nothing by going behind-hand. You are stewards of the manifold grace of God, and you must lay out your Lord's goods among your Lord's servants, and as he directs, and whoever assists you in doing so, is your friend, and has a care for you. It is your duty to honour the Lord with your substance, and thus you are put into the way of doing it.

Ministers must charge them that are rich in this world, who have more than just a necessary subsistence for themselves and their families, with what they have to spare to do good, and to communicate, you ought to give alms of such things as you have, and to be ready to every good work. Put us not to prove that it is your duty to give just so much, and to such a person, when it is plain it is your duty as you have opportunity

[a] 2 Cor. 9. 2.

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opportunity to do good to all men, and to give God his dues out of what he has given you; of which under the law he appointed the priests and the poor to be his receivers. Now those who devise liberal things for you, are in care for you, that you may not omit your duty, or be found in the neglect of it, because omissions are sins, and must come into judgment; and particularly the omission of this duty; for you know very well, those who in the great day are bid to depart with a curse, have this charged upon them, *I was hungry, and you gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:* and are not they kind to you, who do all they can to prevent you falling under that charge, and perishing under that doom? Say not if they did not trouble you with their representations, you should not know it, and that would serve for an excuse; for if you do not know who are objects of charity, because you would not, but discountenanced those that recommended them to you, it is all one, as if you did know it, and would not relieve them; *If thou sayest, behold we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it, and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it?*

The duty of giving to works of piety and charity, is what we are naturally backward to, we would willingly keep what we have, and our corrupt hearts can easily find out excuses to shift it off, and therefore we have the more need to be called to it, and to have even pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance, and provoked by the zeal of others, and their forwardness. Those who have themselves an earnest care to do their duty, will reckon those their best friends who have an earnest care to quicken them to it, and to help them to overlook those winds and clouds by which they are in danger of being driven off from sowing and reaping. It is a care for your precious souls, that they may not lie under guilt and wrath, a care like that of Paul's, *lest by some means the tempter have tempted you,* and a spirit of worldliness prevail over you, and so the labour of your ministers among you should be in vain. We have reason to be as thankful to God for their advice who excite us to duty, as David was for Abigail's when she was instrumental to prevent his sin.

[2.] They would have you do that which will be your honour, and which will put a reputation upon you, and therefore it must be looked upon as an instance of their earnest care for your preferment. In acts of bounty and beneficence you resemble God, who *is good* and *doeth good,* and therefore does good, because he is good. None come nearer being perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, than those who are merciful as our father in heaven is merciful. Hereby you become blessings to your generation, and ornaments to the profession you make of religion; you give occasion to your ministers and friends to boast of you, as Paul did of these Corinthians, and to give thanks, 2 Cor. 9. 2, 11. to God for you: this is a virtue that is as much a praise, as any other. It seems to have been a common saying of our Saviour's, *It is more blessed to give than to receive;* it is more honourable, and more comfortable; and therefore you are to reckon those your friends who would have you put in for a share in that blessedness.

You think you do yourselves honour with your abundance, when you lay it out in rich clothes, furniture, and equipage, or in splendid entertainments; with these you think you gain and keep up a reputation; but you would do yourselves much more honour with your abundance, if you spared something from those things, and laid it out in works of piety and charity, if you thus honoured God with it, and did good to others. I appeal to yourselves, which is the more honourable, and desirable character, to have it said concerning you, "Such a one is a fashionable man, and lives great;" or, "Such a one is a charitable man and does good." You reckon those have a real care of you who help to support and advance your credit in the way of trade and business, though it may put you to some expence; and is it not the fruit of a much more earnest care for you, to help to maintain your credit in this best and most gainful way of merchandise? If you forfeit the character of being ready to do good, you lose the opportunity of enriching yourselves with the true and most durable treasures.

[3.] They would have you do that which you will have comfort in, and advantage by in this world, and therefore you are to reckon them your friends who have a care for you. When you review your expences, surely there is nothing you reflect upon, with more pleasure and satisfaction, than that which you laid out in works of piety and charity; you may look upon it, not as upon that which you spend in housekeeping, it is gone, and you will hear no more of it, but as upon that which you have put into the best fund, ventured in the securest vessel, and set out to the best interest upon the best security, as *bread cast upon the waters,* which you shall *find* again after *many days.* Read Mr. Gouge's book, which he calls, "The surest and safest way of thriving," and you will look upon those as your truest well-wishers who forward you in any work of piety or charity, as you do upon those who contribute any thing towards your outward prosperity.

Your liberally contributing to any good work, will, perhaps increase what you have in the world, will double it; what is so given is lent to the Lord, and he has given his promise that he will pay it again; and if he expects at his coming to receive his own with usury, no doubt he will so return us our own. However it will make what we have *clean to us,* it will make it comfortable. Job mentions it as one of the brightest instances of his prosperity, that the *blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him,* and he *caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.* Many a prayer will be put up for you, by those who have an interest at the throne of grace, which you will have the benefit of, and yours perhaps when you are gone. It is used as an argument with the people to be kind to the priest, *that he may cause the blessing to rest on thine house,* may do it by his prayers with and for thy family. Those therefore have an earnest care for you, who would not have you, for the saving of a little money, to forfeit that blessing, or come short of it.

4. They would have you do that which will be fruit abounding to your account in the day of recompence. If works of piety and charity be done from a pious,

[a] Ez. 44. 30.

charitable

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charitable principle, in faith, and in dependance upon Christ for the acceptance of them, though they cannot merit any thing at God's hand, for of his own we give him, yet he has graciously assured us, that they shall be rewarded in the resurrection of the just, for God is not unrighteous to forget them. You know when, and upon what account it will be said, *I was hungry and you gave me meat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink.* If it be not repaid in this world, there is the more behind; the heavenly inheritance will make amends for all. Those who press you to good works are in care that you may not miss of this recompence, may not lose this good bargain, which will be so much to your advantage. They would have you to use your estates so that with them you may make to yourselves friends, that when ye fail, ye may be received into everlasting habitations.

This was St. Paul's care for the Philippians, they were well-disposed to be kind to him, but they *lacked opportunity*, they wanted some friend to do that for them which Titus here did for the Corinthians, to make a collection among them for Paul's assistance, and to convey it carefully to him. Now Paul shews himself well pleased that at length Epaphroditus had done it; but he professes it was not so much upon his own account, that he might hereby be enabled to live the more comfortably in prison, *Not that I desire a gift*, I could live very contentedly without it; but chiefly upon their account, that they might have the comfort and reward of it, in that day when all we now say and do will be called over again. *I desire fruit that may abound to your account*, that may be reckoned among the fruits of your righteousness, which shall be repeated in life eternal; when not a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, to a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall be left out of the account.

Now lay all this together, and then tell me whether those are not indeed your friends, and have not an earnest care for you, who call upon you to do good and to communicate, look upon them then as your friends, and look pleasantly upon them when they come upon this errand. Thank them that they will take the trouble of a good work so much upon themselves, and yet bring you in for sharers in the honour, comfort, and reward of it. Those who would so manage for you, in some advantageous undertaking for the world, so that you might have nothing to do but to pay in your money, and receive it again with great increase, you would reckon yourselves exceedingly obliged to. Nor think it enough to be courteous and civil to your almoners, and to give them a good look when they come a begging to you, but be free and generous in your almsgiving, and in what you contribute to every good work; that you may encourage those who have this earnest care of you to come to you again. God gives liberally and upbraids not, and so should we, that we may be like him. Remember, it is seed sown, and observe the husbandman's rule in sowing his ground, "Give it seed enough; for if you sow sparingly, you will reap accordingly." And now you have lost one who used to recommend objects of charity to you, be the more inquisitive after them yourselves; that you may in no wise lose your reward.

II. It is mentioned to the praise of God, that he put this earnest care into the heart of Titus for them; and thanks are given to him for it. Now thanks be to God who by his providence brought Titus to Corinth, and by his grace excited and enabled him to do this good office there.

See how solicitous blessed Paul is upon all occasions to ascribe the glory of all the good that was done, whether by others or by himself, to the grace of God, and to own in it the influences and operations of that grace; *I laboured*, others laboured, *yet not I*, yet not they; *but the grace of God which was with me*, and was with them; for *by the grace of God, I am what I am*, and they are what they are. The doctrine of free grace, which is pure gospel, he not only inculcates in his preaching and writing, but applies it, and speaks as one who did himself believe it, and was full of it; for he takes care to cast every crown at the feet of free-grace, in that he boasts all the day long, so as to exclude all other boasting; in that he is made always to triumph; *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.* Now observe here,

1. That God can *put* things into men's hearts, beyond what was expected. He is the Sovereign of the heart, not only to enjoin it what he pleases by his law, but to influence it, and to infuse into it by his providence and grace as he pleases. He has access to men's hearts, knows what is in them, what would be in them, and can expunge and insert according to his own will; and they themselves not be aware of it. He can extinguish the sparks of wrath he finds there, and restrain them, can blow up the sparks of love he finds there into a flame. They are all in his hand as the clay in the hand of the potter, and he fashioned them so as to serve his own purposes by them. The way of man is not in himself, he cannot think what he will, but the wise God can over-rule him. If the hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, to be turned as the rivers of water which way soever he pleases, though their hearts of all men's are most absolute and arbitrary, and unsearchable, much more the hearts of inferior persons. Let no man boast of his free thought, when whatever devices are in men's hearts, it is not their counsel, but the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. See in this how God governs the world, by the hold he has of the consciences of men, and his power to put things into the hearts, so that they shall accomplish his designs, as *his hand*, though *they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so.*

2. That whatever good is in the heart of any, it is God that puts it there. If Titus have in his heart an earnest care for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthians, though he is a very good man, and one whom much good may be expected from, yet even this is not of himself, it is not to be called a natural affection, it is a gracious one, for the grace of God wrought it there, that grace which worketh in good men both to will and to do that which is good. Perhaps Titus was steering his course another way, when God put it into his heart to come to Corinth; or, when he came thither on this errand, perhaps he did not design to press the thing with any importunity, but only to propose it, and leave it to them

to

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to do as they would: but quite beyond his own intention God put it into his heart to be urgent in the matter, which had a wonderful good effect; put zeal into his heart for the carrying on of this good work, and then put words into his mouth wherewith to press it.

If we have an earnest care for our own souls, and for their spiritual and eternal welfare, it is God that puts it into our hearts, that gives it to us, so the word here used signifies, it is he that plants it in us; if we have an earnest care for the souls of others, particularly of theirs who are under our charge, we have it from God, for we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think a good thought, much less fix a good principle, or form a good project, but all our sufficiency is of *God*. Whatever evil there is in our hearts, it is of ourselves, it is, like weeds in the garden, the spontaneous product of the corrupt soil; this God sees there, he foresees it, and can tell the sinner long before, *At such a time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought*; but it is not of his putting there; no, it is the good that is found there, all that, and only that, that God puts there. He will own that, and we must own him in it.

3. That Christ's ministers are in a particular manner all that, and that only to his churches that he makes them to be. They are stars that shine with a borrowed light, and shed no other benign influences, but what are derived from the Sun of Righteousness. If they have a care, an earnest care, a natural care for the souls committed to their charge, it is God who has put it into their hearts, it is his grace in them that makes them blessings to the places where they are, whether statedly or occasionally; if they bring a seasonable word that reaches the conscience, and does good, it is God that puts it into their mouths, and gives them what they shall speak. Paul, that master-workman, says nothing of what he has wrought, but of what Christ has wrought by him. Wherefore look we then at Peter and John, and Paul and Apollos? Acts 3. 12. As though by their own power they did what they do? No, they are no more, no better than what the free grace of God makes them. The most able, the most active ministers, and the most famed for industry and success, if they were left to themselves, and to their own wisdom and strength, would be the unprofitable burthens of the earth; would be like Sampson when his hair was cut, and the Spirit of the Lord was departed from him, weak as other men, nay, and worse than other men, like salt which has lost its savour. We must therefore look up to God by prayer, for that grace which is necessary to make the stewards of the mysteries of God both skilful and faithful; and lament the case of those careless ministers, who, like the ostrich, are hardened against the souls under their charge, as though they were not theirs, for it is a sign that God has deprived them of wisdom, and has not imparted to them understanding.

4. That the grace of God is particularly to be seen and owned in the progress and success of any work of charity, as this here, which Titus was active in among the Corinthians. In this we may be tempted to think there needs no more but that common concurrence of the Divine Providence which is necessary to the negociating of every other affair; but it seems by this we have as much need of the working of the Spirit and grace of God, to enable us to give alms well, as to enable us to pray and preach well. What is necessary to an act of benificence, must be put into our hearts from on high, as well as what is necessary to an act of devotion. It is God who puts it into the heart of all the parties concerned to do their part in it: he puts an earnest care into the hearts of those who manage a work of charity, and a generous, liberal disposition into the hearts of those who contribute to it. And therefore the apostle concludes his account here of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia with praises to God, not only for giving them estates wherewithal to do good, but much more for giving them hearts to do good with them; *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift*. Grace to use what we have in the world to the glory of God, is an unspeakable gift, for which we ought to be very thankful. And we are taught the same by the example of David, who, when he found the princes and people generous in their subscriptions for the building of the temple, blessed God for it, as an admirable instance of of his favour and grace, by which he put a great deal of honour upon them: but *Who am I*, says he, *and what is my people, that we should be able* to overcome that selfishness and narrow-spiritedness which is in our corrupt natures, and *should offer* so much, and so *willingly*, and *cheerfully, after this sort, for all things come of thee*. Those therefore who have any good project upon the wheel, should look up to God for his grace to carry it on, otherwise it will be abortive. Those we persuade to do good, we should pray for, that God would incline their hearts to it, and then only our persuasions will prevail.

Let us now close all, with some inferences from these observations.

1. If this be so, then those who do good have nothing to glory in; for whatever good they do, it was God that put it into their hearts to do it, and therefore he must have all the glory. Boasting is hereby for ever excluded, for in the Lord alone we have not only righteousness for the remission of our sins, but strength and sufficiency for the performance of our duties. How absurd, how unjust is it for us to be proud of any good we do, when without Christ we can do nothing; we cannot so much as be content with such things as we have, but through Christ strengthening us, much less do good with them.

This forbids us to trust to our own good works, as if by them we could merit any thing at the hand of God; we must not entertain such a thought; not only because none of our goodness extends to God, but because all our goodness is derived from him; and the more good we do, the more we are indebted to him for that grace by which we are enabled to do it, and the honour he puts upon us in employing us for him. We never speak a good word, or do a good work, but it comes from that good which God first put into our hearts, so that all being from him, all must be to him; he *planted*, he *watered*, and he *gave the increase*, and therefore his must

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must all the fruit be, and to his honour it must be devoted.

This obliges us, when we have done all, to say, *We are unprofitable servants*, not only because we have done no more than what was our duty to do, but because we have done no more than God enabled us to do. It obliges us also to say, that God is a good master, who works in us what he requires of us, and then graciously accepts and rewards his own work, as if it had been ours, so far is he from being that hard man who reaps where he had not sown. And then our services turn most to our honour, when we take care to transmit the honour of them to God. Nehemiah could not have put a greater reputation upon his undertaking to build up the walls of Jerusalem than he did, when he said, it was what God had *put in his heart to do at Jerusalem*; Neh. 2. 12. and it magnifies Cyrus's proclamation of liberty to the captive Jews, more than the policy or the generosity of it, that *the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to issue out that proclamation*, Ezra 1. 1.

This holy, good man we are now speaking of, whose works praise him in the gates, took care that the praise should not terminate in himself, but be transmitted to God the Father of lights, and giver of every good gift. When a friend of his who visited him in his sickness, mentioned to him his great usefulness, and what comfort he might now have in reflection upon it, he humbly replied, "Alas, I have done but little service for God in my generation; I wish I had done more: But God is good and gracious." Whence I observe, that the comforts and hopes of dying christians are founded upon God's goodness, not upon their own. Thus when Nehemiah had done abundance of good service to the house of God, and the offices thereof, his prayer is, not *Reward* me according to the greatness of my merit, but *Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy*. "I was but a pen in God's hand," (said good Mr. Baxter) and what praise is due to a pen? Thus as God gives grace to the most humble, so he gives humility to the most gracious.

2. If this be so, then those who have any good done them, either for soul or body, must give thanks to God for it, who raised up those who were the instruments of it, and put it into their hearts to do it, and perhaps to do it with an earnest care. We ought indeed to acknowledge their kindness, and to be grateful to them, but that must be in token of our gratitude to God, who, in making them his agents, made them his receivers. But we must look above and beyond them, and give God thanks for them, and for all the kindnesses they have done us. Ezra has no sooner registered and enrolled the ample commission which Artaxerxes gave him in favour of the Jews, but immediately he adds, *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this into the king's heart.* Which teaches us, to see and own all the bounty and benefit, all the service and supply that comes to us by the hands of our friends, flowing originally from the hand of God. And it is the more to be observed, if it come by the hand of those who were unlikely, and unthought of, and that we least expected it from. If Elijah be entertained by a poor widow who has but a handful of meal for herself and her son; if the wounded man who is looked upon but overlooked by a priest and Levite, from whom charity and compassion might have been expected, and was commonly had, be at length taken care of by an honest Samaritan, it must be said, *This is the Lord's doing*, God put it into their hearts; and therefore let us give God thanks for our benefactors, and all their benefactions.

When those are removed from us, who have long been upon any account blessings to us, good parents, good ministers, good friends, instead of murmuring and quarrelling with God, as if he had done us wrong, we ought to be very thankful to him that ever we had them, that they were so many ways useful to us, and were continued to us so long, though we were unworthy of the benefit and comfort we enjoyed by them, and had a thousand times forfeited it. And by these thanksgivings for their lives, let us balance and alleviate our sorrow for their deaths. Thanks be to God, who fitted them for service, and inclined them to it, and put into their hearts an earnest care for us, though perhaps there was nothing in us either deserving or promising, to recommend us to their care. God, who himself does good to the unworthy, puts it into the hearts of good men to do so too; to him therefore we must give thanks.

And these thanksgivings should sometimes look far back; and we should bless God for those who were in the days of old, either by their lasting writings, or by their lasting charities, blessings to posterity; they may not be prayed for, as our living benefactors may, and must be; they are not to be prayed to, as our ever-living Benefactor may, and must be; but the benefit we and others receive by the grace given to them, we may and must give thanks to God for, who put into their hearts an earnest care for those who should come after them. If *what is written*, if what is done *be for the generation to come*, it fitly follows, *the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*

3. If this be so, let us hereby be engaged and quickened to do all the good we can in our places; to do the good the Corinthians did, that is, to contribute largely and freely for the support and encouragement of poor saints, and poor ministers, according to the ability God has given us; to do the good Titus did, that is, to solicit the cause both of the necessitous, and of the deserving, and to procure assistance for them; to recommend works of piety, and objects of charity, as factors in that blessed merchandise, to bring the rich and poor to meet together: according as our capacity is, let us lay out ourselves to do good.

Hereby we shall evidence that God by his grace has put some good into our hearts, which the good we do is the fruit and product of, and by which the tree is known. If we be truly charitable, from a good principle, and for a good end, it will turn to us for a testimony, that the Spirit of God has been at work with our hearts, making us acceptable to our Father in heaven, and making us meet for our home in heaven: and how can what we have be made to turn to a better, or more comfortable account?

Hereby likewise we shall give occasion to many to praise

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praise God for us, and for the good which by his grace we are inclined and enabled to do. And how can we better serve the glory of God, and the comfort of his people, than by furnishing our friends with abundant matter for thanksgiving, (that sweet duty,) in which when we are employed, we have, if any where, a heaven upon earth. This was one thing for which Paul reflected with comfort upon his own conversion, that those who heard that a persecutor was become a preacher, glorified God in him. And therefore we must let our light shine before men, that others may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. If it be an encouragement to charity to think that we shall have the prayers of the poor, much more is it so to think that God shall have their praises. And so the blessing of him that was ready to perish shall not only come upon us, but shall return, as it ought, to him who is the fountain of all blessing: and when the widow's heart is made *to sing for joy*, it shall *sing to the praise and glory of God.*

4. This may be matter of comfort and support to us, when useful instruments are removed from us. That which made them useful was, that spirit of wisdom, holiness, and love that God gave them, and we are sure that he has the residue of the Spirit, the *excellency* of the Spirit, (so the word is) with himself, and he can raise up men with the same spirit, with the same excellencies of spirit, that shall do him as much service, if he pleases, and do it as well in their day, as those who are gone did in their's. If God make the spirit of Elijah to rest upon Elisha, he shall be as much the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, as ever Elijah himself was. And therefore let us not say, *The glory is departed from Israel*, though the hoary heads, who were so much a crown of glory to our tribe, be now in a manner all departed; no, while Zion's God is her everlasting glory, he will take care that Zion's sons shall some or other of them be in their turn a glory to her; *Instead of the fathers shall be the children.* When God has work to do, we are sure he will never want fit instruments to do it with.

It is certain, our fathers, the best and greatest of them, were no more, no better than what the grace of God made them; they took all occasions to own it themselves: and it is as certain, there is the same overflowing fulness of grace in Christ that ever there was, *grace for grace;* and the same way of deriving from it; as the *olive-tree is not withered*, so the *golden pipes* (Zec. 4. 12.) are not stopped up; we have therefore reason to hope, that the same God who put an earnest care into their hearts, will put the same into the hearts of those who are entered into their labours; and that grace which was sufficient for them, to carry them through the services and sufferings of their generation, will be sufficient for us too, who have the same work to do, and the same temptations and difficulties to grapple with; and will enable us at length to finish our course, as they did, with joy.

It was a petition which (as I am told) Mr. Stretton frequently put up to God in his prayers with his family, "Lord, grant that we may be useful while we are here, and that we may not be wanted when we are gone." God did make him useful while he was here, many ways useful, useful to the last; and continued long in his usefulness. A great gap is made in our hedge by his death; but may we hope that so many others shall be spirited to do the same work, with the same earnest care, that in a little time we may be able to say, that in answer to the other part of his petition, *he is not wanted.* If God has mercy in store for your city, for the land of our nativity, he will raise up such men of serious piety, and catholic charity, who shall lay out themselves to do good in the world: I trust he has raised up some such; and that the mystical gloss which one of the rabbins puts upon those words, (1 Sam. 3. 3, 4.) *Ere the lamp of God went out, the Lord called Samuel*, has its accomplishment; "That is," says he, "ere God makes the lamp of one prophet to set he kindles another." God grant it may be so at this day in our land, and it would be a token of good to us, that God would not depart from us. Nay, if it be true, as certainly it is, that while the earth remains Christ will have a church in it, we may be sure that as one generation of such passes away, another generation, somewhere or other, shall come, to support the interests of pure and undefiled religion, that thus the name of Christ may endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

A concise Account of the LIFE *of the* REV. MR. RICHARD STRETTON.

HE was the son of Mr. William Stretton, of Great Cleybrook, near Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where he was born; but was descended from the Strettons of Stretton, in that county.

He was born about the year 1632, but the exact time of his birth could not be recovered for this reason; his father being a puritan, and the minister of his parish such a one as he could not with satisfaction bring his child to be baptized by, he procured one Mr. Moor to baptize him, who was a puritan minister in the neighbourhood; and so he was not registered in the church book.

He often spoke of it as an instance of God's goodness to him, that he enabled his father, though he had many children, to bring him up a scholar.

He had his academical education at New College in Oxford, and was chaplain of the college, as the noted Bishop Gunning had been some time before.

He commenced Master of Arts, July 9, 1658, *(præstitis Exercitiis per Statuta requisitis—having performed the requisite exercises)* as appears by a testimonial under the hand of the university register.

In the beginning of that year, having passed through

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not only his time, but his studies in the university, he went to be assistant to Dr. Cheynel, at Petworth in Sussex, a great living.

Soon after his settlement there he was publicly and solemnly ordained and "set apart to the office of a preaching presbyter," (so the testimonial of his ordination runs) "and the work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and the imposition of the hands of six presbyters in the parish church of Arundel, Oct. 26, 1658. He having given sufficient testimony of his competent age, of his unblameable life and conversation, of his diligence and proficiency in his studies, and of his fair and direct calling to the fore-mentioned place; and they upon examination finding him to be duly qualified and gifted for that holy office and employment."

He continued at Petworth till Michaelmas, 1660, when Dr. Cheynel was put out to make room for Dr. King, Bishop of Chichester. Mr. Stretton however staid and preached there till November, (as Dr. Calamy's account is) having two friends, viz. Captain Taylor and Mr. Bernard, who were very great with the Bishop, and prevented his sending down any other. The Bishop by them offered Mr. Stretton an hundred pound per annum, and the choice of any prebend he had that was vacant, if he would be his curate at Petworth; but Mr. Stretton not being satisfied to conform, declined it; and upon the Bishop's sending another down to the place, he quitted it.

Coming to London, quite at a loss how to dispose of himself, Mr. James Nalton providentially met him in the street; and having been spoken to by the Lord Fairfax to recommend a chaplain to him, he presently brought Mr. Stretton to him; and upon his recommendation, my Lord accepted of him, and took him down with him to his seat in Yorkshire, and soon found himself and his family very happy in having such a skilful faithful helper in the things of God.

While he was chaplain to my Lord Fairfax, he married Deborah, daughter of Mr. Robert Moreton, that excellent, pious, useful man, who was some time minister at Church Lawford, near Coventry, and sister to Dr. Richard Moreton, who was turned out at Kinver in Staffordshire, and afterwards was a very eminent physician in London, and one of the college. By her he had a child or two born, while he was in my Lord's family; and great respect was shewn him by the whole family.

He continued there till my Lord Fairfax died, and preached his funeral sermon, which is in manuscript in many hands; as is also a sermon preached while he was there, on occasion of the marriage of a relation of my Lord's.

My Lord was so wonderfully pleased with his great piety and prudence, and excellent behaviour in his family, that at his marriage he settled a very considerable annuity upon him for his and his wife's life; which was a great support to him all his days. Thus God raised up friends for those who in the way of their duty cast themselves upon his providence.

The respect which was put upon him while he was in my Lord Fairfax's family, gave him an opportunity of being acquainted with most of the considerable families in those parts. Judge Rokeby, who was made one of the blessings and ornaments of the bench at the revolution, was his intimate friend.

Many eminent divines of the church of England he had likewise an intimacy with; particularly Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who was born in Yorkshire. Mr. Stretton, while he was chaplain to my Lord Fairfax, being called upon some business to London, Dr. Tillotson would have no denial, but he must preach for him at St. Lawrence's church, as a country minister; but it coming out some how or other that he was a nonconformist, the Doctor had a private reprimand for it from the Bishop of London. It appears by divers letters to him, found among his papers, that he had many invitations of that kind in the country; and a very friendly correspondence he kept up with many conforming divines, who reposed a great confidence in him, and testified great respect toward him.

Upon the death of the Lord Fairfax, he removed to Leeds, and settled there with a congregation of dissenters, to whom his ministry was highly acceptable; and there he continued six or seven years.

While he was there he buried three sons in a little time; two of them of the small-pox, and in a few days one of another. It was an affliction that went very near him, and so strong was his natural affection, that it was exercise for all the wisdom and grace he had to bear up under it. There is found among his papers a letter of condolence and consolation written to him upon that occasion by the Earl of Clare, father to the late Duke of Newcastle, who was then abroad in his travels, dated at Paris, June 16, 1677. There appears in it much of serious piety, and a particular friendship that noble Lord had for Mr. Stretton.

In the year 1677, he removed to London, and several dissenters who were at that time either deprived of their ministers, or otherwise unsettled, sat down under his ministry, and he continued with them to his death.

In 1679, he published a paper called, "The Protestant Conformist;" or, "A Plea for Moderation," contained in a letter from one conforming minister to another, and his answer to it. It had no name to it, but it met with great acceptance. It was occasioned by a letter from his dear friend Mr. John Thoresby of Leeds, which was likewise printed with it; so I am informed, as likewise of many other things concerning Mr. Stretton, by his son Mr. Ralph Thoresby, now of Leeds, that learned antiquary, and Fellow of the Royal Society; who has already obliged the world with the additions to Cambden's Britannia for Yorkshire, and from whom is expected the Antiquities of Leeds, who was a true lover of Mr. Stretton, and was much respected by him.

At the time when the persecution was hot against dissenters, (in 1683,) he was the first of ten ministers who were taken up as living in a corporation, and had the Oxford oath tendered them; "That it is unlawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the King; which was first contradicted and broken through, and then repealed at the revolution. He had not been at his own house for ten weeks, but the very next

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next morning after his return to it, (so very vigilant were their spies and informers) by five of the clock in the morning he was seized by the then city-marshal, who secured his papers, and would not suffer him to seal up what he made choice of out of them; and immediately carried him and them before the king and council: some present would have his papers looked over, to see if they could find any treason in them, but the king did not encourage it, saying, he believed there was no treason there. As at another time, when a sorry fellow, one Fox, offered to swear, that Mr. Stretton, with my Lord Clare, was in the plot then charged upon the dissenters; the king laughed at the information, as altogether improbable and inconsistent with itself.

But though he was dismissed from the council-board, he was proceeded against upon the Five-Mile Act. That night the marshal took his word for his appearance next morning, when according to his promise he surrendered himself, and was brought before the Lord Mayor, who carried it with great respect and civility to him, importunately desiring him once and again to withdraw for a little time, and consider whether he could not take the enjoined oaths, which he hoped he might, and so escape the penalty of the law. Mr. Stretton told his Lordship, that he would not give the court the trouble of waiting for his answer, for he could not expect to get satisfaction in that case, in so short a time as a regard to that court would only suffer him to take; when he had been many years seeking after it, and could not obtain it. However my Lord-Mayor persisted in his advice, and in compliance with his Lordship's kind desire, he withdrew for some time; but when he returned, told his Lordship he could not do it; which his Lordship said he was sorry for, for then there was no remedy, but he must follow the direction of the law, and sent him to Newgate, where he continued a prisoner six full months; in which time he had a son died, who, in his sickness, earnestly desired to see his father, as the father no doubt did to see the child, but all the interest he could make would not procure him that liberty. During his stay in Newgate, Mr. Smith the ordinary shewed him great respect, and called him up more than once into the chapel to assist him in preparing the condemned criminals for their death.

After the expiration of his six months imprisonment he continued still in the city, and preached privately in one place or other among those of his congregation; and never missed any Lord's day, unless now and then it happened that he met with disappointment in the place he was to preach at. And he repeated in his family largely at night, which he sometimes admitted two or three of his friends to the benefit of.

When king James granted liberty by proclamation to protestant dissenters, he made use of it; but he never did or would join in any address of thanks for it, lest he should seem to give countenance to the king assuming a power above the law, and was instrumental to prevent several addresses.

After the glorious revolution, when the dissenters enjoyed their liberties and opportunities again, he applied himself with fresh vigour to his work, and with an abundant satisfaction in the clearness of his call to it, as appears by a single sheet which he then published in the year 1689, which he called, "The Case of the Protestant Dissenters, represented and argued:" which he told a near relation of his, not long before he died, that he was the author of. The whole paper is of such weight, that Dr. Calamy thought fit to insert it at large in his abridgment of Mr. Baxter's life, pag. 638 to pag. 648.

And as he was industrious to justify the dissenters in their practice, so he was to promote every thing that was good among them. It is observed, before, in the sermon, that he took care to direct the removals of the morning-lecture, so as might answer the intention of it: a very useful exercise, which has been kept up for the most part near seventy years, and is now, wherever it comes, for ought I see, well attended.

He was likewise active in accommodating some unhappy differences of opinion that were among them, so as to prevent the mischievous consequences of them. The prudent and pious endeavours which he and others used for that good end, then had, and, thanks be to God, still have a happy effect.

He laid out himself very much to promote works of charity; it was his meat and drink in that way to be doing good. He spared no pains in going about in the city, and writing letters into the country, to promote good works. He was a principal man in setting up and keeping up a fund for the help of poor ministers and congregations in the country, who had not many like minded, (though blessed be God some there are) who naturally cared for their state. He made it his business to find out the hands who were able to give, and fit to receive, and to bring them together. Those who were entrusted with the distribution of charities, applied themselves very much to him to recommend to them proper objects of charity, which he did with great prudence and fidelity; and then no wonder if those who needed help applied themselves to him likewise.

He was active to introduce useful books into the world, and to encourage the publishing of them, as Dr. Manton's works, to the fifth volume, to which he prefixed a preface, and a very ingenious handsome one it is. And also took a deal of pains to furnish libraries in Scotland, and in the private academies in England, with old books; and to supply young students, who were poor, with such books as were proper for them: a great deal of money he laid out himself, out of the little he had, and a great deal more he procured from others for this good purpose. He knew what books were useful, and how to buy them at the best hand, and by his activity herein, many valuable pieces that otherwise would still have lain buried in dust and cobwebs, have been sent into hands that are daily making good use of them.

His pious zeal herein extended itself beyond the seas, as appears by the abstract of a letter which is found among his papers, from that great and good man Monsieur Frank, Professor at Hall in Saxony, wherein he acknowledges to have received the Polyglot Bible from Mr. Stretton, as a present to their library there, and returns his most hearty thanks to so good a benefactor.

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He was very forward to encourage youths that he saw or heard to be ingenious and well disposed, and to assist them in their education for the ministry: he kept up a correspondence for this purpose with the universities of Scotland, and was instrumental in sending many thither, and procuring assistance there for some who needed it.

He buried his dear wife in the year 1695, and by her he had left only one son living, who has been many years useful in the ministry.

About the year 1707, the infirmities of age grew upon him, occasioned by a bad fall he had as he was returning to his house, after preaching on a public fast-day, in which exercise he had exceeded his strength; yet he continued doing good to the last, and the Spirit was as willing as ever, even when the flesh was weak, and not only weak, but much pained. When he could scare set one foot before another, yet he would attend the lecture at Salters-Hall, and the meeting for charitable contributions, very sedulously, though at a great distance from his house: and but a little before he died, when he was so weak and ill that he could scarce mind any thing else, yet he stirred up himself to give advice and direction in an affair of charity, wherein his assistance had been much depended upon.

He kept up his public work, though he struggled with much difficulty in it, till within ten weeks of his death; and often took notice of it with thankfulness to God, that though for some time before he was confined to his house all the week, yet till May 4, 1712, he had strength on the Lord's day to go to his meeting-place and preach once, and administer the Lord's Supper every month.

In his last illness, he expressed a cheerful resignation of himself to the will of God, an entire dependance upon the grace of Christ, and a believing comfortable expectation of the glory to be revealed.

Some of his sayings in his weakness have been mentioned in the foregoing sermon, and need not to be repeated.

He finished his course, and fell asleep in the Lord, on Thursday, July 3, 1712, and was buried the Monday following in the burying-place in Bunhill-fields. *There the weary are at rest.*

A SERMON *preached upon occasion of the Death of the* REV. DANIEL BURGESS, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

With a concise ACCOUNT of him.

2 COR. 4. 7.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

DIVINE Providence has in the mournful occasion of this solemnity given us a sensible proof of the truth contained in the former part of my text, that *we have the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels*; for here is one of those vessels broken and laid by, by which it appears to have been, though a strong one, yet an earthen one. And now, O that divine grace would, by its sanctifying quickening influences upon all our hearts, verify the latter part of the text, and give us a proof, that notwithstanding this, there is an *excellency of power* going along with the gospel of Christ, which depends not upon dying men, but upon a living God, and is mighty through him to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin, and the setting up of stronger for Christ, that he may divide the spoil, and possess the throne in the soul! And if we have experience of this, that though faithful ministers are removed one after another, yet the Spirit of the Lord is not departed from us, it will be our best support and comfort under all afflictions of this kind; for though our ministers have their strength weakened in the way, and their days shortened, yet Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the same to his Church. They are wearied and worn out, and are gone where the weary are at rest; but the *Everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary*; so that, thanks be to God, still we have the treasure, and if it be not our own fault, may make it our's, though still we have it in earthen vessels.

1. By the treasure here spoken of, it is plain we are to understand the gospel of Christ, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in which is set before us, and offered to us, the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is this treasure, which the Apostle's heart was so much upon, and so full of: this which in the verse before he had called *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* That is the treasure which we christians have, and glory in. And a noble description it is of the everlasting gospel which is preached to us, and professed by us.

It is light: it is such a light as in the dawning of the day of the creation shone out of darkness, when the Almighty said, *Let there be light,* and was the first-born of this visible world: it is such a light as every morning shines out of the darkness of the night, that, as the gospel did, it may take hold of the ends of the earth, which is turned to it as clay to the seal, Job 38. 13, 14. What is more bright and glorious than the light? what more pure? what more self-evident? and what more welcome to them who sit in darkness? Light is indeed a treasure, and we have it from the Father of lights.

It recommends itself to those who would improve their natural reason; for it gives knowledge, sound knowledge, useful knowlege, the knowledge of duty, the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins; a knowledge infinitely preferable to that which the inquisitive

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sitive part of mankind amused and perplexed themselves within the Gentile philosophy, which did but darken counsel by words without knowledge; the light of joy, which the gospel brings, results from the light of knowledge, and that is no christian devotion which has ignorance for the mother of it.

It recommends itself likewise to those who would improve their natural religion; for it gives the knowledge of the glory of God, the founder and center of all religion; it sets that glory before us as the object both of all our adorations, and of all our aims. The heavens indeed declare the glory of God, but they shew us not how and which way we may glorify him, much less be glorified with him: here, therefore, where natural reason and religion both leave us at a loss, the gospel of Christ takes us up, and leads us on, shews us the glory of God shining in the face of Christ, where it shines clearer, and stronger, and brighter, and with more satisfaction than it does in the face of the whole creation; for it declares the glory of God reconcileable to us, and accessible by us, nay, and in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and taking a remnant of the children of men into covenant and communion with himself, through a mediator: in it life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand: such a knowledge as this well deserves to be called a *treasure*, and it is this treasure here spoken of.

2. By the earthen vessels here, it is plain we are to understand the apostles and the ministers of the gospel, here in their present state, while they are in the body. We have this treasure lodged with us for the use of others, whose bodies are as earthen vessels. These were the gifts Christ gave unto men when he ascended up on high, (and valuable gifts indeed, if we consider the treasure lodged in them;) not only prophets and apostles, but pastors and teachers, whose office and business it is to preach the glad tidings of redemption, by the Redeemer's offering himself to be a sacrifice for us, and a Saviour to us.

The very same gospel that was preached by the apostles and evangelists then, is preached by the pastors and teachers still; only the business of the first preachers of the gospel was to propagate it to distant nations, to carry it from place to place, that Christ might be known as salvation to the ends of the earth. The business of the pastors and teachers since has been rather to propagate it to succeeding generations, to carry it from age to age, that *the name of* Christ *might endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven*, The former was intimated in the command, *Go, disciple all nations*; the latter in the promise, *Lo, I am with you always*, with you and your successors, *even to the end of the world*, Mat. 28. 19, 20.

Now those who are employed in this work are here said to be *earthen vessels*; we have it ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσι—*in vessels made of shells of fishes*, so the learned Dr. Hammond thinks it might be read; the shells of oysters, (which have their name from the word here used,) and other the like, resemble our bodies, in which our souls dwell, as a fish in the shell, and are fastened to them: and he observes from Grotius, that the Platonists making two bodies of a man; one more inward, which the soul was immediately lodged in, which they called Ὄχημα ψυχῆς—*the chariot or vehicle of the soul*, an aerial body; the other, which is terrestrial, more gross and carnal, which we see and touch, they called Ὀστράκινον, the word here used, the *shell* of the soul. But he owns that the word signifies likewise an earthen vessel which has passed the fire, and is therefore brittle, and soon broke, such as that earthen bottle which the prophet broke for a sign before the ancients of the people, Jer. 19. 10.

3. The force of the reason why God has been pleased to put such a treasure in earthen vessels, is also plain, *that the excellency of the power may be*, that is, may appear to be *of God*, and not *of us*. "We carry bodies about us" (so Dr. Hammond paraphrases it) "subject to all manner of oppositions, pressures, and afflictions; and this on purpose designed by God also, that all the good success we have in our apostleship may be imputed to Christ, and not to us, as it would be if we came with any secular power or grandeur to plant the gospel." And a very considerable proof it was of the divine original of the gospel, that though the preachers were not only destitute of all worldly advantages, but laboured under all imaginable disadvantages, yet it made its way, gained its point, and did wonders, which was an evidence that there was an excellency of power above that of any creature going along with it.

Three doctrines we may observe hence.

I. That the gospel of Christ is a treasure indeed, and it is our unspeakable privilege that we have that treasure.

II. Ministers are earthen vessels, in which this treasure is put.

III. That God has put the treasure into earthen vessels, that all who are enriched by it may give him the glory of it.

I. In having the gospel of Christ known and owned among us, we have a treasure truly valuable, nay, invaluable. It is our happiness as Christians, that we have the gospel written to us in the Scriptures, which are of divine inspiration, preached to us by a ministry of divine institution, under the direction of a divine warrant, and the influence of a divine promise, and professed in the world by a Church called out of the world, and incorporated by a divine charter.

We live in an age of infidelity, when under colour of opposing bigotry and enthusiasm (two very detestable things) the gospel of Christ is ridiculed and run down, and set upon a level with the pagan theology: *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, when men thus make void thy gospel*; and it is time for us in our places to appear in defence of that which is the foundation of all our hopes, and the fountain of all our joys, when it is thus virulently, thus violently attacked. It is *pro aris & focis—for our God and our Country*, that we contend, when we contend for *the faith once delivered to the saints*, and for the common salvation, and therefore we ought to contend earnestly. Upright men are astonished, to see such sacred truths and laws treated with such contempt; and the

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the innocent cannot but stir up himself against the hypocrite. When they speak slightly of the gospel who hate its laws, and despise its comforts, we ought to speak honourably of it; and how can we speak more honourably of it than to call it, as the text does, our *treasure?* We know it, and believe it to be so, and that, in comparison of it, all the learning and policy of this world is but trash and trifle.

The gospel of Christ is indeed a treasure. For,

1. There is in it an abundance of that which is of inestimable value. If the things themselves be truly precious, and there be plenty of them, then we call them treasure; and such things there are, and such a fulness of them in the gospel of Christ. As the merchandise and trade of this wisdom, so its stores and treasures are better than that of silver, or of fine gold, or precious stones. *The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal them, the onyx, or the saphire,* Job 28. 19.

There are treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the truths which the gospel discovers to us, about which the understanding finds the best employment, the best entertainment. There are treasures of comfort and joy in the offers which the gospel makes us, and the blessings it assures to all believers, in which, not only, the necessities of the soul are well provided for, but its desires abundantly satisfied, and its true and lasting happiness inviolably secured. There is a treasure of merit and righteousness in Christ, and in his mediation, his sacrifice and intercession for us; a treasure of grace and strength in the Spirit, and his operations on us; a *fulness of grace, grace for grace,* grace for all gracious exercises, which it pleased the Father should dwell in Jesus Christ, that thence we might receive.

These are things of value to the soul of man, and which every soul puts a high value upon, that truly desires to know and love its God, to serve him, enjoy him, and be for ever happy in them: things which angels themselves put such a value upon, that they desire to look into them; and which Christ himself put such a value upon, that he thought it worth while to pour out his soul unto death to purchase them for us, since they could not be obtained for gold, nor could silver be weighed for the price of them.

And there is an abundance of them, infinitely exceeding that of light in the sun, or water in the sea. In Christ there is enough of that, of all that which our souls need; enough for all, enough for each, enough for you and me; enough for as many as will come and take of these waters of life. *Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* When God entered into covenant with Abraham, (and it was the covenant of grace that he made with him,) he engaged to be to him *El-shaddai,* a God *All-sufficient,* Gen. 17. 1.—a God that is enough. Justly therefore is that gospel which proclaims this covenant, called a treasure, for in the most valuable durable riches it infinitely exceeds the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces. It is an inexhaustible fountain of life and living waters; it is a bottomless treasure; not a treasure in a chest, but a treasure in a mine, continually searched into, but never wasted.

2. This is safely laid up for a perpetuity, and therefore it is a treasure. It is deposited in good hands, whence we may draw from it, but cannot be deprived of it: it is *hid treasure;* not hid *from us,* but hid *for us:* it is a treasure under lock and key, and it is in the hand of Christ that this key of David is. The riches of Christ, which fill those treasures, are unsearchable riches; are such as *eye hath not seen,* nor *ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive.*

It is hid in God, in his wisdom and counsel, and that eternal purpose which he has purposed in himself, which can never be altered: it is hid in his glorious perfections, which are all made over to true believers for the constituting and ensuring of their happiness by that all-comprehending article of the New Covenant, *I will be to them a God;*—which is treasure enough.

It is hid in Christ, and in his undertaking for us; which contain all that we need as sinners, as God's being to us a God, contain all we need as reasonable creatures. He is the treasurer of this treasure, is intrusted, as Joseph was in Egypt, to dispose of it, as he was to lay it up; and in him it is safe. All the promises of God, which are real treasures, and the best securities, are in him *yea and amen.*

It is hid in the Scripture: there it may be found; thence it may be fetched by faith acting on divine revelation, assenting to it with application and resignation. It is in the parable a treasure *hid in a field,* where it must be digged for; and the Scripture is that field, which we must make ours, and make use of, and then the treasure is ours. The word is nigh us, and Christ in the word.[a] It is hid from the wise and prudent,[b] the worldly wise, who look with contempt upon the field of the Scripture, as Naaman upon the waters of Jordan, preferring before them Abana and Pharpar, *rivers of Damascus*;[c] leaving God's fields for a rock, and for the snow of Lebanon,[d] as the prophet speaks. But it is hid for the humble and holy, the willing and obedient: they have an uncontestable, indefeasible title to it: in it they have a portion that is safe, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through, and steal;[e] a good part, which shall never be taken away from them.[f]

It is a treasure; for it is laid up for hereafter. The bulk of these riches is that which is reserved in heaven for us;[g] a glory that is to be revealed in due time.—It is a treasure, that will not only suit the present exigences of the soul, but will last as long as it lasts, and run parallel with its never-failing duration. It is an everlasting gospel that is preached to us,[h] that word of the Lord which endures for ever, when all the glory of man is withered as the grass:[i] it is a treasure, which glorified saints will be living plentifully and pleasantly upon to eternity.

3. It is of universal use to us; and therefore it is a treasure. It is not only valuable in itself, but every way suitable and serviceable to us. He who has a treasure has that which answers all things;[k] and that the gospel does: it is accommodated to the case of our souls

[a] Rom. 10. 8. [b] Luke 10. 21. [c] 2 Kings 5. 12. [d] Jer. 18. 14. Mar. [e] Mat. 6. 20. [f] Luke 10. 42. [g] 1 Pet. 1. 4. [h] Rev. 14. 6. [i] 1 Pet. 1. 25. [k] Ec. 10. 19.

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in all respects; and the riches of God's glory in Christ Jesus, will, as the apostle speaks, *supply all our need.*[a]

In our contemplations, in our devotions, and in our whole conversation in the world, the gospel of Christ is of constant use to us, does that for us which we need, and which nothing else could do for us. We could have no acquaintance or communion with God, but under the conduct and direction of the gospel; no comfortable enjoyment of ourselves, nor peace in our own consciences, but upon gospel grounds; nor any sure rule of speaking and acting, but that which the gospel furnishes us with in the law of Christ; nor any powerful principle of well-doing, but what is wrought by the Spirit of Christ.

It is a treasure of food for all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is *manna*, bread from heaven; not a pot of manna, but a cloud of manna: The bread which the Son of Man shall give, is that which endures to eternal life, is the pledge of it, and nourishes believing souls to it. It is a treasure of physic for diseased souls, that apply themselves to Christ as their physician; and there is in it a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady. And the universal cures which Christ wrought when he was here upon earth, were an indication of that inexhaustible fulness of healing virtue that there is in the gospel of Christ; as his feeding thousands with a little food, was of the abundant nourishment that there is in it to them who by faith live upon it, to whom his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

It is a treasure of arms and ammunition for our spiritual warfare; a divine magazine, whence the good soldiers of Jesus Christ may be furnished with answers to every temptation, and with the whole armour of God, with which they may not only secure themselves, but resist and vanquish their spiritual enemies, and become more than conquerors.

It is a treasure in the world; it puts honour upon it, and puts good into it. God's love to the world, in sending his only begotten Son, that through him righteousness and life might be brought in where sin and death had reigned, is the best treasure that ever was in it, far exceeding the riches of the sea, or the treasures hid in the sand. The enlarging of the borders of the church, by the spreading of the gospel, is called the *riches of the world*, the *riches of the Gentiles*; and those parts of the world that have the gospel, have no reason to envy those who have the gold, nor should wish to change with them.

It is a treasure to any nation or people. Those are truly rich among whom the word of Christ's gospel has free course, and is glorified; who have it in its purity, power, and plenty; and Christ in that chariot going forth, and going on, conquering and to conquer. As wisdom and knowledge are the stability of our times, so the fear of the Lord is our treasure. Bibles and ministers are the wealth of a nation; the growth of Scripture knowledge, the increase of the gifts and graces of ministers, their zeal for Christ, and love to the souls of men, may be reckoned the growth of a kingdom's wealth, of its honour and of its strength.

[a] Phil. 4. 19.

Let us bless God, that we of this nation, that you of this city, have this treasure, and have it in such abundance; that the gospel of Christ is read, and preached, and professed among us; O that it were more practised, and lived up to! The kingdom of God among us is the treasure of our kingdom; let us see that we bring forth the fruits of it, that we receive not the grace of God therein in vain, lest we provoke him to take it from us, and give it to another nation (for some where or other he will find a place for it) that will make a better use of it. Dread the loss of wisdom's merchandise, more than of any trade; of the liberty of the gospel, more than our civil liberties; and deprecate the threatening inundations of atheism and popery; either of which will rob us of this treasure.

It is a treasure in the heart of every true believer who receives it, embraces it, and is delivered into it, as into a mold. If the gospel of Christ has, as it ought to have, the innermost and uppermost place in our souls, if it command us, if it constrain us, and so if we become interested in its promises and privileges, we are rich, and increased with goods, we are truly rich, rich toward God, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. And out of this good treasure in the heart, a good man upon all occasions brings forth good things, for his own use, and for the service of others: as the good housholder, so the good scribe, who is well instructed concerning the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, from that treasury produces things *new and old*, to the glory of God's grace and truth.

Let us therefore get our hearts enriched with this treasure by a true and lively faith in Christ and his gospel: we are wretchedly and miserably poor till we do this; and then, and not till then, we begin to be wise for ourselves. There are many who through grace, can call God theirs in covenant, Christ theirs, all the benefits of the New Testament theirs. Come, O come, and cast in your lot among them; receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and give up yourselves to him, to be ruled and taught, and saved by him; and as you have received him, and resigned yourselves to him, so walk in him, and you have a treasure which will be your heritage for ever; and in the mean time may be the rejoicing of your heart.

II. Ministers are earthen vessels in whom this treasure is put. What is laid up in order to its being used hereafter is laid up in some vessel or other, where it may be ready when there is occasion for it, or to which those who have occasion may have recourse. Now the treasure of the gospel is committed to the preachers of it, as proclamations to the messengers of the government, to be dispersed; and this is like putting a treasure into earthen vessels.

They are said to have this treasure, not only because they ought to have it, in their hearts themselves, firmly to believe it, and to abide under the impressions and influences of it; for how can they expect to be instrumental in bringing others to the belief and obedience of that which they do not themselves believe and obey? but because they have the exhibiting and dispensing of it to others. They have (as the Levites under the law) the

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the *charge of the holy things*, because if there were not some to whom this charge were committed, that which is every body's work would soon be no body's work. The ministers of Christ are said to be *stewards of the mysteries of God*, and have the keys of the stores committed to them, that they may give to each of the household their portion of meat in due season; it is a dispensation, not a dominion that is committed to them. The gospel is said to be *committed to their trust*, to the use and behoof of the Church of God, and all the members of it, yet, blessed be God, not excluding themselves; their concern, therefore, is to pursue the trust, and to be faithful to it.

The preaching of the gospel is put into their mouths, and they are like John Baptist, the *voice of one crying in the wilderness*, crying as to travellers in a wilderness who have lost their way, and if not called to, will wander endlessly; and they are but the voice, God is the speaker. The applying of the seals is put into their hands, the admitting seal, the confirming seal; by which those are sacramentally invested in the privileges of the gospel, who, by the working of the Spirit on their hearts are become intitled to them: and thus they have the treasure.

1. They are but *vessels*, that afford no more, no other than what is put into them, nor can give but just as they have received. God is the fountain of light and life, and living waters, and all our springs are in him: they are as all other creatures are, (angels themselves not excepted) that, and all that, and that only, that God makes them to be. It is Christ who is the *fountain of gardens*, Cant. 4. 15. they are but *cisterns*: it is the commandment that is the lamp, and the law is light; they are but as candlesticks in which this light is set up, and by which it is held forth.

Ministers must remember this, and religiously adhere to their instructions; and as they must dare to declare the whole counsel of God, so they must not dare to declare any thing else under the name and shadow of that; but must be able to say *we have received from the Lord that which we have delivered unto you*; for a man can receive nothing, which he can depend upon himself, or recommend to others with any assurance, unless it be given him from above. You like not the liquor that tastes of the vessel; nor will a gracious soul relish the doctrine that is of man, and by man. It is the *pure river of water of life, clear as crystal*, which *proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb*,[a] that waters the New Jerusalem, and makes it glad.

People must remember this, and not expect any more from their ministers than from vessels: we have a gospel to *preach*, not a gospel to *make*; we can but *declare* the grace of God, we cannot *bestow* that grace; and therefore why look ye at us, as if we could speak to the heart? What is Paul, or what is Apollos?[b] They are but ministers, not masters; they can but prophecy upon dry bones, but to no purpose, unless a spirit of life from God enters into them; they are but like Gehazi with Elisha's staff, or Elisha with Elijah's mantle; it is the Lord God of both who must do the work.

[a] Rev. 22. 1 [b] 1 Cor. 3. 5.

2. They are but *earthen vessels*: It was agreeable enough to the external glory of the Old Testament dispensation, that the lights of the sanctuary should be put into golden candlesticks, of pure gold: but the glory of the New Testament being spiritual, the exhibiting of the light of that is in earthen lamps, like Epictetus's. Some think here is an allusion to Gideon's soldiers, who, advancing to battle in the night, took lamps in their earthen pitchers, with the glaring light of which, upon breaking the pitchers, the enemy was terrified, and so discomfited.[a] By such unlikely methods is Christ's cause carried on, and yet is victorious.

Let us see why the ministers of the gospel are here compared to earthen vessels.

(1.) They are made of the same mold with other people. All the children of men are earthen vessels; the body is the vessel of the soul, and it is of the earth, earthy; and ministers are partakers of flesh and blood, as other men are, hewn out of the same rock, and digged out of the same hole of the pit.

God has not sent us his gospel by those messengers of his who are spirits, and a flame of fire, but by such as have bodies, and are *clods of clay* and *worms of the earth*, as those are to whom they are sent: they are to you in God's stead indeed, and their embassy is high and honourable; but as Elihu speaks, they also are formed out of the clay; and God in compassion to us chuses to speak to us by men like ourselves, because their terrors shall not make us afraid, as those of angels would, if God should send his errands to us by them; nor shall *their hand be heavy upon us*.

St. Paul has an earthly house, which he expects the dissolution of, and finds already in the dissolving; and St. Peter a tabernacle, which he knows he must shortly put off, though they were both great apostles, and one of them had been in the *third heavens*, and the other in the *holy mount*. And it is not only an honour put upon the human nature, that God is pleased to commit the ministry of reconciliation to those of that nature, but an encouraging token of God's favour and good-will to us, and an evidence to us that he is in earnest in the embassy of peace; for if the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us such things as these, much less would he have shewed them us by those who are our bone and our flesh, who belong to that world which he has justly a quarrel with.

We are not only children of men, as you are, but we are by nature, (blessed Paul puts himself into the number) children of wrath, even as others, guilty and corrupt, and as certainly ruined and undone, without a Saviour, as any of you: we are making the same complaints that you are, and groaning under the same burthens: we have the same need of the merit of Christ for our justification, and of his Spirit for our sanctification that you have: we will never lay any other yoke upon your necks, but what we desire to submit our own to; nor wish you to embark for another world, in any other vessel, but what we desire to venture ourselves and our own salvation in: we would deal for your souls as for our own; for your case is our's; and therefore the priests

[a] Judg. 7. 16.

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were taken from among men, that they might deal tenderly with men, Heb. 5. 1, 2.

(2.) They are oftentimes, in respect of their outward condition, mean and low, and of small account, as earthen vessels are; not only *men*, but *men of low degree, sons of earth*, as the Hebrew phrase is. Their family, perhaps, like Gideon's, poor in Manasseh, and they the least in their father's house,[a] who have nothing distinguishing in their extraction or parentage, their birth or education; they have reason to rejoice (as Christ tells his disciples) that *their names are written in heaven*, but they must never expect to have a name like the names of the great ones of the earth.

The first preachers of the gospel were poor fishermen; earthen vessels indeed, bred up to the sea, and before they were entrusted with this treasure, were unlearned and ignorant men.[b] Christ's kingdom not being of this world, he did not make use of the princes of this world, not men of honours and estates, not their learning or politics; but as the poor received the gospel, so the poor preached it.

And still they are not many mighty, not many noble, who are called to this work; it is honourable enough itself, and needs not borrow any additional lustre from the glory of this world, which God would thus put contempt upon, and give more abundant honour to that part which lacked, as the apostle speaks with reference to the dispensing of spiritual gifts. The poor in the world are often made rich in faith, rich in the gospel treasure.

(3.) They are subject to many infirmities, to like passions as other men, and upon that account they are earthen vessels: they have their faults, their flaws, their blemishes, as earthen vessels have. John Baptist takes notice of it, that it is Christ only who cometh from heaven, and is above all, who is perfectly pure and spotless; but he *that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth:* the treasure is wisdom from above, it is all heavenly and divine; but the vessel in which it is put, has too much in it of the wisdom from beneath; for it is earthen, and savours of its original.

God has chosen not only the weak, but the foolish things of the world, by them to carry on his cause, and by them to carry it at last. *The law made men priests who had infirmity*, and so does the gospel too. Jonah was a prophet of the Lord, and yet peevish and passionate, and often out of temper: Elijah himself was so. St. Peter at Antioch was to be blamed, when he went in with Barnabas into a piece of dissimulation;[c] and I doubt St. Paul at Antioch was not altogether to be justified, when he fell out with Barnabas in a heat of contention.[d] There were those who preached Christ, even of envy and strife; and many who sought their own things more than the things of Christ;[e] and yet as long as they preached Christ, and held forth the gospel treasure, St. Paul rejoiced[f] in it. He was a great apostle, who put himself in, when he said, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*

Ministers are men, and therefore it cannot be thought they do what they do by their own power; they are sinful men, and therefore cannot be thought to do it by their own holiness. They are pressing toward perfection, but they have not yet attained; they own they have not, they own it to you, and desire you will not think the worse of the treasure that is put into their hands, for any mistake or defect of their's in other things: you may see a divine excellency in it, though you see much human infirmity in the vessel that keeps it. Bear with them then, and be not severe in judging them, whom you have so often heard going before you in judging themselves.

(4.) They are made of different sorts of earth, as earthen vessels are; all of the same nature, but not all of the same natural constitution. The bodies of some are of a stronger make, and more cut out for labour, while others are feeble and soon foiled. *Quies meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,—Some have souls that seem to be made of finer mold than others;* the capacities of their minds more elevated and enlarged, while others, who yet have their hearts upright with God, in comparison with them, are but babes in understanding.

But those of the finest mold, even the china vessels, are but earthen ones: the head and the eye in it are made of the same earth with the rest of the body; and those who are of a coarser mold, yet may as effectually answer the end in keeping the treasure, as those of the finest composition. The living creature in Ezekiel's vision, that had the face of an ox, did as good service in his place, as that which had the face of an eagle.[a] Therefore let not those of eminent gifts be puffed up, they are but earthen vessels: nor let those of meaner abilities be cast down or discouraged, God can make them who seem poor, yet to enrich many.

A great deal of difference there is likewise between some and others of those earthen vessels, in respect of natural temper: some are more bold, others more timorous: some more warm and eager, others more soft and gentle. I remember Gregory, in his book *de pastorali cura,—on pastoral care*, observes, that St. Paul, writing to Timothy, bids him *not strive, but be gentle to all men*, and to reprove *with all long-suffering:* but, writing to Titus, he bids him rebuke sharply, and reprove with all authority; for which he gives this reason: "Titus was a man of a mild disposition, and needed a spur: Timothy more sanguine, and needed a bridle." Some are of a sorrowful spirit, reserved, and inclined to melancholy; and that is turned to their reproach, as it was to David's, when he wept and chastened his soul with fasting, Ps. 69. 10. and to John Baptist's, who, because he came neither eating nor drinking, not conversing so familiarly with the world as others did, they said, *He has a devil*, he is a crazed distracted man. Others are of a cheerful spirit, and jocular sometimes, and that shall be made a blemish in their character; as, because Christ came eating and drinking, they called him a *gluttonous man*, and a *wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

So, likewise, as to the manner of exhibiting and dispensing the treasure, there is a great variety of gifts: Apollos is an eloquent man; but Paul's speech is contemptible, (2 Cor. 10. 10.) yet his letters are powerful. Even among the inspired writers there is a great variety of phrase and diction, much more among the other earthen vessels, that are left more to themselves. And all

[a] Judg. 6. 15. [b] Acts 4. 13. [c] Gal. 2. 11, 13. [d] Acts 15. 39. [e] Phil. 2. 21. [f] Phil. 1. 15, 18.

[a] Ezek. 1. 10.

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all these, as far as they have an aptitude to edify some or other, either the learned, or the unlearned, are wrought by one and the self same spirit; and yet by men of corrupt minds, both the one and the other are exposed to contempt. He who delivers his message as St. Paul did, in tears, is ridiculed as a whining preacher: he who delivers it now and then with a pleasing surprising turn, is ridiculed as a facetious one; as Isaiah was bantered for saying, *Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line,*[a] which in the original is a jingle of words, *Tsaf betsaf, kaf bekaf;* and this made a song of, v. 13. *The word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept.* Jeremiah is jeered for saying, *The burthen of the word of the Lord;* and they said of Ezekiel, *Doth he not speak parables?* And yet after all, laid to their charge a thousand things which they knew not; but wisdom is, and will be *justified* of all *her children.*

(5.) They are of different shapes and sizes, as earthen vessels, and vessels of shells used to be; notwithstanding which they may all receive and keep safe, and minister the treasure, according to their different capacities. While they hold the foundation, Christ, and him crucified, and the truth as it is in Jesus, yet in matters of lesser moment, that do not so immediately affect the treasure, there may be a great variety of sentiments, and of practice accordingly.

It was so in the apostle's times: *One believes he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eats herbs; one esteems one day above another, another esteems every day alike.*[b] Both cannot be in the right: yet the apostle interposes not his apostolic authority in the matter to determine it either one way or other; but rather chuses to give a rule, which would be of lasting use to the Church, in all differences, of that kind, when apostolic authority should cease; and that is, each to practise according to their sentiment, with true devotion to God, giving him thanks, and with true charity toward their brethren, not imposing upon them their own sentiments, no, nor so much as judging and censuring theirs, or judging and despising them for practising according to them; that both sides may reserve their zeal for the weightier matters of the law and gospel, faith in Christ, and holiness of heart and life.

(6.) They are all what God, the great potter, makes them; for if they are earthen vessels, they are in his hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter, who has a sovereign power over them; and it is not to be asked, *Why hath he made them thus?* The wise God knows what he designs men for, and what use he will make of them, and fashions their hearts accordingly: *Before I formed thee in the belly,* says God to the prophet, *I knew thee,* and knew what service I would employ thee in, and formed thee accordingly, fitted thee to be a *weeping* prophet in calamitous times.[c] As God intrusts talents with his servants according to the ability[d] he has given them, so he gives them ability according to the talents he designs to intrust them with.

Therefore we ought not to envy the gifts of those who excel and eclipse us; for may not God do what he will with his own? Nor should we be discouraged, though our capacity be small, our faculties weak, and the sphere of our activity low and narrow; if we be faithful in the little we are intrusted with, and diligent to improve it, it may be our comfort, that it is the place which God has seen fit to put us in; and where he has given but one talent, he expects the improvement but of one; for he is not a hard master.

(7.) They are all vessels of use and service in the family, though they are but earthen ones. The apostle observes, that in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold and silver, (the angels who are God's ministers in the upper world, and employed in this, are vessels of gold and silver, vessels of honour) but there are also vessels of wood and earth, which are comparatively vessels of dishonour:[a] but it does not therefore follow, that they are no part of the furniture of God's house: *If the feet shall say, because I am not the hand, or the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body?*[b] God knows how to make use even of earthen vessels, how to make them truly beautiful and valuable by putting a treasure into them, which may be and must be received from them, and use made of it.

(8.) They are oftentimes despised and trampled upon by men, notwithstanding the honour God has put upon them, and are thrown by as despised broken vessels, and vessels in which is no pleasure. So this similitude of the earthen vessels is explained here, in the following verses; where the apostle shews, that he called himself and his fellow-apostles earthen vessels, because they were *troubled on every side, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down;*[c] and because they past by so much *dishonour and evil report as deceivers,* and *unknown,* though they were true and well known.[d]

It has often been the lot of some of the most faithful useful ministers of Christ to be loaded with reproach and calumny, to be exceedingly filled with the scorning of them who are at ease, and the contempt of the proud, and to have all manner of evil said against them falsely. Thus the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, and every way preferable, have been esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter.[e] Our Lord Jesus himself was one whom men despised, whom the nation abhorred.[f] *And the disciple is not better than his Lord;* and Satan finds his account in it, for by casting dirt upon the earthen vessels, he prejudices the minds of people against the treasure that is put into them. "But" (as I remember Archbishop Tillotson somewhere expresses it) "it is no disparagement to be laughed at, but to deserve to be so; nor ought we to think the worse of the food at Christ's table, because it is not served up in plate, but in earthen vessels."

(9.) They are frail and mortal, and dying, and upon that account they are earthen vessels. Thus the apostle explains it here, *We which live are always delivered unto death:* they are dying daily, and yet this is so far from being

[a] Isa. 28. 10. *Per illusoriam μιμησιν verba Prophetarum sub sannant.* Grot.
[b] Rom. 14. 2, 5. [c] Jer. 1. 5. [d] Mat. 25. 15.

[a] 2 Tim. 2. 20. [b] 1 Cor. 12. 15, 16. [c] 1 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10. [d] 1 Cor. 6. 8, 9. [e] Lam. 4. 2. [f] Isa. 49. 7.

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being any allay to the rejoicing which they have in Christ Jesus our Lord, that the apostle protests the truth of it by that rejoicing, as a thing of unshaken certainty. These earthen vessels are soon broke, and return to their earth: they must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: but blessed be God, the treasure in them is not so: the word of the Lord abides, but the prophets do not live for ever.[a]

They are worn out with their labours; and as they spend, they are spent in the service of Christ and souls. They are subject to the same decays of nature, the same distempers of body and mind, the same accidents, and the same infirmities of age as others: they are cisterns at the best, and will shortly be broken cisterns; flowers at the best, and will shortly be withered flowers. *I have said ye are gods,* but *ye shall die like men,* for ye are earthen vessels.

Ministers are workmen, and they shall accomplish as a hireling their day; and having patiently borne the burden and heat of it, shall be called in by the shadows of the evening to receive their penny, and enter into their rest: they are watchmen, and when they have staid their time shall be relieved; they are soldiers, and their warfare will shortly be accomplished; witnesses, and their testimony will be finished: they are Christ's ambassadors, and will be recalled, and an exchange made. This is not the world, that ministers and people are to be together in: O that the one in preaching, the other in hearing, and both in praying, would look upon themselves, and one another as dying! that what their hands find to do therein, they may do with all their might!

III. God has put the treasure of the gospel into earthen vessels, that the divine power which goes along with the gospel, may be so much the more glorified. The great design of the everlasting gospel, is to bring men to fear God, and give glory to him; and that he may be the more glorified, those are employed in propagating it, who were least likely for such a purpose, that his strength may be manifested in the weakness of the instruments. He ordains strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, that thereby he may perfect praise; as if this were the perfection of the divine praise, not only to help the weak, but to employ the weak. And he chuses to make use of such, to confound the wisdom of this world, and that he who glories, may glory in the Lord, and give glory to him.

There was an excellency of power going along with the apostles, which appeared to be of God, and not of themselves.

1. To strengthen them for the work they were employed in; to preach down Judaism and Paganism, and to preach up the kingdom of a crucified Jesus, was a service that required a far greater strength, both of judgment and resolution, than the apostles had of themselves; so that if they had not been full of power by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, they could never have spoken as they did with that wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gain-say or resist; could never have made such vigorous attacks upon the devil's kingdom, nor have gathered in such a large harvest of souls to Jesus Christ. They were in labours more abundant, and yet, like their master, did not fail nor was discouraged; for though they knew and owned that they were not sufficient of themselves for such a service, yet they found their sufficiency was of God, and they could do all things through Christ stengthening them.

2. To support them under the hardships that were put upon them. Therefore God chose the service of such men as were despised, that he might magnify his own power in keeping the spirit he had made, and made fit for his own use, from failing before him. One would wonder, how the apostles kept up their spirits; it was not by any power of their own, but underneath them were the Everlasting Arms; and when they were *pressed out of measure,* above strength, so that they despaired of life, yet they did not faint, being born up by the power of a God who raises the dead. Then it was, that Christ's strength was made perfect in St: Paul's weakness, when he was enabled not only to bear reproaches, and persecutions, and afflictions for Christ, and to say *none of these things move me,* but to rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ; to glory in these tribulations, and even to take pleasure in them. Let it never be said, it was by any power of their own, that the apostles were enabled to bear the shame so boldly, and sorrow so cheerfully, and to die daily, and yet live pleasantly; no, it was according to Christ's glorious power, and by his might, that they were thus strengthened unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.[a]

3. To give them success in that great work to which they were called. The world was to be enlightened with the lamps, and enriched with the treasure that was lodged in these earthen vessels. By their agency the kingdom of the Redeemer was to be set up upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom, the stream of the world was to be turned, the sea must be made to fly, and Jordan must be driven back: this work must be done; and therefore such earthen vessels shall be made use of in the doing of it, that it may appear, that the victorious power that does it, is not that of the apostles, but that it is a divine power; it is not what they have wrought, but what God has wrought by them to make the Gentiles obedient;[b] it is mighty through God; to the casting down of imaginations,[c] and the captivating of high thoughts. The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation,[d] and in that, as in his chariot, the exalted Redeemer goes forth conquering, and to conquer.[e]

O the wonderful atchievements of the gospel! The trophies of its victory over the powers of darkness! The numerous instances of its convincing, converting, sanctifying power! How many sinful hearts have by it been made to tremble, and how many gracious souls to triumph! Had the preachers of it been princes or politicians, had they been philosophers or orators, this success would have been attributed to them; but when

[a] Zec. 1. 5.

[a] Col. 1. 11. [b] Rom. 15. 18. [c] 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. [d] Rom. 1. 16. [e] Rev. 6. 2.

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they are such despicable men, and so despised, men, who, like their master, were of no reputation, it must be owned, that therefore so many are brought to believe their report, because the arm of the Lord is revealed to them.

Now for the application of this.

1. Let us see how this scripture is this day fulfilled, in the removal of the master of this assembly from its head. The gospel treasure was faithfully dispensed here: but hereby it appears to have been put into an earthen vessel, that the vessel is broke, and is returned to the earth out of which it was taken. We are here bewailing the death of a minister of Christ, who was entrusted with the gospel treasure, was enriched with spiritual gifts, and has been in his day instrumental, through the grace of God, to make many rich. But he has finished his course.

My personal acquaintance with him was small, and therefore I wished and laboured, that this service had been put into the hands of some other person, every way better able to do him justice, but since it is thrust into my hands, I think I need not study to do any other honour to his memory, than to take notice of the honour God has done to his ministry, in blessing it to the conversion and edification of many precious souls; which I find there are multitudes ready to bear their testimony to; who, though they have had many instructors in Christ, have called him their spiritual father; for under his preaching the grace of God has turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and those who have been effectually called, he has been many ways instrumental to build up in their most holy faith. And this I know, there were many very judicious christians, and who had spiritual senses exercised to discern things that differ, to whom his praying and preaching were both very acceptable and very serviceable, and who sat down under his shadow with delight: yet none more mindful than he, that he was an earthen vessel. An instance of which comes to my thoughts; I once saw a letter from him, to which, instead of his name, he subscribed himself "Dust and Ashes." Now if those who have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, are to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake, much more are they to be so esteemed, who have obtained this further mercy, to be successful for the sake of the fruit of their labours.

Two things he was an eminent example of;

(1.) Great industry and courage in his work, while his health and strength were continued to him. It is a great blessing to any man to have a good constitution of body, and especially to a minister, and is a great talent that must be accounted for. Such a one he had, and made a good use of it; for he laboured more abundantly, on Lord's Days, on week days, *in season, and out of season*, and was in his element when he was in his work. He took pains in preparing what he preached, and then took pains in delivering it, and did not think that either one would excuse the other; either that if a sermon were well studied, it was no matter how dully, and carelesly it was preached; or that if it were preached with liveliness, it was no matter how slight and superficial the preparation was: no, he knew, that they who are made fishers of men, have need to mind their business, both when they are fishing, and when they are mending their nets.

You who knew fully his doctrine and manner of life, remember with what unwearied vigour he went on in his work for many years; how he went from strength to strength, and his bow was renewed in his hand; with what courage and holy contempt he looked upon the reproach of men, and their revilings, and like the prophet, *set his face as a flint*, for the advancing of serious godliness. And he found that in waiting on the Lord he renewed his strength, and therefore would not hearken to those who suggested, *Master, spare thyself*. Those who are enabled to do thus have reason to be thankful, while those who are not may yet be very useful, and ought not to be discouraged, since God requires, and will accept and bless, according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. So much was his heart upon his work, that he complained of being too much hindered in needed and desired ministrations, in which he would willingly give his pains, as that which was a great grief and burthen to him, I have reason to think, that which at length sunk his spirits, and broke his strength, was not so much his working as his not working.

(2.) Great cheerfulness and holy confidence, when he saw the day of death approaching. Many who are very gay and pleasant while they are well, and in health, when they come to be sick, when painful threatening distempers grow upon them, when they find death working in them, and that they are already taken into the custody of its messengers, how are they cast down, and how is their countenance fallen? But it was not so with him: the cheerfulness of his spirit being founded on a good basis, continued to the last, and he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, as one who even there feared no evil.[a]

He looked back with comfort upon all the way in which the Lord his God had led him in this wilderness,[b] and encouraged his family to trust in God and his providence, from the experience which he had had of God's goodness to him, and particularly in the abundant kindnesses he received from his friends, now in his last illness, which he had a very grateful sense of, and for which he gave thanks to God.

He looked forward with comfort upon a blessed state on the other side death. When he found nature sensibly decaying, he said to some of his friends, "Well, if God has any more work for me to do, he can repair these decays, and will do it; and if not, blessed be God, I have a good home to go to, and this is a good time to go home."

A little before he died, he said to those about him, he had four props, which he staid himself upon, and that he found them firm, and they did not sink under him, when he leaned on them: 1. "The incarnation of Christ, and his taking our nature upon him." 2. "His oblation of himself a sacrifice for our sins." 3.

[a] Ps. 23. 4. [b] Deut. 8. 2.

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" His resurrection from the dead for our justification." And, 4. " The intercession which he ever lives to make for all that come to God by him." These he resolved to rest upon. Thus to him to live was Christ, and to die gain. Christ was all in all to him. Thus, thus he ventured into the invisible world, thus embarked for eternity in the never-failing vessel of Christ's mediation, as a poor sinner in the arms of an all-sufficient Saviour: and it is the excellency of our holy religion, that it furnishes us with living comforts in dying moments, and enables us to triumph over death and the grave, as those who through Christ are more than conquerors.

2. Let us see what improvement we may make of the truth contained in this text; and confirmed by this providence, that we have the gospel-treasure in earthen vessels.

(1.) It may be many ways instructive to us who are ministers, and may remind us of our duty.

[1.] Are we earthen vessels? Then we have reason to be very humble, and low in our own eyes, and to take great care that we never think of ourselves above what is meet, but always think soberly. Let us watch over our own spirits, that we harbour not any conceit of ourselves, or confidence in ourselves, or contempt of our brethren, remembering what we are. We are but vessels, and have nothing that is valuable but what we have received, and are entrusted with; and if we have received it, and received it but in trust, why then do we boast?[a] or what have we to boast of? We are no more, no better than what the free grace of God makes us every day.

We are of the earth, and therefore it becomes us to abase ourselves before God, and to put our mouth in the dust, and acknowledge ourselves unworthy to speak to, or speak from the Lord of glory.[b] We are of the same mold with others, and therefore ought to condescend to the meanest of the flock of Christ for their good; and to be so far from *lording it over God's heritage*, as to make ourselves the servants of all, as being less than the least of all saints, and the meanest creatures that ever called God Father.

[2.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us not be indulgent of our bodies, nor of their ease, or appetites. What needs so much-a-do about an earthen vessel, when after all our care and pains about it we cannot alter the property of it, but brittle it is still, and must inevitably be broken after a while. Let not this earthen vessel be enshrined, and made an idol of, nor the belly made a god of; but let it know its place, let it be kept under, and brought into subjection,[c] and kept employed as a servant to the soul in the service of God: our principal care must be about the treasure, duly to dispense that, and about the vessel, only in order thereunto. We then, indeed, make much of our bodies, it is the most we can make of them, when we make use of them as instruments of righteousness to God's honour.

[3.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us not be empty vessels. A vessel of gold or silver is of considerable value, though it be empty; but an earthen vessel, if empty, is good for little, but is thrown among the lumber. Let us get our hearts replenished with the gospel-treasure, with sanctifying grace for our own benefit, and with spiritual gifts for the benefit of others. Let us be filled with the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, filled with the scriptures, filled with devout affections and holy dispositions, that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work; and, in order hereunto, let us give attendance to reading, to meditation; and, as long as we live, be still improving and adding to our stock, that we may bring forth things new as well as old; and it may appear, though we are still spending, we have still, by the blessing of God on our studies, fresh supplies.

[4.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us be clean vessels. It is enough, that as earthen, we are mean by nature, we cannot help that, but let us not make ourselves vile by sin. Let us possess these earthen vessels in sanctification and honour,[a] as temples of the Holy Ghost, which it is sacrilege to pollute: the bodies of all christians are so, much more the bodies of ministers, with whom the gospel treasure is lodged, who are therefore concerned to keep themselves unspotted from the world and the flesh, lest, if, like Eli's sons, they make themselves vile, they make even the sacrifices of the Lord to be abhorred,[b] as good food is in a dirty vessel. If they must be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord,[c] much more must they be so who are themselves his vessels. Let our conversation be with all purity,[d] not let any blot of any kind cleave to our hands: let us carefully avoid filthy lucre, and every filthy lust, every thing that looks like it, and leads to it. And since it is our business to compass God's altar,[e] let us with the priests under the law, frequently wash in the gospel-laver. Lord, *not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head,*[f] and my heart.

[5.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us take heed of dashing one against another; for nothing can be of more fatal consequence than that to earthen vessels, no, nor to the treasure that is deposited in them. It is not only the duty of ministers in conformity to the design of their ministry to be at peace among themselves, but it is their interest; for if they clash with one another, both sides are in danger of being broken: no better can come of it, when the *potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth.*[g] They who think, because they are stronger vessels they can crush the weaker, should remember they are still but earthen ones, and it may prove a crush to themselves

What if some, according to the light God has given them, stand up for a christian liberty, in those things wherein others, according to the light God has given them, yield to a christian obedience, since there are those on both sides who do it unto the Lord, and give God thanks,[h] why should they judge or set at nought each other? They are both earthen vessels, that have their infirmities, and seeing through a glass darkly may

[a] 1 Cor. 4. 7. [b] Gen. 18. 27. [c] 1 Cor. 9. 27.

[a] 1 Thes. 4. 4. [b] 1 Sam. 2. 17. [c] Isa. 52. 11. [d] 1 Tim. 5. 2. [e] Ps. 26. 6. [f] John 13. 9. [g] Isa. 45. 9. [h] Rom. 14. 6.

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be mistaken;[a] why should they not bear with one another, and love one another, strengthen the hands of one another, since they both are intrusted with that treasure which *consists not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?*[b]

Let us therefore study the things which make for peace, and unite our zeal against popery, that common enemy; for if God, for our sins, should suffer that to prevail against us, it will be a rod of iron to break in pieces all these potters vessels; and we cannot do it better service, than to quarrel among ourselves; for if we bite and devour one another, we shall soon be consumed one of another,[c] at least so far as to become an easy prey to that great devourer.

[6.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us bear contempt and reproach with patience, and not think it strange, or fret at it. It would contribute very much to the quiet and repose of our own minds, if we could but learn *spernere se sperni,—to despise being despised*, and not to be disturbed or moved by it. Now those who over-value themselves, cannot easily bear to be undervalued by others; let us therefore not only by keeping a good conscience have this to say, to those who think and speak ill of us, that it is false and unjust, and our hearts condemn us not; but by keeping the grace of humility in its strength and exercise, have this to say, to those who think and speak slightly of us, that they cannot have a meaner opinion of us than we have of ourselves; nor lay us lower before men, than we lay ourselves every day before God. What else can earthen vessels expect but to be despised, and thrown under foot? Let us make sure the honour that comes from God, and then reckon it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment.[d]

[7.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us often think of being broken and laid aside, and prepare accordingly. We are in use for a while, and it is our honour and delight to be employed in the service of Christ and souls. But what is our strength, that we should hope to be long thus employed? *And what is our end, that we should* expect to *prolong our life? Is our strength the strength of stones? Or is our flesh of brass?*[e] No, we are earthen vessels, and are hastening to the dust; let us therefore work the works of him that sent us while it is day;[f] let us fill up our time with that which will turn to some good account or other, and improve all our opportunities of doing good, though it be in the lowest sphere of usefulness, as those who know and consider the day of our service is hastening off, and the day of our account is hastening on. Let us follow our work with vigour and resolution, that at length we may finish our course with joy and honour; in a believing expectation, that these earthen vessels, though sown as you have seen in weakness, dishonour, and corruption, shall shortly be raised in power, and glory, and incorruption; these *vile bodies* made like *Christ's glorious one, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself*, that in glory as well as grace, the excellency of the power may be of him.

[a] 1 Cor. 13. 12. [b] Rom. 14. 17. [c] Gal. 5. 15. [d] 1 Cor. 4. 3. [e] Job 6. 11, 12. [f] John 9. 4.

(2.) This doctrine may be of use to you all. Are your ministers earthen vessels?

[1.] Thank God for the gospel treasure, though it be put into earthen vessels; nay, thank God that it is in such vessels, that it may be the nearer to you, and the more within your reach; and give all diligence to make sure your interest in this treasure. What will it avail us, that we have the gospel in our land, if we have it not in our hearts; that we have the sound of it about us, if we have not the savour of it within us? That we have bibles in abundance in our houses, and in our hands, if we have not a bible religion reigning in our souls?

You are laying up treasures of this world's wealth it may be; O that you would be so wise for your souls and eternity, as to lay up for yourselves that treasure, which will make you rich towards God? Which will send you rich out of this world, when death will have stripped you of all your possessions and enjoyments here.

[2.] Esteem the earthen vessels for the treasure's sake, that is put into them; esteem them highly in love, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;[a] and such as make use of them, and shew respect to them. The greatest honour and pleasure you can do them, is to draw from the treasure that is put into them, in your profiting by their ministrations, and making your profiting to appear. As far as you find they deliver Christ's errand, receive it and them for his sake.

And since they are earthen vessels, do all you can to strengthen their hands in their work, to forward it, and to further the success of it; and take heed of doing any thing to discourage them. Throw not those vessels to the ground hastily, because in some thing or other they do not please you; for remember they are earthen vessels, and they are your own. They who by their loose and irregular walking, or by their unruliness or peevish strifes, sadden the hearts of faithful ministers, do more than they think of toward the hindering of their work, and the shortening of their days, and perhaps will have a great deal to answer for shortly.

[3.] Bless God that the breaking of the earthen vessel, is not the loss of the heavenly treasure. Ministers die, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and a seed of ministers shall be raised up to preach it, and a seed of Christians to profess it, both which shall be accounted unto the Lord for a generation.[b] Ministers hold forth this light, but it shall not die in their hands; they hold this treasure, but it shall not be buried in their graves; for though we see the end of the conversation of those who have spoken to us the word of God, have seen their exit, and shall see them no more, yet we are sure that *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*[c]

And therefore since Christ has provided, that there should be a succession of these earthen vessels, why should not you look out accordingly? Apply yourselves to him who has the residue of the spirit, and who holds the stars in his right hand, and attend his conduct.

[4.] Let the glory of all the benefits you have, or may have, by the ministry of the gospel, be given to God,

[a] 1 Cor. 4. 1. [b] Ps. 22. 30. [c] Heb. 13. 7, 8.

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Nehemiah 9:38. We make a Sure Coven^t; & write it, & Seal it.

Isaiah. 44:5: One shall Say I am the Lords, another shall call himself by the Name of Jacob, & another shall Subscribe with his Hand unto the Lord, & Sirname himself by the name of the God of Israel.

2 Cor. 8:5. They first gave their own Selves to the Lord; & unto us by the Will of God.

A Fac Simile

Of the solemn evangelical Self-Dedication to GOD, of the

REV. DANIEL BURGESS.

From the Original in the Possession of M^r. Bagster.

Printed for S. Bagster, Strand, 1808.

I do Sincerely and Solemnly give up my Self, my whole Self, unto God, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; Relying upon the Promises, and Consenting unto the Demands of his Gospel Covenant. Resolving thrô the Aids of his Holy Spirit, all my Days, to be for him, and not for Another.

I do Give up my Self unto the God, who is one God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the God and Lord whom I will Labour ever to Serve, and as the portion whom I will ever Seek to Enjoy.

I do Commit my Self and Submit me unto the Lord Jesus Christ, as my Prophet, my Preist, & my King. Giving my Self to Learn his Doctrines, to Trust in his Meritts, to Obey his Præcepts, and to Follow his Example; but not in my Own Strength, but with Dependance on the Holy Ghost, the Great Officer in Christs Kingdom, to Teach me, to be my Remembrancer, to Quicken me, to Strengthen me, to Comfort me, and when I Fall, to Restore my Soul.

Dan Burgess

14th: of May: 1704.

Alexander & Strand.

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to him only, to him entirely; for from him the *excellency of the power is.* No praise is due to us, we have a great deal in ourselves to be ashamed of, and nothing to boast of, nothing to trust to: the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for employing us in his service, and enabling us for it; and therefore let every crown be cast at the feet of free grace, and every song sung to the humble strain (Ps. 115. 1.) *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

[5.] Let the consideration of the frailty and mortality of your ministers quicken you to make a diligent improvement of their labours, while they are continued with you. You have the treasure in earthen vessels, therefore delay not to make it your's, lest the vessels that are most likely to convey it to you, should break, and others such should not be raised up, and so you come short of it. *Behold, now is the accepted time,* therefore put not off the great work you were sent into the world about, to a further time: but *to-day, while it is called to-day,* hear the voice of Christ, and heed it. *Yet, a little while is the light with you,* therefore walk and work while you have the light.[a] He who will not send to you by a messenger from heaven, will not send to you by a messenger from the grave: If you believe not Moses and the prophets, your ministers, when once laid in the dust, shall be no more reprovers to you; nor Samuel be raised from the dead to advise Saul, who would not be advised by him while he was with him. By these, therefore, be admonished now, at length in this your day, to know and understand the things that belong to your peace, lest you despair at the last when they are hid from your eyes.[b]

[a] John 12. 36. [b] Luke 19. 42.

A concise Account of the Rev. Daniel Burgess.

HE was born about the year 1645, at Staines in Middlesex, where his father, Mr. Daniel Burgess, was at that time minister, but afterwards removed to Sutton, in Wiltshire, and then to Collinburn Ducis, in the same county, a very considerable living, I am told, of about 400*l.* per annum; and thence he was turned out by the *Act of Uniformity,* chusing rather to quit it on the fatal *Bartholomew Day,* 1662, than to wrong his conscience; and with what little he had of his own, by the blessing of God, made a shift to maintain and educate a numerous family.

This son of his being looked upon to be a child of extraordinary ability, he sent him, at nine years old, to Winchester school; and, after some time, he was chosen on the foundation, where, as is supposed, he concontinued till he removed to the university. He was entered Commoner of Magdalen-Hall in Oxford, in *Mich.* term, 1660, when we take him to be but about fifteen years of age, so great was his proficiency. That house then flourished much under Dr. Henry Wilkinson, that was then principal of it, but was turned out by the Act of Uniformity. His tutor was one Mr. Northmore, a Devonshire man, of great note for piety and learning, and an acute disputant.

One who was his contemporary in Magdalen-Hall, gives us this account of him, that he was observed to be a very close hard student, and his demeanour in the house was, in all respects, very good.

He continued there till he was Batchelor's standing; but then he and some others his co-temporaries in the same house (Mr. Brice and Mr. Cudmore) scrupling something that was required of them for their degree, as I am informed, chose rather to waive taking it, than to submit to the impositions they were then dissatisfied in.

Soon after that he left the university, and went to his father's in the country, and in a little while went to be chaplain to Mr. Foyl, of Chute, in Wiltshire, from thence he moved into the family of Mr. Smith of Tedworth, in the same county, as tutor to his and some other gentlemen's sons. After some years he was courted by the Earl of Orrery, Lord president of Munster, (who was Mr. Baxter's great friend,) to go over with him to Ireland; which he did about the year 1667.

The Earl set up a school at Charlevill for the strengthening of the interest of the protestant religion in that kingdom, and nominated Mr. Burgess the head-master of it. There he had the education of the sons of many of the nobility and gentry of that part of Ireland. After he left that school, he was for some time chaplain to the Lady Mervin, near Dublin.

He was ordained in Dublin, by Dr. Harrison, Dr. Rolls, and some other ministers there. There he married Mrs. Briscoe, by whom he had a son * and two daughters.

* This son filled, for many years, the honourable office of Secretary to Queen Caroline, and was struck with the palsy on returning from Court.

This son left one daughter, who was, on account of her father's long and faithful services to the queen, indulged with apartments in Somerset House, wherein she lived until all the partakers of the king's liberality were removed, that the building might be used for public business; on account of this appropriation of the buildings to public business, goverument allowed to her a compensation.

This daughter then took up her abode with Mr. Bagster, *Beaufort Buildings, Strand,* with whom she dwelt until her death, in the year 1786.—She was, some years before her death, affected with the disease that proved fatal to her father, but, she so far recovered as to live for years in tolerable comfort, and there appeared a prospect of long continuance in life; but, such is the uncertain tenure of human existence, she fell as walking across the carpet, by which fall she broke her thigh, and which proved fatal. Her remains were interred with her grandfather, in a vault under *St. Clement Danes Church, Strand, London.*

The remembrance of her grandfather's excellence and her own personal merit, induced the late Dr. Gibbons, Dr. Stennel, and Dr. Harris (with whom the *Regium donum* money for the three denominations was intrusted) to pay her kind attention and respect, the latter of these gentlemen was left executor to her will.

He

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He continued in that kingdom about seven years; but his father growing infirm, sent for him over to settle near him, which he did in 1674.

He took up his residence at Marlborough in Wiltshire, where he applied himself closely to the work of the ministry, as the difficulty of the times would permit; for he had the courage to put to sea in a storm, and when very few non-conformists did.

He laboured abundantly, and with great success, at Marlborough, and in the parts adjacent, and afterwards preached statedly at Baden, and occasionally at Hungerford, Ramsbury, Alborn, and other places thereabout.

And, as he was much followed by those who loved and valued his ministry, so he was greatly persecuted by those who hated it, and much hardship he underwent. Being once taken up for preaching, he was committed to the common gaol, at Marlborough, where he had nothing either to sit down, or lie down upon, but was forced to walk all night, till next day his friends got a bed in to him at a window. He was likewise denied a copy of his commitment; but after some he came out upon bail. His prosecutions at assizes and sessions were very expensive to him; and as he laboured, so he suffered abundantly.

The violence of his prosecutors in the country, at length forced him to London, about the year 1685. And there he was when the dissenters had some breathing time allowed them, in 1687, and then he first began to be taken notice of in the city; and some little singularities he had in his preaching, made him to be the sooner and the more taken notice of: and in a little time his hearers were very numerous; and among them divers persons of distinction formed themselves into a society, and took a meeting-place* for him in Bridges-street, near Covent-garden: divers of them were the remains of Dr. Manton's congregation thereabouts. There he continued many years.

After that turn of the tide, in favour of the dissenters, he was advised by a great man to take his advantage against those in the country, who had prosecuted him beyond the law: but he said no, he had freely forgiven them, and would never meditate revenge.

He often said he chose rather to be profitable than fashionable in his preaching, and that he thought it cost him more pains to study plainness, than it did others to study fineness; and he would be willing to go out of the common way to meet with sinners, to persuade them to return to their God. "That is the best key (said he) that fits the lock, and opens the door, though it be not a silver or golden one." And many have acknowledged that they came to hear him at first only to scoff at him, and make a jest of what he said, but went away under such convictions about the concerns of their souls, and another world, as, it was hoped, ended in a happy change of their spirits.

In his preaching he insisted mostly upon the first and great principles of religion, which all good christians are agreed in; and one who was a very competent judge told me, he thought he had as good a faculty in demonstrating them, and making them plain and evident, as most men he ever heard. He much lamented, and vigorously opposed the growth of deism and infidelity among us, saying, he dreaded a "christless christianity." He meddled not with party-matters, or matters of doubtful disputation, but plainly made it his aim to bring people to believe in Jesus Christ, and to live in all godliness and honesty. He was particularly careful to explain the two covenants of works and grace, and to guard against the two rocks of presumption and despair.

He was observed to be very serious in prayer, and not to allow himself there such liberties of expression as he sometimes took in preaching.

He had a great dexterity in resolving cases of conscience, abundance of which were brought him from other congregations as well as his own.

He now and then used some plain similitudes or surprising turns of expression, or little stories, such perhaps as we find Bishop Latimer's sermons full of, (that celebrated preacher and martyr) which, by some, were turned to his reproach; but it is certain many particular stories were maliciously fathered on him, that were abominably false, and were raised by a lying spirit only to obstruct his usefulness; and in the general he was industriously misrepresented by many, who it is to be feared therein discovered no kindness for serious godliness. A gentleman having once the curiosity to go to hear him, when he had done, could scarce be made to believe that that was Mr. Burgess; for, said he, "*I never heard a better sermon in my life!*"

His moderation was known unto all men, and he often said he cared not for being distinguished by any denomination, but that of a *christian* of *Antioch*.

He was a most agreeable man in conversation, (which is all I can say concerning him of my own knowledge,) very ingenious and pleasant, and his discourse good, and to the use of edifying. He had wit and learning, and could use them aright.

He was much respected by many considerable men; and, like St. Paul, passed by honour and good report, as well as by dishonour and evil report. The excellent Dr. Bates, I am told, had a particular kindness for him.

His delight was much in his study, and there he spent most of the day, and was uneasy when he was interrupted, or called from it, unless it were to do some good office. He went from strength to strength in his work, and chose rather to *wear away* than to *rust away*.

It is well known, he had many very sore trials in the latter end of his time, and some of them went very near him: the unkindnesses, at least apprehended, of some of his friends, much nearer than the insults of his enemies: which yet, said he, "I have never inclined to express my feeling of to any friend save *Eloah, Emmanuel* only. But it must and shall be said to the praise of new covenant grace, (so he goes on in the paper I have by me,) of never-failing grace; all my nights are not sleepless, all days are not restless, every friend is not found faithless, nor are all enemies found useless; all disturbed studies are not tasteless, all the disadvantageous sermons have not proved fruitless, all the various

* Which was some years afterwards destroyed by the populace.—Ed.

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ous troubles have not been comfortless, nor the comforts mixed with them successless. Some grapes have been gathered from both sort of thorns, and the dung wherewith the tree is so much soiled, it is hoped will make it the more fruitful. Remember what I add, when you see me not, and when I shall be seen no more, I am near home; and whatever falls on me betwixt this and home, I shall strive myself, and exhort such as you to maintain a holy gospel alacrity and cheerfulness: because it is most sure, 1. Our God approves it, and requires it in all states. 2. Our Lord Jesus is anointed to give it to us. 3. Our holy infirmity-helper is sent to work it in us. 4. Our dangerous enemy is advantaged by our want of it. 5. It is our spiritual bread to strengthen us. 6. It is our bright armour to adorn and defend us. Hereof think you, therefore, in your supplications for yourselves, and for a poor servant of that Lord, whose oblation and intercession we count our best and only riches: content, I hope, (as Luther spake,) to let our names be vilified, so that his name may be hallowed and glorified. I am sure new covenant grace is cordial, and very supporting; and I hope no day shall pass without my experience thereof."

During his last sickness, which continued some months, and was purely a decay of nature, he had a great composure of mind, and was very much in a heavenly frame. He expressed an entire submission to the divine will, often repeating the words of David: *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again to see the ark and his habitation; but if not, here I am, let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his eyes.* He said, if he must work no more, he would rather be "idle under ground, than idle above ground."

His great weakness disabled him from speaking much; but most that he did say was heavenly and profitable. He once said, a little before his death, "I thank God, I have been dying every day in the week. With God is terrible majesty; and that the guilty world will find ere long. Who can dispute an all-knowing God, or evade his charges? But there is a mediator, an Emmanuel, O for a Christ, or else I die! O for that covenanting act to make him ours!

The evening before his death, a friend who came to see him, speaking of public affairs, said, it was feared there would be a storm; he answered with cheerfulness, "but God will house some of his children first." And when he was so weak, that he could scarce speak so as to be understood, he said, *Well, here is all trouble at the gate; but when got through it, no more, no more.* And when he seemed to be fainting away, and one of his near relations thereupon cried out, in a fright, when he recovered himself, he asked what was the meaning of that shriek: "*We thought you had been dying,*" said they: "*And what if I had,*" said he, "*what needed that confusion?*" Thus willingly, thus cheerfully, did he enter into the joy of his Lord.

He was buried at St. Clement Danes Church, Strand, London, January 31, 1712-13.

The books he published were these: *Soliloquies,* which he printed in Ireland. *Mr. Noah Webb's funeral sermon,* in 1675, when he was in Wiltshire. And after he settled in London, *A call to sinners;* written at the request of Judge Rotheram, for the use of condemned criminals. *Three questions plainly resolved. A discourse of the Lord's Supper. Counsel to the rich,* with an address to King William. *Of reconciliation to God. Characters of a godly man, more or less grown in grace. The christian decalogue. Hastiness to anger reproved. Directions for reading the word of God profitably. The golden snuffers,* the first sermon preached to the societies for reformation of manners. *Holy contention for the faith. Duties of parents and children. Proof of the scripture's divine original. Sure way to wealth. Funeral sermons on Mrs. Hook, Mr. Fleming, Dr. Rolls, and the Countess of Ranelagh. A sermon in the morning exercise,* 1689, *concerning the conversion of young people. The most difficult duty made easy: or, directions to bring our hearts to forgive injuries. Foolish talking and jesting described and condemned,* in a sermon on Eph. 5. 4. *Rules for hearing the word, with certain and saving benefit. Forty aphorisms concerning riches. Poisons and antidotes; the sins whereby poverty tempts; and helpful considerations against them. Mrs. Sarah Bull's funeral sermon. The death and rest, resurrection and blessed portion of the saints; with the work of the Redeemer and redeemed. Man's whole duty, and God's wonderful entreaty of him thereunto. Advice to parents and children.* And, *a Latin defence of non-conformity,* entitled, *Appellatio ad Fratres Exteros—A call to the expelled brethren.*

A concise ACCOUNT of Lieut. ILLIDGE,

Fifty Years in the Militia of the County of Chester: chiefly collected from his own Papers.

Christian Reader,

IT is well observed by the Wise Man, (Prov. 14. 10.) that the *heart knows its own bitterness,* and its own fears, cares, desires, joys, and hopes, and expectations; that as there is occasion, it is natural and easy to speak or write most feelingly concerning them. These are those *things of a man, that no man knoweth, save the spirit of man which is in him,* (1 Cor. 2. 11.) which is therefore called *the candle of the Lord, which searcheth all the inward parts of the belly,* that is, of his own heart, (Prov. 20. 27.) especially when this candle is lighted by the word and Spirit of God; and when a person makes it his business to accomplish a diligent search, doubtless, he may arrive at a certain knowledge of his own state and condition, with reference to God and his salvation; by observing the complexion of his own soul from time

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to time, and looking himself in the glass of God's law, he may come to know what *manner of man he is.*

The world sees our ways and actions, and is apt to be either too severe on the one hand, or too favourable on the other hand, in their remarks upon them: but as to this, which is the most hidden, and yet most excellent part of man, the thoughts, the designs, the various workings of the heart, and the secret and solemn transactions between God and it; here a man is best able to draw his own picture: which this good man has done for his own use, in the manuscripts he has left behind him, that he might know (but not with any design to make known to others) what manner of man he was.

What he had done more at large, his friend has in this extract done in miniature, and taken the liberty to shew it to the world. This we find done by some, who, for their eminency in gifts, and learning, and station, have made a much greater figure in the church, and in the world; and it has met with good acceptance, and been of use for the assisting, quickening, and warning of others. And we are not without hopes, that this may have the like good effects; that it will not be despised, but be the more acceptable to some, for its plainness and simplicity, as proceeding from an honest farmer, who was a good husband of his time, and was instructed by the grace of God how to cultivate his soul, as well as his ground, and suffer neither to be overgrown with briers and thorns. These thoughts, expressions, prayers, and self-reflections, may suit the case of many others, as well as his; the tradesmen, the farmers, those who are in a public post, the aged and infirm may here meet with instruction, and especially it may be of use to work in us such a sense of death and eternity as he had, and, as I think, is not common.

I know it will be a surprise to many of his friends, because it represents him to be a better man than, it may be, they took him to be, though, I hope, not a better man than, by the grace of God, he really was: they saw his outside, this shews them his inside; they saw some of his failings, and remember some of his gross sins; here they may see what bitterness they were to him in the reflection. And I cannot but expect, that all good men who loved him, will rejoice and glorify God in him, for the grace given unto him, whereby he was victorious over those foolish and hurtful lusts, to which too many (the more is the pity) still continue in bondage.

The case reminds me of the Apostle's remarks on men's sins and good works, (1 Tim. 5. 24, 25.) some men's sins are open beforehand, &c. *that is, their sins are some way open,* or they had not come under censure; and their good words must be some way manifest, or they can have no right to absolution: so the learned Dr. Hammond understands the text. Then by good works understand such are the genuine fruits of an unfeigned faith, and sound repentance; for God pardons and absolves such, and only such as truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.

But then, as to those his friends and acquaintance, who have gone a great length with him in sin, but yet are not conscious to themselves of such reflections on themselves, as they find in these papers, it does not become me to threaten or judge; but I would with the tenderest compassion warn and exhort them, that they would bethink themselves, as they are reading the following lines, and assure themselves, that there is an eternal difference between good and evil, how industrious soever some may be to confound the ideas of them; and that when they come to die, and enter on their eternal state, they must expect no true peace on any other terms, than those on which, we trust, this good man has both hope and peace; and on these terms, peace be with you. Amen.

The LIFE of Lieut. R. ILLIDGE.

HE was born in Weston, in the parish of Wibunbury, in Cheshire; his father was of Cherlton; his grandmother was of the Pools of Blackwell; his grandfather, his father, and himself, had each four sons, and no daughter. His mother was Cecilia, daughter to Mr. Chesnis, of Mickley in Wrenbury parish, who, besides four sons, had seven daughters who were all married, had children, and died widows.

His father once intended him for the ministry, he having a very good capacity for learning; but neither his father's abilities, nor his own inclination would permit it. However, he made good proficiency in school learning.

When he was about fifteen years of age, being a younger brother, he was put apprentice to a shoemaker in Nantwich, whom he served faithfully; and it was a comfort to him in the reflection long after, that he did so. When he was out of his time, he went about to divers cities and towns, to improve himself in his trade. At last he came to London, where he staid about a year; and it was a satisfaction to him in his old age, to be able to say, that in all that time he did not remember, that he had neglected the religious observation of one sabbath; and that he did not keep ill company, or haunt ill houses, but delighted in the manly exercises of wrestling, leaping, &c. He was at London at the time of the return of King Charles II. And the spring following came down to Nantwich, married Mary the daughter of Richard Price, and widow of William Minshul, and set up his trade, which he followed seventeen years.

But his genius led him more to that ancient, innocent, and honourable employment of husbandry, which, he says, was his chief worldly delight; and therefore, when he was about forty years of age, he took a rack-lease of a farm near Nantwich, on which his father and mother lived and died. It was looked upon by some of his friends as a hard bargain. But by the blessing of God, upon his great ingenuity and industry in improving the lands, he lived very comfortably upon it for thirty years, *rejoicing* with *Issachar* in *his tents.* In the first year of his removal into the country, he lost very considerably by suretiship. He said, his father, on his death-bed, gave him much good counsel, to keep the Sabbath, to be obedient to his mother and master, and not to take tobacco, (he himself having found great inconveniences by

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by it) which he had carefully observed; and (said he) if he had given me the same charge against suretiship, it might, perhaps, have prevented that loss.

His father and mother were religious, and brought him up in the fear of God. He relates in some of his papers, that when he was about ten or eleven years of age, there was a solemn fast kept in Nantwich church, upon occasion of a great drought, where his father and the family attended. Divers ministers prayed and preached; but he was particularly affected with a sermon of Mr. Burghal's of Acton; (who was afterwards silenced by the act of uniformity;) his opening the evil of sin, and man's misery because of it, brought many tears from his eyes. He had a book written by Mr. Burghal, called, "The perfect way to die in peace;" which, when he was old, he delighted much in. After this he betook himself to secret prayer and reading good books, and took pleasure in hearing the word, to which he all along continued a good affection.

After he married, and set up his trade, he was taken into the militia, and continued an officer in it to his death. At the last muster he observed, there was only himself and one more left alive, of about nine score who were in when he entered. He was of a lively, active temper, very bold, and would turn his back on no man, but not abusive or quarrelsome; he loved the soldiers, and they loved him; he took great pleasure in military affairs, and had good judgment in them, which recommended him to the esteem of his superior officers, who loved him.

But this proved a great snare to him; for though he fell not into that height of profaneness that many do, yet he left off to watch and be sober, and for many years lived a vain and careless life; often sitting up till midnight and morning, drinking and mis-spending his time and money; excusing it to himself, that this was the way to oblige the gentlemen, and get an interest in them, for the promoting of his trade, having but little to begin the world with. His reflections upon this long after are: "Happy, thrice happy are they, who not only remember their creator in their youth, but continue to do so from their youth up; which I humbly confess, to my sorrow and shame, that my conversation has been loose and extravagant; I often ventured wickedly upon sin, against knowledge and conscience, and quenched the spirit, and neglected the day of visitation. But this, I can truly say, it was always with regret and reluctance: I have been a great sinner, but through grace, a penitent sinner; both my own sins, and the sins of others, were a grief and trouble to me."

The chief thing that induced him to leave off his trade, and retire into the country, was, because he was weary of this evil course of life, and desirous to break off from that company, which he found to be a snare to him; and he found the benefit of it, and walked much more circumspectly afterwards, and kept a more strict watch upon himself. "Such a day," says he, "I unhappily fell into ill company, and, contrary to my inclinations, designs, and resolutions, was overcome by their enticements to drink to excess: a sin I have been often guilty of, and have cause to repent of all my life long: I have of late years set myself much against it; and not without success, through mercy."—He set down what were the prayers, which, with many tears, he offered up to God on this sad occasion. "Good Lord, in mercy, give me strength and power to overcome this, and all the enemies of my salvation; and hereafter to resist all such wicked and evil temptations, both from men and devils. Lord, Thou art merciful to all true penitents, but a consuming fire towards obstinate sinners: in tender mercy, look down upon me thy poor, unworthy, sinful creature, even one of the worst of thy creation, because I have known thy will, but have not done it. Now, O Lord, if thou shouldest be severe and strict with me, I were undone to all eternity; strike this rock, O Lord, that the waters may gush out, even floods of tears. O purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me in the blood of Christ, and I shall be whiter than snow." He said to one who was no company-keeper; "I wish I had done as you have done. If I were to live my life over again, I would never keep company with those that are given to drinking." Being once at a feast where full glasses were pressed, his parish minister, Mr. Jencks, being present, took him aside, and begged of him not to humour such sots, to his own damage and danger. This good caution confirmed his resolution, and made him more afraid than ever of such company; and through the grace of God, by degrees, he got a victory over temptations to this sin.

Let drunkards who make a mock at this sin, read this and tremble; for it will certainly be *bitterness in the latter end*, how light soever they make of it, taking a pleasure, and taking a pride in making themselves and others drunk, and turning it off with a jest. Let them know, that they must either weep for it, and bewail it with godly sorrow, and by a holy violence used with themselves, must break off from it, and become sober, as this good man did, or they must drink of the cup of the Lord's wrath, which is poured out without mixture in a lake of fire and brimstone, where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and not a drop of water allowed to cool the tongue. For whatever they say, the God of truth has said, *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God:*[a] They shall *not have peace who go on to add drunkenness to thirst.*[b] The wine that *gives its colour in the cup, at the last bites like a serpent.*[c]

And let not those who are unhappily entangled in temptations to this sin, despair of getting a victory over it, through the grace of God, which shall not be wanting to those that desire it, and pray for it, as this good man did, and are careful and faithful in the use of proper means for the improving of that grace. Those who are acceptable to their company, as he was, and, upon that account are courted, and respected in company, have need to double their guard, lest under pretence of obliging their friends, and entertaining them, and improving themselves and others by conversation, they wrong and ruin their own souls.

And let those who are out of the way of temptations of this kind, keep themselves so, and bless God, that they are so happy as to be strangers to this sin, and

[a] 1 Cor. 6. 10. [b] Deut. 29. 19. [c] Prov. 23. 31, 32.

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hope the best concerning others whom they see entangled in it, that they repent in secret of their folly, and that they may yet, through the help of divine grace, recover themselves out of this snare of the devil, in which so many are led, and held captive by him.

When he had attained to the age of fifty-seven, at which age, both his father and mother died, that consideration, with some others, awakened him to a serious concern about his great change, and his everlasting state, and consequently to a closer application to the business of religion: then he began to be more diligent and serious than before, in prayer, reading, and other devout exercises. It was then about the year 1694, that he set himself to write down his reflections and observations upon himself, his meditations and pious breathings towards God, memorandums of the sermons he heard, and very large collections out of the Scripture, and other good books he read, with some account of remarkable providences. This practice he continued from that time to his death, which was about fifteen years; and has left behind him seven books, three quarto's, and four octavo's fairly written, which shew him to be a man whose heart was very much upon another world, and who made it his great care to prepare for that world.

The reasons he gives for employing himself thus, are, because he had made it his chief end to honour the great God of heaven and earth, and his chief business to endeavour the salvation of his own precious and immortal soul; because he would often meditate on death, that he might prepare for his great change, because he would thus employ his vacant hours, that he might keep from idleness, and keep out of idle company. He hoped likewise, that this practice would increase his knowledge, strengthen his faith, and give him more hopes of salvation. He also hoped it might be beneficial to his grand-children, whom he desired to take the same method.

Much of what he wrote, being transcribed out of the Bible and other good books, which might be thought needless, since the passages might be better read in their proper places, he thus excuses for it: that he transcribed those things which he was himself most affected with, and which, when they were collected and put together, would be the more ready for his use and meditation; that the writing of them over, would better settle them, and fix them in his memory; that both the writing and reading of them was pleasant and delightful to him: and that the time he employed herein, would, if not thus spent, in all probability, be worse spent. I wish others would be prevailed with to use the same expedient for the same good purposes.

The motto he wrote on his books was, "Piety is the way to prosperity, both now and hereafter." And thus he writes, "Should I fill my head with good thoughts, and this book with good sayings and sentences, yet unless my heart be filled with sincerity and holy zeal, it is all as nothing." When he staid at home on the Lord's day in the afternoons, which he often did, while he lived in the country, that his whole family might go to church, he spent his whole time in this pious and profitable exercise.

And we shall now have little more to say of him, but what shall be gathered out of his own papers, and delivered in his own words, which it is hoped, may be regarded by some who had a kindness for him, and may make good impressions upon them which may abide. We shall only glean some passages out of many of the same purport, and, for more clearness, reduce them to proper heads.

I. His deep concern about his soul and eternity. His soul was his darling, for thus he writes:

"O my soul, my precious soul, shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in the world? Surely there is an immortal spirit dwelling in the fleshly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, for it must live to all eternity, either in bliss or woe. This never-dying soul I value above all things here below. There is no greater folly or madness practised in this world, than over-caring for the body, and neglecting the immortal soul. The body hath no assurance of life one moment, nor of that dross and dung which most men so inordinately covet, which is transitory and fading, and not to be compared with our eternal concern. Even heathens by the light of nature, did set a great value upon the soul of man; and shall not I then, who own myself to be a christian, have the light of the gospel, and the knowledge of Christ, and many other benefits which tend to the advantage of my soul; shall not I above all things prize and take care of my immortal soul? Sad and miserable is their condition, who neglect their own souls, as the generality of men do. O my soul, let it be thy chief and continual care to seek and secure heaven!"

As he was walking in his fields, and looking on his improvements, he said to a friend who was with him, "All prospers, if the soul prosper. The most precious and valuable thing, that I am concerned for in this world, is my immortal, never-dying soul; which must fare in the next world according as I behave myself in this. O! it is rest for my precious and immortal soul, which I desire and aim at above all things whatsoever." He wondered at those who spent their precious time, so contrary to reason and their own interest, when their immortal souls lie at stake, and are in danger to be lost to all eternity. "All my concerns here below (says he) will shortly end in death; and therefore it is my soul that I set so high a value upon, as the most precious jewel in the world, bought with the precious blood of the Son of God."

He writes this saying of Mr. Mede's: "O take heed thou art not found overvaluing other things, and undervaluing thy precious soul! Shall thy flesh, nay, thy beast, be beloved, and thy soul slighted? as if a man should feed his dog, and starve his child."

In a letter to his friend, who was concerned for his spiritual state, there are these passages: "I have read over and over your good advice, and seasonable admonitions. I take them very kindly, and give you great thanks, and do bless God, and shall do upon my knees, that any take so much care of my immortal soul. I may well take it as a message from God, whose assistance I humbly beg in the performance thereof, with your continued prayers on my behalf, against all the enemies

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enemies of my salvation. With God's assistance, I shall endeavour to observe and keep your instructions, which are both necessary and pious. Your reproofs are sharp, but just and real. Should I go about to vindicate my past course of life, it is in vain; had I done any thing that were well, I am but an unprofitable servant, but shall daily beg for repentance and amendment of life. I desire two things of you; 1st, A frequent part of your prayers. 2dly, When you see or hear of any thing amiss in my conversation, that you would reprove me sharply, I shall take it kindly." So he writes, though to an inferior.

Dec. 16, 1690.

II. His exercise and expressions of repentance.

"It is my heart's desire to repent of all my sins. And I humbly and earnestly beg of God, that he would herein assist me with his Holy Spirit. It is with sorrow and shame, that I call to mind my sins, the sins of my whole life, humbly confessing them to the Almighty God. Lord, I repent, help my repentance, and make it sincere; Lord, I repent, accept my repentance through my blessed Saviour; in whose merits is my only hope of salvation. Lord, I repent, increase my repentance, that I may mourn for my sins all my days. Lord, I heartily grieve for them, and stedfastly purpose, by thy grace, to lead a new life. O seal my pardon in the blood of my Saviour, whom I stedfastly believe in. Lord, accept of sighs for tears; O that I could weep a flood of tears for my sins! O wicked wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? I desire to continue my repentance to my last moment, and to die repenting."

He writes many passages out of the books he read concerning repentance: as thus; "True repentance is a change of the whole man, the judgment, will, affections, conversation; it turns a man not only from this or that particular sin, but from all sin.—He whose mind and desires were before to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and to prosper in the world, and enjoy the pleasures of it, now strives as hard to kill those desires, takes the world for vanity and vexation, and turns it out of his heart. No sin is rightly killed, till the love of every sin is killed. True repentance is turning to God, and setting our hearts and hopes on heaven, so that we now love holiness, and seek God's kingdom above all things in this world. To say we repent, and not to reform; to be sorry for sin to-day, and return to it to-morrow, is but counterfeit repentance."

Many confessions and lamentations of sin we find in his papers, with petitions for mercy: Such as these;

"O God, when I call to mind the sins of my youth, the many and great offences, which I ungratefully committed against thee my God; and when I consider my present state, how subject I am to failings and infirmities, and how apt am I to come short of my good designs and resolutions, I am almost ready to despair, and am full of doubts and fears; but when I call to mind the goodness and mercy, and the sufferings of my blessed Redeemer for me, I conceive some hopes."

"Lord, I am a sinful unworthy creature, that have made no suitable returns for the great and many mercies I have received from thee all the days of my life. Thou mightest justly have cut me off, and thrown me into utter darkness long ago; but, good Lord, pardon my sins, and be reconciled to me, through the merits of my blessed Saviour. I have too much pampered this perishing body, and have taken too much delight in the vanities of this sinful world, little regarding the shortness and uncertainty of my life, and the greatness of that account I have shortly to make. My good desires, endeavours, and resolutions are often frustrated and disappointed; temptations overcome me; these are my daily grief. There is nothing in this world that troubles me more than sin; good Lord, remedy and amend all that is amiss in me, for Jesus's sake."

"O my soul, seek thou the Lord, humble thyself before him, beg for his grace, without which I can do nothing. Lord, I repent, and am ashamed when I look back and consider, how vile and wicked a creature I have been, the many great sins I have committed, none of which are hid from thine all-seeing eye; my sins of omission and commission, of weakness and wilfulness; many in number, heinous in nature. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, thy poor sinful servant, who am not worthy to breathe in thine air, or to take thy holy name into my polluted lips."

"I cannot melt into tears, as I should for my sins; but when I consider, what my dear Saviour suffered for my sake, I find my mind greatly troubled, and the hardness of my heart is my grief. Where must I seek for succour, but from thee, my God? O help me, and deliver me for thy mercies sake. Thou art the only physician that canst heal maladies; O heal this hard distracted heart of mine, compose it, mollify it, make it such as thou wouldest have it, for Christ's sake."

"I have *known the will* of my heavenly Father, but have not done it; therefore deserve to be *beaten with many stripes*. O let me with regret and sorrow look back upon a loose ill spent life, which I must be afflicted in soul for now, and must amend, or suffer for eternity. O let me cry out with the Gaoler, *What shall I do to be saved?*"

"When I look back and consider the number and greatness of my sins, I cannot but admire the mercy of God in sparing me so long: O how often have I provoked his great Majesty to be angry with me, till he had destroyed me, and cast me into hell; but he had spared me, because his mercy and compassions never fail. Ever blessed, praised, glorified, and magnified be thy great and holy name."

"Lord, give me hearty sorrow for all my offences, and grant that I may never be at peace with myself, till I am at peace with thee."

"I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; when I address myself to any spiritual or heavenly employment, when I design to draw nigh to God, and promise myself comfort in communion with him, then is evil present. Could I but enjoy a freedom from it in the season of my duty, and the time of my communion with God, what a comfort would it be! but then am I molested with wanderings and distractions, then is sin most busy. O this is my great misery and burthen. Good Lord, help me out of these troubles."

"Two

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"Two things lie very heavy upon me at this present, and greatly trouble me; ingratitude under great mercies, and impenitence under great sins; Lord, help me under these great straights."

"I strive against sin, but am often overcome; fight, but am often foiled: Lord, assist me in my spiritual warfare, and make me a conqueror."

"The longer I live, the more sensible I am of my own frailties and infirmities, hardness of heart, distraction in duty, want of zeal in the service of God; these are my grievances; the *spirit willing*, but the *flesh weak*. *O wretched man that I am! My sin is ever before me.* But I am resolved, by the help of God, it shall have no rest or quiet in my heart; I will continue to fight against sin and Satan, and all the enemies of my salvation; and though, like the sons of Zeruiah, they are *too hard for me*, yet I will daily beg and pray for thy help, O Lord, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit against them, without which I can do nothing that is good. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me;* but *I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.*"

III. His particular striving against the sin of passion, and hastiness of spirit.

"Lord, thou knowest my frame; I humbly confess, to my shame and grief, that I have been passionate and impatient; it is a misery that has too much attended me in the whole course of my life: the Lord in mercy pardon me, and change my corrupt vile nature; Lord, give me patience and meekness, and an humble spirit, that I may bear with submission all the afflictions that come from thee, my God, and all the disturbances and injuries that are offered me by men."——Through the grace of God, he got very much the mastery of this corruption toward his latter end.

"I bless the Lord, I do what lies in me to live at peace with all men: I am willing to bear many wrongs, and freely forgive all men that have done me wrong; and were I satisfied, that I had wronged any man, I would freely make restitution. I wish harm to no man; if any do to me, I pray God forgive them, for I freely do, as I desire to be forgiven myself. I confess through passion, I may jar with a neighbour, but I dare not bear malice, or harbour revenge in my heart, against any man living, nor ever had one suit or trial with any man in any court in all my life."

"I have read (says he) of a good man, who, when one wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, answered, "When my heart is ready to rise against those that have done me wrong, I presently begin to think of the indignities and injuries that were done to Christ, which he bore patiently for me. If my own servant should pluck my beard, or smite me on the face, yet this were nothing to what my Saviour suffered; and I never leave off thinking on this, till my mind is still and quiet.—Who am I, that I should not be crossed?"

He found great advantage against this sin, by the frequent receiving of the Lord's-Supper; for (says he,) "When I meet with wrongs and abuses, affront and injuries, they disturb and vex my mind, and often put me into a passion; and then in haste, I threaten to go to law: But I presently consider that I am a Christian, that I was lately at the Lord's Table, and must appear there again ere long, if not prevented by sickness or death; and how dare I then harbour malice or revenge? Then I soon alter my mind; for my great Creator hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, and my blessed Saviour hath strictly charged us *to love our enemies, and bless them that curse us.*"

IV. His doubts and fears about his spiritual state, with his good hopes and resolutions.

"When I inspect the state of my soul, doubts and fears arise; especially, when I recollect the number and greatness of my sins, and observe the present hardness of my heart, and dryness of my eyes: I am subject to a wandering fancy and distractions in duty: God seems to frown and to withdraw himself from me. It is sin that is the only cause of this my present misery; but when I think of God's mercies and Christ's merits, and the comfortable promises of the gospel, my hope revives. Lord, my sins are great, but thy mercies are greater; therefore, I will never despair: if I perish, it shall be at thy feet. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be confounded.*"

"I seldom miss any opportunity of coming to the Lord's Table; but I want that sensible joy and communion with God, which many good Christians have, and that inward comfort which is of more value than all the riches in the world. My heart is hard, my affections dull, I am often lukewarm, and unfit for holy duties. Lord, it is thou alone that canst help me, and vain is any other help; of myself I can do nothing; I have none to fly to but to thee; Christ is the rock on which my foundation shall be laid: O pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Thou hast said, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:* these are comfortable words to a poor sinner. Assist me by thy Spirit, good Lord, that I may embrace them, and rightly apply them."

"O when will the happy time come, that I shall be set at liberty from sin and coruption, from the body and the world? When will the cares of this life cease to trouble me, that I may repose in God? His love and favour is the greatest comfort in the world, that will make a death-bed easy, and dying hours comfortable."

"It is the great mercy of God, that hath supported me under many temptations; I have often fallen; but, through the goodness of God, I have risen again: I have been long troubled with doubts and fears, yet have not despaired of God's mercy. Let not his goodness encourage me to presumption or vain hopes, or to think my own case better than really it is; but put me upon striving to enter in at the strait gate, and working out my salvation with fear and trembling, that I may make my calling and election sure, while it is called to-day, because the night is very near, when I shall work no more. Lord, give me grace, though I want comfort."

It was some encouragement to him when he read the lives of good men, to find that they had the same exercises, particularly that of Mr. Philip Henry: "If such an eminent holy man" (said he) "that lived a life of communion with God, yet complained of wanderings and

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and vain thoughts in duty, &c. I will not despond who have the same burthens to complain of."

He also took comfort from a passage he transcribed from the present Lord Bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, which was this: "The strongest encouragement of our endeavours towards heaven, is, that all our defects shall be supplied by the infinite merits of our Lord and Saviour, who knows the infirmities of our nature, takes the will for the deed, and admits honest endeavours in lieu of perfect obedience. The goodness of God is infinite, and his mercy is over all his works."

"I believe (says he) that vain and groundless hope of salvation is the ruin of many, who say, they hope in Christ, but keep not his commandments; whereas, it is not saying, *Lord, Lord,* that he will accept, but doing the will of our Father; it is not my prayers, nor my reading good books, nor writing good things, that will bring me to heaven, without faith and repentance, and serving God in sincerity."

V. His self-examination and evidences for heaven.

"Were I capable I would write something of the hardness and deceitfulness of man's heart, since I can say so much on that subject by woeful experience, for it hath been a continual trouble to me most of my days. "The heart" (says one) "is that which the eye of God is, and the eye of a Christian ought to be, chiefly fixed upon." Many an earnest prayer have I put up to God to soften this stoney heart, and fix this wandering mind: O that at length my heart might be wrought into a right frame: could I win my heart to God, and keep my heart with God, I should think myself a happy man. I pray daily that God would *create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.* O that I could obtain the favour of God, and communion with him, which I value more than all the riches of this world. The light of his countenance, an interest in Christ, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, I desire above all worldly treasures."

"Lord, thou knowest all the secrets of my heart, and all my thoughts afar off, all my present designs and purposes, which, I hope, are well intended; but I want thine assistance. The heart is deceitful, and doubtless mine as bad as any; how then shall I judge of my spiritual state, which most judge too favourably of their own case! If the heart be filled with sin, and so continues with delight, there is no room or habitation for God and Christ in it. O that I could put away all the evil of my doings, and repent with that repentance, which is not to be repented of. So far as I know my own heart, these are my unfeigned desires. Help and assist me, O God, for thy mercies sake. Let thy strength appear in my weakness."

"Let me not censure others, but begin at home, and examine my own conscience, and judge my own heart: I am in the sight and presence of God, whose all-seeing eye beholds all my thoughts, words, and actions; and it is dangerous to dissemble with God, or flatter myself."

Mr. Corbet's inquiry into the state of his soul, was of great use to him in this part of his work. "Doubts and fears arise; (says he,) I feel many conflicts between flesh and spirit; and though the flesh often prevails in some particular instances, yet I trust, through grace, the spirit hath the predominant power. Vain thoughts, unruly passions, often intrude into my heart, but they are unwelcome guests there, and soon turned out. I hope, I shall never offend my God willingly; and that I do not delight or allow myself in any known sin."

"Some of my weak imperfect evidences for heaven are these: 1. My hope is built purely upon the mercy of God and the merits of Christ. 2. My designs, endeavours, and resolutions, are frequently good. 3. It is my desire, delight, and practice to hear the word of God preached. 4. I have a great esteem for all that love and fear God, of what persuasion soever. 5. When I have done any action that I think is pleasing to God, it is my great joy and heart's delight. 6. When I have done any ill action, or committed any sin, it is the grief of my soul. 7. It is a very great trouble to me, to hear the name of God profaned, or his word undervalued, or evil spoken of. 8. I have been averse to law-suits, and to my power, am a peace-maker. 9. I have been always willing and desirous to keep holy the Lord's-day. 10. There is not that person living that I envy or hate, or seek to be revenged on; if any hate me, I pray God forgive them, for I forgive them freely. 11. Though I have been a vile sinner, yet, I hope, I can truly say, that I am a penitent sinner, and desire from the bottom of my heart, to sorrow for all my sins, and to amend my life; Good Lord, help me so to do. 12. I had rather have a heart to love God above all, to love him perfectly, than have all the riches, honours, and pleasures in this world. I would rather lose all things, than the grace and favour of God, and the benefit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I hope, I can truly say with Mr. Corbet, as far as I am able to discern my own heart and ways, I have chosen the Lord for my portion; I take up my rest in him, and not in the creature. To love, fear, admire, and bless him, and to have communion with him, is my chief joy. I am heartily grieved for loving God so little; yet I am certain, I love nothing more than God, and in my esteem and choice, I prefer a spiritual, heavenly life above all things upon earth."

"Lord, I love thee, for I am grieved at thy absence, and rejoice in thy presence, I love those that are like thee; I love the place and duties where thou art wont to meet thy people; I am grieved when thou art dishonoured by myself or others; I would have a heart to love, and look, and long for thy coming and appearing in glory."

His particular actions he examined, by the twelve questions in Mr. H.'s Communicant's Companion, ch. 4. which he transcribed and enlarged upon, concluding: "I have, to the best of my knowledge, examined myself upon these queries, and find that in many things I have fallen short, through negligence and human frailty; but in some things, conscience witnesseth for me, that according to my ability, I have kept my integrity; and I trust for the time to come, that, through the assistance of Almighty God, I shall walk more circumspectly."

VI. His contentment with his lot, and gracious contempt of this world.

Though he lived upon a rack-rent, yet he was very well.

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well pleased with the little he had of this world. Thus he writes: "It hath been my great happiness, through the goodness of God to me, that my passage, through the world, thus far, hath been mostly pleasant and plentiful; I have had Agur's desire, neither poverty nor riches, being ever content with what God appointed for me. I always had a very grateful esteem of my own condition, and have not been subject to murmur and repine."

"It is my trouble, that the care and business of the world doth often take my thoughts off from better things, but I am endeavouring to bring my worldly affairs into less compass, that I may hang the world loose about me, may use it as if I used it not; setting my affections on things above, and seeking, first, the kingdom of God, not doubting, but that then other things shall be added."

"There is not one day of entire peace in these things; but either something troubles, or nothing satisfies. We may be happy without riches and honours, but cannot be happy without grace. It is madness in man to lose their immortal souls, for the dross and dung of this world. He that sets his heart upon this world, can never seek the world to come as he ought: therefore, O my soul, use all the care and diligence imaginable, to take thine affections off from the vanities of this world." Thus little do the things of time appear to those, to whom the great things of eternity are revealed by faith.

Archbishop Tillotson says, "Nothing doth so besot the mind, and extinguish in it the sense of divine things, as sensual pleasures do; if we fall in love with them, they will steal away our hearts from God. Let my soul therefore despise the world, and devote itself wholly to the fear and service of God."

"Worldly things often hinder the good designs of good men, and as for bad men, they carry them headlong to ruin; for they swim down the stream of pleasure, not considering what account they have to make, nor how it will be with them, when they lie gasping and groaning on their death-beds."

He had but little (in comparison) of the good things of this present time; yet he often said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire:" And that he would not thank any one to give him 100l. per annum: For, "I have enough to maintain me, and am content with it; and if I had such an addition to what I have, instead of doing me good, it might perhaps do me hurt." Thus *godliness with contentment is great gain;* it is all the wealth in the world. They who think what they have enough, have enough; and who would desire more? Happy they who bring their mind to their condition.

VII. His private devotions.

It appears, by his papers, that he conversed much with God in solitude. Thus he writes in 1698. "It is my desire, my real purpose and full resolution, to do these two things for the future, as God shall enable me: 1. To fall down upon my knees three times a day to pray, and give thanks to God; so Daniel did, and David, evening, and morning, and at noon. 2. That the first and last thoughts of every day shall be of God; and that as soon as I lie down to sleep, I will call to mind the passages of the day: and how can I spend my time better, when I lie awake in the night, than in communing with God and my own heart. I know the fittest posture for prayer is upon my knees; yet, I believe, God will accept of prayers and ejaculations from his people at any time in any place, if they come from an upright heart."

"I bless God, according to my abilities, I frequently make my addresses to my great Creator, though I am unworthy to take his holy name into my polluted lips: I am sensible of my insufficiency for prayer, yet, I hope, my merciful Father will accept me; for he regards not so much the words of prayer, as the heart and the spirit of prayer; and he rejects no humble faithful suppliant, be his speech ever so weak; even broken words will serve, if they come from a broken heart. Prayer without sincerity is a lie to God. Lord, give me wisdom from above, and teach me to pray, so that my prayers may be acceptable to thee, my God; that every prayer may come warm from the heart, may be an effectual fervent prayer, which availeth much. If we employ both head and heart in the service of our prayers, then we may pray at all times, and in all places. Whenever we have a heart to pray to God, he has an ear to hear. It is the heart God requires in this duty; for a dead dull heartless prayer is an abomination unto the Lord."

He much esteemed a book, called "The Liberty of Prayer," written by Mr. Jencks of Harley, read it much, and wrote many excellent passages out of it. He was for praying *always with all prayer;* and despised neither prayers by a form, nor extempore prayers, thinking each to have their excellencies at several times; and that he who truly loves prayer, will truly love both.

In his family he prayed daily, and usually read the Scriptures, or caused them to be read, and sung psalms, There he used mixed prayer, as Dr. Fuller calls it, partly a form, which he wrote down in his book; containing the essential parts of prayer, which always remained unaltered; but adding many moveable petitions to it, as the Spirit of God enabled him, and as there was occasion.

"A prayerless family (says he) is no better than a beast-house, and indeed a den of thieves, where God is robbed of his tribute, and their souls of the benefit. He that will undertake to prove that prayer is needless in families, shall oblige them to be his humble servants, or any one's, but his that made them."

VIII. His worship of God in public.

He attended the public worship of God in his parish church every Lord's Day, and was sure to come early, though he was near two miles distant from it, yet he could say, he had never been absent from it any Lord's Day for seven years, except twice, and then his occasions called him to other parish churches. In the afternoon, when he lived in the country, he often stayed at home, that he might send all his family to church, because he thought he could spend his time better at home, than any of them could: but when he came to live in the town, he constantly went to church both parts of the day; and, at noon on the Lord's Day, a chapter

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chapter was read to his family, a psalm sung, and concluded with prayer.

He wrote down, when he came home, the text, and what he could remember of the sermons he heard, that he might have the benefit and comfort of reviewing them afterwards.

But he was in a special manner exemplary, for his diligent and serious attendance on the ordinance of the Lord's Supper; which he rarely omitted whenever there was an opportunity for it in his parish church, which usually was eight times a year, and he made very solemn preparation for it. Much of what he has left behind him in writing, is sacramental meditations, partly his own, and partly gathered out of good books; Mr. Gouge's, Mr. Flavel's, Mr. Shower's, and others.

"According to the dying charge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (says he,) I do frequently attend at the Lord's Table, and do that *in remembrance of him*, as he hath required. Lord, I dislike none of thy commands, they are all good and reasonable; but I find fault with my own wicked heart, that I do not more heartily love, and more readily obey them, I bless the Lord, I have been seldom absent from his table these many years, and have found great benefit by frequent communion. I am sorry when I see but a small appearance at the Lord's Supper. Some are absent, because they love their sins and will not part with them, and so slight their souls; others, because they over-charge their hearts with the cares of this world. Mr. Jenks our minister told us, "All worldly business is either lawful or unlawful; that which is unlawful in the name of God renounce it: that which is lawful and used with moderation, rather fits a man for the sacrament than otherwise." "Others are absent upon a mistake, that they can never be well prepared to receive."

He usually spent one day in fasting and prayer in secret, before the Lord's Supper; and sometimes two. "These two days, (says he,) I desire to set apart for the worship and service of God, with a full purpose to make what preparation I can, by the grace of God, for receiving the holy sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*. To that end, I will, as God shall enable me, humble myself, and with sorrow and shame confess my manifold sins to my merciful Father, who is a sin-pardoning God: I am ashamed, and do repent of all my sins; and it is my heart's desire not only to confess them, but to forsake, detest, and abhor all manner of sin whatever. Lord, grant that I may not bring one beloved sin to thy Table. Thou hast promised pardon to all that truly repent, and eternal life to all that believe in thy Son: Behold, O Lord, I heartily repent of my sin, and stedfastly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, putting my whole trust in him alone for salvation. Enable me, O Lord, by thy grace, to persevere to the end, that I may be blessed for ever, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

Thus he writes; "To-morrow is a day of great concern, not for our bodies, but our souls, for we are to meet the Lord at his own Table. O with what humility, reverence, repentance, faith, charity, ought we to appear there? I have endeavoured to prepare myself, setting this day apart for prayer and meditation, especially on the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, both in his life and at his death. I hope that my striving and struggling is a sign that I am not dead in trespasses and sins; for a dead man strives not. I beg of God often, and heartily, that I may be upright in all my duties."—But he afterwards writes: "At this sacrament my heart was but dull and sluggish, which is my great trouble; I thought I took some pains with my hard heart in my preparations, yet my endeavours proved ineffectual at this time. God be merciful to me a sinner, for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Another time he writes: "I did appear at the Lord's Table, and receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, I hope to the benefit and advantage of my precious and immortal soul; I found much joy and comfort in the ordinance, and it was very delightful to my soul. Lord, bless and sanctify it to me, and grant, O God, that I may ever bear upon my heart those promises and resolutions, which I make at thy Holy Table."

And thus; "O Lord, I dare not approach thy Holy Table in my own strength or merits, but in the strength and merits of my dear Saviour Jesus Christ; for I know, when I have done all that I can, to fit and prepare myself for thy Table, my endeavours will be found imperfect; yet, I will hope and trust in thee, my God, for thy help and assistance, and the free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins, through the mediation of my dear Saviour, and this I beg for Jesus sake, and for thy mercy sake. Amen, Amen."

And thus; "I often call to mind that memorable saying of Mr. Flavell: "The Lord's-Supper and the point of death require equal seriousness; we should go to that ordinance, as if we were going into another world." O what need is there of an awful composed spirit, when we approach the Lord in this ordinance. O that I could humble myself at this time, and examine myself, and search and try my heart and ways, that I may find out my errors, and where my unfitness lies, that I may repent and amend! O how unsuitable is a dry eye, and a hard heart to such an ordinance as this! Now would I free myself from all my cares of this world, be in perfect charity with all, and be affected in prayer and meditation. The chief things this vain world affords, are honours, riches, and pleasures: I desire no greater honour, than the love and favour of God; no riches, but an interest in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and benefit by him; nor value any pleasure like communion with God: Lord, grant me these, and I desire no more."

"Lord, I stretch out the weak arm of my faith towards thee; O stretch out the mighty arms of thy power and mercy, and come and save me. I am fearful that I am not rightly prepared, but I hope this is an error on the better hand; then are we most fit, when we are most humble and ashamed in the sense of our own unfitness. I will, by the grace of God, use my best endeavours, acknowledging my own insufficiency. The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak; therefore will I beg of my heavenly Father, that he will direct, assist, and accept of me, through Christ my Saviour. Let this unspeakable love of thine constrain me to obedience."

Once

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Once when he was prevented from this ordinance by an unexpected throng of worldly business, which he thought did for the present unfit him for it, he writes, "It was a great trouble to me that I lost such an opportunity; Lord, pardon this great neglect, this sin of omission, and prepare me, by thy grace, to embrace the next opportunity.

His prayer, sometimes, after the receiving was, "O most glorious Lord God, let me now sing praise to thy great name; for blessed are they that dwell in thy house, and are fed, though it be with the crumbs that fall from thy table; and now I have tasted, and seen how good thou art, and that thou hast heard my prayers, and granted my request: O that I might never depart from thee, or be weary of thy service. Strengthen me, O Lord, against all manner of sin, that I may say with the princely prophet, *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* Direct me, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, and carry me through this vale of tears, this valley of the shadow of death, for Jesus' sake." *Amen.*

When he received the Lord's Supper, upon the account of his office, he writes, "I doubt there are many who come upon this occasion, and neglect the duty at other times, which is a sad thing; but let me begin at home, and not judge other men, but examine myself."

IX. His thankfulness to God for the mercies he had received.

He often expresses himself much affected with the goodness of God to him, the memory of which he abundantly utters. In August 1697, he thus writes: "This being the 60th year of my age, I thank my God, who hath spun out my days to this length, I praise the Lord, that he hath made me a reasonable creature, a man, and not a beast; a christian and not a heathen; that he hath planted me in a protestant nation, blessed me with the light of the gospel, which I value above all things: *Come, behold the works of the Lord,* what he has *done for my soul!* I have a competency to live upon; though it seems but little in the eyes of some, yet, I bless my God, I think it sufficient, and am therewith very well content. I have enough to keep me while I live, and bury me when I am dead, and that is sufficient. Naked came I into the world, and brought nothing with me, and naked shall I return, and carry nothing away with me."

"If I look back, and review the mercies of my life, they are innumerable: I shall only name some; I never was arrested or imprisoned in all my life; never had a joint put out, or a bone broken; never received any great hurt or wound to use a surgeon; have been long in the militia, yet never was in one battle, so peaceable have our days been. I have had much dealing in the world, yet never had a trial in any court, which has made my life the easier. I never was assaulted by thieves, nor had my pockets picked. I have lived in repute and credit, and never under any disgrace or scandal; and what false reports have sometimes been raised of me, never turned much to my prejudice. I have had many creature comforts, good wives, good children, hopeful grand children, kind friends, and loving neighbours, *&c.* My lot is cast in a fruitful soil, where the gospel flourisheth, and is frequently preached, when many, more deserving than I, have lived in poverty and affliction, or have been grieved with wicked relations, that have brought down *their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.* My passage through the world has been very pleasant."

How may this good man's thankfulness to God shame those who, instead of caring and working for a livelihood, and paying a great rent, as he did, live at ease, receive great rent, and deliver all their care and business upon the heads and hands of others, and have every thing about them pleasing to a nicety, and yet seldom think of their obligations to the God of their mercies, or give him praise for his favours to them.

But see how he was affected with these mercies, "Lord," (says he) "it is owing to thy goodness, not to any desert of mine, that my life has been so comfortable. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits? I will acknowledge his goodness to me, and praise him while I have a day to live in this world. O that I could in some measure walk answerably to the goodness of God to me! Lord, thou hast given me abundance of temporal good things, give me spiritual grace, and I ask no more. Yet, he adds, the present pleasures of my life, shall never extinguish in me the thoughts of death, because the one is certain, the other uncertain."

He often expresses his thankfulness to God for public mercies; for peace, and plenty, and health in the nation, especially our happy enjoyment of the gospel; that not only our civil rights and liberties, but our religion is secured to us by law; that our land is not a seat of war. And he writes with great compassion concerning those countries that are so: "Sure no nation under the sun enjoys more mercies than we in England do at this time. I am obliged to praise God, not only for particular mercies to me and mine, but for his common mercies to the land wherein we live. Blessed be the God of heaven for them; and again, I say, blessed be his great and holy name for evermore. How great is the patience and forbearance of God towards us, though our sins cry aloud for vengeance; and we are very ungrateful for the mercies we receive. Some do not like the present government; others grudge at the taxes; others are highly offended at the toleration; and some are scarce content with any thing, not considering the calamities of other nations. How barbarously the poor protestants of France have been used by their tyrannical prince, and what desolations he has made with fire and sword in many of his neigbouring countries, though of his own religion."

X. The sense he had of his afflictions.

Undertaking in his old age, to give an account of his troubles, thus he begins: "My greatest trouble is for the sins that I have committed." Which he took all occasions to reflect upon with godly sorrow, abhorring himself, groaning under the burthen of corruption, longing for deliverance, and crying to heaven for help. His books are full of passages to this purpose: wondering at those fools who can make a mock at sin; who plead for it, laugh at it, turn it into a jest, and glory in it; forgetting

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getting the nature of God, the worth of their souls, and the awful eternity they are so near. Though such may have the name of christians; it is but the name. O what heart-piercing thoughts will such have of eternity shortly; and they will be themselves astonished to think, how they could possibly make so very light of these great things.

His next trouble was, worldly care and business; "Which" (says he) "is often a great hinderance to my devotion, distracts my head, disturbs my mind, and makes me unfit for holy duties. An affable temper hath been injurious to me: I have been always ready to serve my neighbour or friend in any business that I was capable of, whereby I have lost much time; but I have therein endeavoured to do good, and shew, that I love my neighbour as myself. But I earnestly desire, that I may desist from worldly business one year or two before my death, that I may have the more time to prepare for it."

His next trouble was, the painful infirmities of old age; Stone or gravel in the kidneys, sciatica, and the like. "Though I live (says he) with much content, yet not without a thorn in the flesh; scarce a night passes without smarting pain; but it is God's goodness that it is not worse; I have reason to bear it patiently; for it is less than my sins have deserved. Though the outward man grows weaker, I hope, the inward man grows stronger. Lord, cast me not off in the time of old age." A book written by Mr. Corbit of Chichester, when he was grievously afflicted with the stone, was of great use to him, and he collected much out of it; concluding, "Lord, put thy Spirit of grace and meekness into my heart, that I may bear with patience whatever thou art pleased to lay upon me, and help me to follow this good example. I can truly say, my pains and distempers have very much drawn my mind off this world. *It is good for me I have been afflicted.*" He wrote down divers passages of Scripture, to comfort himself with under his pains: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth, for he maketh sore, and bindeth up. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest.* And many the like.

Being once wonderfully delivered from hurt by a dangerous fall from his horse, his foot hanging in the stirrup, so that he had been in all likelihood killed, if his shoe had not happily come off, he writes thus of it; "In my distress, I said, Lord, have mercy on my soul, for I see that my life is gone; my hope was in God, to whom I cried for deliverance, and he heard me according to his word: *Call upon me in the time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.* God granted me deliverance, and shall not I now endeavour to glorify thee, O thou preserver of men? O let this for ever engage me to keep close to Christ my refuge; and make me say with Ezra, since thou, Lord, hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments? Lord, grant that I may never forget thy goodness." He failed not to give thanks to God for the mercy, upon the yearly return of the day.

XI. His zeal for the suppression of vice and profaneness.

When the minister of his parish, and others of his neighbours, (well affected to religion and virtue,) joined in a society to promote the design of her Majesty's pious proclamation, *for the preventing and punishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality*, by *informing* against offenders, in order to the putting of the laws in execution, he was an active man among them. Though many opposed this good work, and reproached them that acted in it, yet he knew he had the law of God and the land on his side, and was not discouraged in it. This good design was countenanced and encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury's circular letter to the Bishops of his province, dated April 4, 1699, the printed sermons of the Bishops of Ely, Salisbury, Chester, Chichester, Dr. Stanhope, Dr. Willis, Dr. Kennet, and other dignitaries of the Church. The Lord Bishop of Oxford thus addresses himself to those societies: "Ye brave and truly heroic souls, who have entered into a holy confederacy, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. your adversaries are numerous and powerful; the prince of the power of the air, with his rulers and companies, and the children of disobedience upon earth, in whom he worketh, all evil spirits, and all wicked men; and from these you must expect the most vigorous and obstinate opposition. But be not afraid of their terrors, remember that the battle is not your's, but God's, &c." Much to the same purpose is collected in the account of the progress of the reformation of manners, the thirteenth edition. It is therefore a great surprise and grief to all good men, to find those societies represented quite otherwise by Dr. Sacheverell, in his Assize Sermon at Derby, Aug. 15, 1709. Where he says, "That under the sanctified pretence of reformation of manners, they turn informers, assume an odious and factious office, arrogantly intrench upon other's christian liberty and innocence, and under the shew of zeal and purity, the most infallible token of a dexterous and refined hypocrite and knave, turn the world upside down. And these troublesome wasps erect themselves into illegal inquisitions; and whatever godly and fallacious glosses they may cast upon their actions, they are doubtless the unwarrantable effects of an idle encroaching, impertinent and meddling curiosity, the base product of ill-nature, spiritual pride, censoriousness, and sanctified spleen, pretending to carry on the blessed work of reformation, by lying, slandering, whispering, backbiting, and tale-bearing, the most express character of the devil, who is emphatically stiled The grand accuser of the brethren. No wonder then, that St. Paul has so severely stigmatized these busy-bodies in other mens matters, by ranking them with *murderers* and *thieves*, as the most proper persons to keep one another company.

When this good man was told, he would be accounted a bus--body for joining to this society; he said he valued it not, so that he was doing good, and were honouring God. He gives this account of it; "We met about twenty of us at our minister's house, the last Lord's-day in the month, after evening prayer, to consult about carrying on the good work of the reformation of manners in the parish; and we had pretty good success.

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cess, many were restrained from open profaneness, the poor relieved; but we met with discouragement from some, whom we hoped, would have encouraged us."

Once coming into a public house, and hearing a gentleman most profanely swearing, though a stranger to him, he desired him to forbear; said he, "Thou art some Presbyterian I warrant thee." Said the Lieutenant, "Pray sir, what church are you of?" "Of the church of England," said he. Then said the Lieutenant, "I am sorry you are of the same church that I am of, for you are a disgrace to it."

"I once" (says he) "heard a friend of mine talk atheist-like, very profanely: I reproved him, saying, "Sir, why do you talk so wickedly? Do you think there is neither God nor Devil, heaven nor hell?" He answered, "It may be there are such things, but I know not where they are." I answered, "Sir, in time you may know, to your own sorrow and amazement." By this time he doth, for he died lately.

XII. His charity, especially for the teaching of poor children.

He was very liberal to the poor, according to his ability. A worthy Knight giving away many of Mr. Gouge's tracts, entitled, *Surest and safest way of thriving*, one of them came into his hand; after he had read it, he wrote down his resolution, which was from that time forward, to double his charity. He loved to employ poor workmen, and was kind to them, saying, they worked hard for a little money.

He wrote down such passages as these, to stir up himself to charity: "It is not he that possesses wealth, and keeps it by him, that is rich, but he that distributes it in charity, which will make men rich for ever. When thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thyself; and what thou with-holdest another shall possess. Give to the poor, and it shall be given thee; it is lent to the Lord, and God twice repays it: in this world by a blessing on thy wealth, and in heaven he repays it over again. Thou shalt have in grace, what thou partest with in money."

He contributed very cheerfully to the teaching of poor children, and bought divers of that little book, called, *The guide to heaven*, to give away, and had a great esteem for that book; generally carried one about him to read at his leisure. He much rejoiced in the increase of the charity-schools, and was pleased to see the children taught at those schools, carry themselves reverently at church, and hear them say their catechism. When he died, out of his little, he left ten pounds to the charity school in Wibunbury parish.

XIII. His respect to good ministers, and his grief concerning those who were otherwise, and his lamenting our unhappy divisions.

As he had a reverence and love for God, so he had for all his; his day, his people, his ordinances, his ministers. He was, in judgment and practice for the church of England, as by law established; "for" (says he) "it is my belief that a man may, by the grace of God, live as holy a life in this church as in any." He does in his books bless God, for the learned and pious clergy of the church of England. It rejoiced him to hear (a few days before he died) the present Lord Bishop of Chester, preach so excellent a sermon at Nantwich, that had the marrow and substance of the gospel in it, on 1 Tim. i. 15. and to hear of that excellent charge he gave his clergy, to teach their people the necessity of divine revelation, the divine authority of the scripture, and the divinity of our Saviour, and to press holiness of life; and that they should set a good example, and deny themselves in lawful things for the good of their people; and refrain from public houses: and as to those protestant dissenters, that carried it humbly, and as they ought, they should not be behind hand with them in love and kindness. He rejoiced that the church had many such.

He had a great value for Mr. Jenks, who was minister of Wibunbury, and died July 19, 1700. "I got much benefit to my soul, (says he) by his good preaching, and exemplary living. He was a man of a good natural temper, an ingenious preacher, sober and temperate, very charitable, and of a public spirit. He used his best endeavours to promote religion in the parish. I have heard him reprove sin, and idle talk very boldly. He was diligent in the duties of a minister. He was a constant reader of the prayers, and frequently administered the Lord's Supper; carefully catechised the children and servants in the summer time; visited the sick in all quarters of his parish, both poor and rich; would go to any part of the parish to baptize children that were sick, and not fit to be brought to church; took a deal of pains to get subscriptions for the maintaining of petty schools, to teach children to read. He did his utmost towards the suppression of vice, particularly the punishing of the filthy sin of fornification in the parish: but herein he was opposed by some, to his great grief, which made him often say, that christianity was come to a very low ebb among us, when men that profess christianity, hinder the punishment of vice and debauchery. I asked him once to spend his two-pence with me: says he, "I never went to an ale-house, on purpose to spend two-pence, in all my life." For repairing the vicarage-house, and improving the glebe, he exceeded most men, and endeavoured all that in him lay, to promote all the concerns of the church. Mr. Lancaster preached his funeral sermon, on Acts xx. 20. *I have taught you publicly, and from house to house*: and gave him a very high character, which he well deserved." After the funeral, Mr. Lancaster came to Lieutenant Illidge, took him by the hand, and said, "You were none of those that grieved your minister."

"In the time of our vacancy," (says he) "it was my frequent prayer to almighty God, that he would be pleased to send us a minister that truly feared God and loved religion." He also took the boldness, in his great zeal, to write a letter to my Lord Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry, who is patron, beseeching him, for Christ's sake, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to provide for this great parish (being eighteen townships) such a minister as may answer the great charge and trust he undertakes; one truly religious, laborious, and an able preacher, that may bring honour to God, and our holy religion, &c. praying God to direct his Lordship

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Lordship in the choice. And when his Lordship had presented Mr. Bromfield, the present incumbent, and he had had some trial of him, he writes, " What great cause have I to thank and praise the Lord, who hath heard my prayers, and sent us such a good minister." Some time after he wrote to Mr. Bromfield, expressing his great satisfaction in him as his spiritual guide, and begging his pious advice and instruction in his spiritual concerns; " For it is from your mouth (saith he) that I receive the good word of God, and from your hand, I receive the holy Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, and according to your counsel I purpose to proceed, as God shall enable me." He prayed earnestly for his minister, that he might live long to the glory of God, and might be an instrument of the conversion and salvation of many souls.

Concerning the divisions among us, he thus writes; " I own myself to be a member of the church of England, which, I think, is not exceeded by any other in purity: I was baptized, and have continued in that communion all my days, yet have great charity for protestant dissenters, that truly fear God, and love religion. I am much troubled, when I hear such abused, and reproached, and scorned by wicked and profane wretches, that will swear, and curse, and be drunk, and stick at no manner of debauchery; and yet boast, that they are church of England men. God knows, these are a disgrace to our church, and a great scandal to religion. These are the men that undermine the church, and are drawing down judgments on themselves and the whole nation. And some of our high clergymen will preach against profaneness in the pulpit, but allow it, and laugh at it in the ale-house; and will rather reproach and persecute an honest dissenter, for truly serving God, than make complaint of, or endeavour to punish a profane swearer, a drunkard, or a debauched wretch that blasphemes the great God. We have good laws against profaneness, but not put in execution: it is as the prophet Hosea says, *like people, like priest.* I once reproved a minister for setting in idle company, and hearing a deal of obscene and wicked talk. He answered, " I am not to reprove such things out of the pulpit." So careless and lukewarm in religion are many of them. They live loose lives themselves, and grow envious at those who serve God after a more serious manner, though of their own communion, and true sons of the church. Doubtless it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for such men, especially those that persecute and reproach the servants of God; whoso offends one of these, better he were thrown into the sea with a millstone about his neck. Good Lord, in mercy turn the hearts of those blind guides, who call themselves the ministers of Christ, but discover the contrary, by their ambition and pride, and seeking revenge upon their poor dissenting brethren, rather promoting animosities, than using means for peace."

" Another time" (says he) " I was in company at dinner, where there were many that count themselves of the high church, and abundance of cursing and swearing there was among them; and though there were some clergymen at table, they shewed no dislike of it, nor gave one word of reproof to the swearers. I very much suspect, that such men are no ministers of Christ, who can stand by, and hear their Master abused, and have nothing to say on his behalf. Indeed of late, there is a generation of young clergymen among us, who are proud, and idle, and loose, and fitter to go to school, than to the pulpit."

Let none blame him for his zeal in this matter, since he himself knew, by sad experience, what influence the ill examples of the clergy have upon others: for he remembered with grief, that above twenty years ago, when he himself lived a careless life, he sat up one Sabbath night, drinking till the next morning, and two clergymen were in company with him all that time; one that had preached that day, and the other the minister of the parish: towards morning, when they had drunk the house dry, one of the ministers gave money, to knock up another house to get more drink. When he came home, his wife asked him, how he could answer his mis-spending the evening of the Lord's Day so: he replied, he had been with two ministers, and he did but as they did.

Then when he lived at large himself, he was very severe against the dissenters; but when he saw the errors of his ways, he was troubled for it, and became very moderate towards them; hearing them often reviled by those, who themselves led bad lives, he set himself to inquire concerning them, acquainted himself with some of them, and looked into their books, and found they were not the men they were represented to be, but men worthy to be loved; and then, though he continued in full and constant communion with the church to his dying day, he was himself reproached as a presbyterian; which very much confirmed him in his good opinion of them: " For" (says he) " our high churchmen will scarce admit of one serious christian among us; for if a man begin to have that character, he is branded with title of a presbyterian." Certainly they cannot do the presbyterians a greater kindness, nor the church of England a greater diskindness than using such language.

It grieved him to hear some make such a noise against those, whom he knew to be good christians, calling them schismatics, when they themselves who made that noise, he thought unfit for so great a charge of souls, by reason of their immoralities, their small qualifications, or their envious, unchristian, malicious tempers. He wondered how men could make so light a matter, of souls, as by their unnecessary impositions, to force men either to a sinful compliance, or, (as they call it) a " damnable schism." Upon his reading the conference at the Savoy, between the bishops and the ministers, commissioned by King Charles II. he told his minister his judgment was, that the fault of our divisions lay at those bishops' door, who had power, and might have prevented them.

He prayed often for the healing of our divisions, and comforted himself with those words of the learned Bishop Stillingfleet: " God will one day convince men, that the union of the church lies more in the unity of faith

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faith and affection, than in uniformity of doubtful rites and ceremonies.

XIV. His spiritual improvement of common occurrences.

Some of the many occasional good thoughts which we met with in his papers we shall set down.

Nov. 1st, 1699. "This, I understand, is my birthday. I now enter upon my climacteric year sixty-three, a year in which it has been observed that many die: I have found, in reading lives, that Tertullian, St. Bernard, Luther, Melancthon, Justus, Jonas, and many others, died in that year of their lives. Death is a debt I owe, and must pay ere long, whenever the great God demands it. Lord, I am willing to submit to thy holy will: do with me what thou pleasest; my time is short, my work is great, my strength is small. Lord, help me to improve that short minute of time which yet remains."

"I have lately set my house in order; and, I hope, have made an honest and equal distribution of that worldly estate my good God hath given me, endeavouring, in all things, to die with a good conscience, which will be comfortable in a dying hour."

"I have now past one month of the doubtful year, and am so much nearer my end. I endeavour to stand upon my guard, and to watch, because I am uncertain when my Lord cometh."

At the latter end of the following summer he writes, "Now the days begin to shorten, an emblem of my estate; my days decline; winter and death are coming on; wise men provide for both. Most men take care of their bodies and earthly concerns; but most wise and happy is that man that takes due care of his soul, and his eternal concerns; that in health prepares for sickness and death."

At the return of the year he writes: "I have now out-lived the doubtful year; and, I praise God, have meditated more of death this year than formerly; and, I hope, shall continue to do so all the days of my life. Death will come, and that ere long. The young may die, but the old must die. A friend of mine, not long since, said, rejoicingly, "Now I have out-lived my climacteric year, I hope I may live a great while;" but he died the year following. And I know death hath the same power over me this year, that he had the last, only waits for a commission from him, in whose hand are all men's lives; nay, I cannot assure myself of one day, so uncertain is the life; and the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. I hope I shall never live out of the expectation of death, while I continue on earth. Lord, help me to watch and pray, my glass is still running, my dissolution draws near, but the time is uncertain; therefore I must wait the Lord's leisure, whose creature I am, and to whom I owe all possible obedience,—his time is the best time."

When he entered upon his seventieth year, he writes, "I may very well expect death may seize me before this year be ended: I find great decays in myself of late, so that the time of my dissolution must of necessity draw near. Should I out-live this year, and God should add more days and years to my life, I am sensible they would be but labour and sorrow, as Moses speaks: but I will refer all to my merciful father, and resign myself wholly to his will and pleasure. It is high time to bestir myself; for the day is far spent, and the night is coming, when I must work no more. I am now arrived near the end of my journey: I have almost done with the world, and the world with me: I have hitherto passed without any signal troubles; and if now, in the close of my days, God gently lays his afflicting hand upon me, I have no reason to complain; but must own it is what I have deserved, and it is good for me that I have been afflicted. No man is more miserable than he that has no adversity."

"Such a time there was great cock-fighting, and horse-races about the town; but I saw none of them, having a more serious concern in hand, to prepare for my great change. What will all the pleasures of this world avail us, when we come to lie upon a death-bed?

When he had compleated his seventieth year: "Lord," (says he) "make me wise to salvation; teach me so to number the few minutes of my time that yet remain, that they may be spent to thy glory, and the benefit of my own immortal soul. I have lived much longer than ever I expected. Lord, as thou hast given me length of days, with much comfort and contentment, grant me the joys and comforts of thine everlasting kingdom for Christ's sake." Jan. 1st, "Lord, as thou hast given me life and health to enter upon a new year, so I pray thee give me a new heart, renew a right spirit within me, order all my affections according to thy will, that I may love what thou lovest, and hate what thou hatest; that I may abominate all my old sins, and may become a new creature in Jesus Christ; that I may spend the ensuing year to thy glory, and the good of my own soul. One year passeth away, and another comes; and still I am nearer the time of my dissolution: as the old year is expired, Lord, grant that all my sins may expire: as the new year is begun, Lord, give me a new heart, and new and earnest desires, to persevere in godliness all the days of my life."

"Old Mr. Henry desired, that if it were the will of God, he might live no longer than he was useful; and my desire is, that I may not live so long as to be troublesome."

"Now autumn is come. The days grow short, so doth my life; it declines every day, and is near expiring. It is the greatest wisdom, in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his business of dying is half done. A diseased pained body will unfit the mind for holy duties; therefore it is good to labour in health, and make our peace with God then. Grey hairs tell us, as the golden leaves on the trees in autumn, that our fall is near, and it is highly dangerous to defer our repentance to the last. Many on their death-bed are sorely handled; some seized in their heads, and rendered insensible; and how can the great work be done then? A virtuous life never thought ill of death. A good conscience, and a well-grounded hope of salvation, will encourage a dying man: yet good men may be oppressed with doubts and fears upon a death-bed, and go to heaven even by hell-gates."

One year he writes; "There is a great shew of a plentiful crop this year; which yet our God, if he pleaseth,

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pleaseth, can deprive us of. The famous Mr. Hooker, (as I have read in his life,) when he was offered a benefice in London, desired rather to have a country parsonage, where he might see the blessings of God spring out of the earth. And a pleasant thing it is to see the fruits of the earth spring up, grow, and in a little time come to maturity. O that we may not set our hearts too much upon those things, so as to neglect the main business."

Another year he writes: "We have had a plentiful crop, and good harvest-weather: What shall we render to the Lord for his mercies? Lord, with these, give us thy grace, and peace, and truth, in our days."

He records an awakening providence, which fell out to his great grief: "This day a dear friend of mine was suddenly killed by a fall from his horse. He was well, and dead in a moment. O how uncertain is the life of man! Lord, imprint this upon my heart, that I may bear it in my mind, while I have a day to live; and may watch and pray, because I know not at what hour my Lord comes. O that I may from henceforward be more diligent than ever in making preparation for death, that whether it be natural or violent, sudden or slow, it may be happy."

About the same time, a young man wickedly set himself to drink brandy to that excess, that he died upon the spot; a self-murderer. And another lusty young man suddenly fell down dead in his master's shop, and never spoke a word more. These three sad accidents happened in and about Nantwich, in less than three week's time. On which he writes, "How foolish are they that set their hearts upon this world, which we are to look upon as an enemy, that will flatter us with its pleasures, but will deceive us, will kiss, and kill. We have heard of many that have spent their time very ill, yet, at their death, have had their eyes opened, and their consciences awakened; one crying out, "Call time again!" Another, "Alas! my life is done, and my work is undone!" Another, "O that God would try me once again!" O that men were of the same mind now, that they will be of then! And do that which they will wish they had done, when it is too late!"

"Such a time Mr. Bromfield preached excellently of repentance, and the danger of delaying it, at the funeral of a young man struck dead with lightning in a moment, in his full strength. It was indeed a thunder clap, for warning to us all that are left behind, to watch always; for who knows what a day, what an hour, what a minute may bring forth."

"Though death doth not come suddenly to all, yet it comes unexpected to many, and unwelcome to most: but as Archbishop Tillotson saith of Mr. Gouge's death: "To him no death could be sudden, because the constant employment of his life, was the best preparation for death;" so that it was rather a favour and blessing; the more sudden, the more easy."

"Such a day my mother-in-law died, (in 1708,) the only person, save one, that has died in my family of thirty-six year; and now it has pleased God, by death, to make a breach in my family; how it may proceed, the only wise God knows, who doth all things well, to whom I humbly submit myself, trusting in him, that he will give me strength and patience to bear whatever he is pleased to inflict upon me, living or dying; for he is my merciful Father."

"O let me not lose one moment of this precious time: let me not waste it in idle trifles and folly, but employ every moment of it in doing that work, which my Father hath sent me to do: if I do this, my time, how short soever, will be long enough; but if I squander it away in doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, I shall find the want of it, when it is too late."

As he thus improved the occurrences of his own time, so he delighted very much in reading church-history, especially the lives of good men, both ancients and moderns, and made large collections out of them. "It is my delight to read the lives of good men, and my earnest desire to imitate their good examples: The Lord enable me so to do."

He read with much affection the lives of the martyrs, admiring what they suffered for their dear Lord and Master. "Methinks, (says he) I that have lived to a sufficient age (then near sixty-two) should embrace a natural death willingly, when so many, in the midst of their days, have, with great joy and satisfaction, suffered cruel and violent deaths, and have declared they would rather die than live. A well-grounded hope of salvation will make a death-bed easy." He gathered many things that were very helpful to him out of the life of Mr. Philip Henry.

Having collected many excellent passages out of Mr. Burghal's book, called, "The perfect way to die in peace." He adds, "I knew Mr. Burghal of Acton very well: he was a serious godly divine, was cast out of his living at Acton on Black Bartholomew-Day, 1662, among a great number of his pious brethren all England over. The more the pity. I have heard him preach often; once in Nantwich church a soul-searching sermon, that did much affect me."

XV. His desire of retiring from the hurry of the worldly business.

When he grew near seventy years of age, he grew very weary of the hurry of the world. "It hath been my desire (says he) several years, to desist from business, and retire into privacy, that I might give myself wholly to the great work of preparing for the world that is to come. I have often wished, and am still of the same mind, that I were in some private place, where I knew none, and none knew me, provided it were a place where piety was practised; I would fain make an end with the world, before death thrusts me out of it."

He had designed it several years before; but it was not till a little more than a year before his death that he removed from his dwelling in the country into the town of Nantwich, that he might be free from the encumberance of the world, which he found had been an hinderance to him in his soul's concerns, and that he might be near the church. He was sensible the town had more temptations of another kind, which had formerly been sometimes too hard for him; but he put his trust in the grace of God, to deliver him from them, and armed himself with these considerations: "If I should

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now relapse, and return with the dog to his vomit, how miserable would my condition be? I should account myself a cast-away, and undone to all eternity, and it had been better I had never known the way of righteousness: *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.* I must daily watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation; and happy they, whose last days are their best days, and their last good works more than the first."

He reserved but very little to maintain himself; but said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire: and now I hope not to remove again, till I am removed by death; which, I suppose, will be in a very short time. Lord, thy will be done in all things, whether life or death."

Some time after his removal into the town, he wrote thus: "I praise the Lord, I find much comfort and satisfaction in my late removal: I am quit from a great deal of worldly care and trouble, which I have been a long time cumbered with. O then, (my soul,) since I am retired into privacy, according to my desire, let me strive and endeavour all that in me lies, to make the best use of it, that I may more and more contemn the things of this vain world, and set my affections on things above."

Yet still he found his true rest was not in this world. All our removals, while we are on this side Canaan, are but from one wilderness to another. It is in the future state, not in this, that there is a true and everlasting rest, remaining for the people of God.

XVI. His advice to his grand-children.

He directs one of his little books to his three grand-daughters. "My blessing (says he) I freely give you; and my earnest prayers are to Almighty God, that he will bestow his blessing and grace upon you, that you may live holy, and die happy. This is the earnest desire of your poor aged grandfather. I am not capable to give you that advice that I fain would; however, I will do my best, and hope you will all take notice of it, and observe it, when I lie rotting in the dust.

"In the first place, and above all things, serve the Lord in spirit and in truth; love him with all your heart; count all things here below of no value, in comparison of God and Christ; be careful to keep God's holy laws and commandments; be frequent in prayer, and hearing the word. He that will taste the love of God, must be no stranger to meditation and prayer, and must not be cold or inconstant in them, but dwell and walk above with God. He must be wholly addicted to improve the talent he is entrusted with. His design and trade on earth must be to do all the good he can, and to keep his soul clean from the flesh and worldly vanities, and to such a soul, God will make known his love. Good children, I entreat you again and again, to serve God, and then he will bless you: live religious lives, then you will be happy here and hereafter too. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth; for godliness is great gain; as you sow, you will be sure to reap. Think not to do ill, and yet hope that all will end well. I love both your bodies and souls, and would have you do well for both, by living in the fear of God."

"Have a special care of your reputation; for it is better than precious ointment, and rather to be chosen than great riches. Remember the verse you learned;

> Thy credit wary keep, its quickly gone;
> By many actions got, but lost by one.

"The way to get and keep a good name, is to live in the fear of God, to be modest, and chaste, and virtuous, will please your God, rejoice your friends, and turn to your own comfort. I charge you all, in the name of God, to take heed of the society of vain, loose, young fellows; let not such come into your company, nor scarce into your sight, or thoughts, but flee from them as from a lion or a bear."

"Earnestly implore divine grace to guide, counsel and establish you; for, without that, we can do nothing. Remember God's eye is ever and every where upon you. Endeavour to live in godly families; dwell where God dwells, and be in such company as you hope to be with in heaven: then at death you will only change your place, not your company. As death leaves us, judgment will find us. Nothing flies so swiftly, as the soul out of the body. Eternity hangs on a moment, for such is our life. Ask your hearts every night what you have done this day, because any night may be your last: work, pray, believe, repent, get assurance of heaven, and be happy for ever. Earthly comforts are short-lived; riches have wings, beauty is but skin-deep; all is but vanity. A frothy wit, and a vicious life will carry directly to atheism, which is the master-mischief of this age. Thoughts are not free, nor words kind; they will both judge us another day. Get ready for death; it is a great word to say upon good grounds, *I dare die.* Redeem time, for how cutting will the remembrance of good hours ill-spent be!

"Be obedient, loving, and dutiful to your father, take his advice in all your concerns, both spiritual and temporal. O that you would all of you be as great a comfort to your father as he hath been to me. He is now above forty years of age, and I can truly say he never vexed or grieved me in his life, but was always dutiful, loving, and obedient to me. I must own that he hath been a great assistance to me in my spiritual warfare: be you sure that you all strive to rejoice and comfort your father's heart, as he hath rejoiced and comforted mine."

"As to your mother, you had but little knowledge of her. It pleased God to take her out of a troublesome world, when you were but infants. She was a pious, modest, good woman. I pray God you may be like her; and that her virtues may, by the grace of God, be stamped upon all your hearts. She was a pattern of piety and patience. From a child she was discreet and serious, not in the least given to pride or vanity. In disposing of herself, she took the advice of her pious and judicious parents. She was of a solid, serious disposition, and mighty cautious what company she entertained, or came into."

"Good children, as you tender your own good, or expect the blessing of God, and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, do not slight or despise the advice

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vice or counsel of a poor dying grandfather. Though I yet live, it cannot be long, this being the sixty-seventh year of my age, therefore I am daily expecting and preparing for my great change, which you may observe, if you will take the pains to read over the following weak meditations; and as I wrote them for my private use, I desire they may not be exposed to the scorn of bad people."

Dear children, I shall conclude my weak advice with some few profitable texts of scripture, Rom. 8. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Heb. 13. 16. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not.* Ps. 50. 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God.* Deut. 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*

Now the God of all mercy, power, and love, bless you all, and keep you in his true faith and fear, in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, for evermore. Amen.

XVII. His expectation of, and preparation for death.

This was indeed the chief subject of the papers he wrote. One might collect a little volume of his serious thoughts about death, and the passages he wrote, referring to this. It was the sense he had of death approaching, that put him upon all this concern about his soul, and he had the comfort of it in his dying hours.

Sept. 6, 1698. "It is my serious thought, and heart's desire, to note down, or compose something in way of preparation for my approaching dissolution. I am now above sixty, my head hoary, my eyes dim, my strength fails, the chips fly off, and the tree must fall. It is great wisdom in all to prepare for death, especially the aged. The young *may*, the old *must* die. It is an unwelcome messenger to most men; but it is great folly to strive against such a stream, and neglect a work that must be done. Death is most certain, and nothing more necessary than a due caring for the soul, and a serious preparation for the hour of death, and the day of judgment, which is my real purpose. Good Lord, for thy mercies sake, direct and assist me in this most great and necessary work, by thy Holy Spirit, that I may persevere in this my duty, all the days of my life, till my change come. To this end it is my design, to collect some texts of scripture that treat of death and judgment; also the sayings of some good men, and my own weak sentiments adapted to my own condition." *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayers. Cast me not off in the time of old age. Be not far from me, O my God, make haste to help me.* Now, *when I am old and gray-headed, forsake me not. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Job 14. 14. *If a man die, shall he live again,* &c.? Rev. 13. 14. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,* &c. Ps. 89. 48. *What man is he that lives, and shall not see death?* Gen. 3. 19. *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* Isa. 40. 6. *All flesh is grass.* Jam. 4. 14. *What is your life but a vapour.* Ps. 39. 5. *Every man at his best estate is vanity.* Mat. 24. 44. *Watch therefore: Few days and full of trouble. Lord, make me to know my end.* Heb. 9. 27. *After death, the judgment.* Ecc. 12. 14. *God shall bring every work into judgment.* 2 Cor. 5. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

"It has been my earnest desire and endeavour to leave sin before it leave me. Who will not arm himself against an enemy that threatens every hour? Our breath is in the hand of God: We may be well one moment, and dead the next. Many have gone well to bed, and been dead before morning. The time when, the place where, the manner how, are all uncertain. Many are taken away, not only in the midst of their days, but in the midst of their sins. It is my earnest desire to make my peace with God in time of health; that I may not have oil to buy when I should burn it. It is dangerous deferring repentance; that makes a death-bed uneasy, and dying hours uncomfortable."

"Mr. George Herbert on his death-bed, said, "I am sorry I have nothing to present to my merciful God but sin and misery; but the first is pardoned, and a few hours will put a period to the latter."

"He that lives well cannot die ill; but he that lives without fear shall die without hope; he that hath no grace in his life, can have no true peace in his death. The longest day has its night, and the longest life has its death; that man's soul is in no good case, that is loath to think of dying."

"When death calls, I believe I shall be as willing to go, as flesh and blood will allow; for I am willing to part with every thing in this world. I desire to live in continual expectation of death; for that will make a man more careful to serve God, and will make a pious life the more pleasant; it will check inordinate desires of the world, and it is our Saviour's express command, *Watch always.*"

"It is a serious thing to die: it is a work by itself. A dying friend once said to me, "It is a hard thing to die." It was the saying of one; "If thy youth have been faulty, it is a comfort if thy age be otherwise;" It is bad to be wicked, but worse to continue so."

"What thoughts hast thou of thy dying hour, and thy departing soul? It must ere long be required of thee; will Christ receive it? Hast thou made sure of that? If not, thou hast done nothing, but art undone to all eternity. If life be of such value, as we think it is, what are our souls worth? But we are earnest in pursuing shadows, and let go the substance; we busy ourselves about trifles, and neglect the most weighty matters."

July 15, 1700. "I desire, it may be my daily practice while I live, and am capable, to meditate something of death, and of my dying hours." Mr. B. in his treatise of self-denial, gives many reasons, why we should submit to death, and be willing to die. "Our lives are not our own, but his that doth require them, and he is Lord of them. The greatest potentates must undergo the stroke of death. All things in heaven and earth are at God's disposal: he gives and takes life at pleasure. How many beasts, birds, and fishes die, to feed us! The best saints have trodden this path before us. Our Lord Jesus drunk of this bitter cup, to conquer death, and unsting it for us: the best may be afraid, but death puts an end to all their fears: It is joy when it is over. We should be willing to leave this wicked world, to go to the glorious society above." One would think these considerations

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considerations sufficient to make any Christian willing to part with life freely.

And afterwards he writes, "It is the greatest wisdom in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his dying work is half done. I ought to do so more especially now; for my parents both died before my age. I had three brothers, and all dead; and this is my climacteric year. I desire, that thoughts of death may fill me daily, that I may make it familiar to me."

—— One says, "O foolish soul, I wish thou wert as covetous after eternity, as thou art after a fading perishing life; and after the blessed presence of God, as thou art for continuance with earth and sin. Did we but love God as strongly as the worldling doth his wealth, or the ambitious man his honours, we should not be so loath to leave the world, and go to God. Turn thy thoughts from the vanities of this world; set thyself to study eternity, and busy thyself about the life to come; labour to get your hearts into heaven, and doubtless yourselves will follow after shortly."

——"I have here no abiding city. Let me not set my affections on the things of this world; let me often consider, that this poor body of mine shall become as noisome as the vilest carrion, must be laid in the earth, and become a prey to worms; but my soul shall still live to all eternity. Death hath no power over that immortal part. I praise the Lord, and it doth rejoice my heart, that I have of late fallen into this method of considering and meditating much on my latter end."

——"I often see younger and stronger than I go before me; yet it must be my lot ere long. Forbearance is no acquittance; death will not be put off, or bribed."

——"It is the greatest concern of life to prepare for death; but alas! it is too much neglected by the most of men, who put the evil day far off, and promise themselves long life, when they know not what a day may bring forth. They that will not remember death, death will be sure to remember them; and they that put off the thoughts of death, will certainly be surprised at last, and seized unawares, to their everlasting amazement. O deceitful hopes! how many have you deluded? And while you promise men old age, you have cut them off in their youth: then all the treasures, pleasures, and honours of the world will avail nothing: then, to have the favour of God, an interest in Christ, and a good conscience, are the things that will stand us in stead, and make a death-bed easy. Good Lord, in mercy help me, that I not only write these good things in my book, but may practise them."

——"I doubt too many never think of dying till their dying day comes; and then what would they give to escape it? Then what promises of new obedience, which yet prove abortive, like Pharoah's? Many are like seamen; they never seek God for help, as long as they are able to help themselves. O my soul, remember death, remember that eternity, which thou mayest begin to-day, or to-morrow, but never end."

—— One says, "I must be at God's disposal, whether I will or no: there is no rest for souls, but in the will of God. Our own wills have undone us; they have misgoverned us; they are our greatest enemies, our disease, our prison, our death, till they are brought over to the will of God. There is no true peace or felicity, but in the conformity of our wills to the will of God."

——"To prepare for my great change is my chief concern in this world: it is an important business of a high nature: it is the concern of my soul, which is of more value than all the world. Mr. Shower has many excellent sayings suited to my present purpose. The life of man is short and fleeting; our days on earth few and uncertain: how careful then should I be to manage every hour well? All the time that is past is irrecoverable, and the little that remains flies apace: how quickly will it be gone? How suddenly may an unexpected stroke of death conclude it? And this is all the opportunity I have of making my peace with God, and preparing for an everlasting world. I can have no business of greater moment, than to secure the happiness of my soul in another world: for what will all other business signify in the end, if this be neglected; but how have I trifled away my precious time in sloth and idleness, in foolish mirth and hurtful company, in vain thoughts and impertinent discourses? Lord, make these meditations effectual, to prevent my loss of time for the future, which, sooner or later, will be esteemed precious. O how swift, how short is my time of trial, in order to eternity? How difficult, how important a work is it to prepare for an everlasting state? What is all this world? how little, what a mere nothing, to a departing soul? And shall I continue to pursue shadows, and please myself with empty dreams, being so near my final judgment?"

Let me therefore endeavour to impress the consideration of death and eternity, as at hand, more deeply on my heart, that I may walk and live, may discourse and pray, and demean myself in every thing, as near an unchangeable state. My time is near an end: I must shortly take death by the cold hand; Lord direct and assist me in this great concern."

——"Remember this, (O man,) that *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* This is a mourning verse, which God himself delivered to Adam. Thou art but a bubble; thy life as the passing of a shadow. Why dost thou heap up riches, O thou covetous wretch, when as this night thy wealth may be taken from thee, or thou from it."

——"I praise God, the thoughts of death are often in my mind, and my great change still before mine eyes. My time is short, my days that remain are but few; yet, I fear, I do not make that preparation for death that I ought. *In me, that is, in my flesh there dwells no good thing. To will is present, but how to perform that which is good, I know not.*"

——"I may well expect the summons of death every day: the most earnest business I can set about, is to prepare for it; and, in order to that, to consider often how it will be with me, when I lie gasping and groaning upon my death-bed."

——"Therefore I often think of death, because it is my earnest desire, that when it comes it may not be terrible to me. Death has some terror in it, therefore I would learn how not to fear it. The way never to fear death, is always to think of it."

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" To meditate on mortality is necessary for all, especially the aged. Our glass is always running, and now almost run out: our time always going, and now almost gone; we have one foot in the grave; death stands daily over our heads, ready to strike: I ought therefore to say, this day I stand at the door of eternity, because we die daily. Still think of thine hour-glass."

—— " I often think of death, but cannot live up to what those thoughts require as I would, and should, nor perform my duty to God with such life and zeal as I ought. O my soul, think what will all the world avail a dying man! The peace with God, and peace of conscience, are of more value than all the world."

—— " The learned Salmasius said upon his death-bed, " O! I have lost a world of time; time, that most precious thing in the world, whereof had I but one year more, it should be spent in David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles." O Sirs! mind the world less, and God more. The fear of God is true wisdom."

—— " I see or hear every day of the death of one or other younger than myself; they go to the grave before me; I survive, but am in expectation: I know the lot will fall on me whenever it pleaseth God: I hope I shall with meekness and patience submit to the will of my heavenly Father, and freely resign my soul to him that gave it."

—— " One says, " To thee, O my Saviour, I commit my soul: it is thine by redemption, thine by covenant, sealed by thy Spirit: thou hast promised not to lose it, hast promised rest to weary souls. Lord, I am not only weary of suffering, but weary of sin, weary of the flesh, weary of my darkness, dulness, distance; weary of this wicked, blind, unrighteous world; and whither should I look for rest but homewards to my heavenly Father. To thee I am but a bruised reed, but thou wilt not break me: I am but smoaking flax, but thou wilt not quench what thy grace has kindled."

—— " O let me not be surprised, and think it strange when death seizes me, and throws me upon a sick and dying bed; then let me submit to my Father's good pleasure, and resign myself up to him. I have fair warning given me by the death of others, day after day, time after time, to prepare for my great change: Lord, direct and assist me in this great concern. I have here no abiding city, and therefore seek one to come; for how can I be in love with this world, which is so vain, sinful, and uncertain."

—— " Have not we seen and known some that have been suddenly struck, sound and sick, quick and dead, in the space of one hour and less; how dare we then defer our repentance? Death may seize us in our delays, and deliver us up into eternity. Lord, grant that every day I may remember my last day, may every day take a turn or two with death; so shall I be acquainted with its face, and not feel its sting. To trust to a death-bed repentance, is a very high affront to Almighty God: what do those make of him, who think to live in sin all their days, and then expect pardon when they can live no longer?"

—— Dr. Taylor says, " We complain our life is short, yet we throw away much of it. We want company, seek out arts to drive the time away, and then weep, because the time is gone too soon. He that desires to die well, must not live a soft voluptuous life."

—— " An idle man is never ready to die, and is glad of any excuse: a busy man hath always something unfinished, and is ready for every thing but death: but remember, thou must carry no more out of the world than thou broughtest in; therefore be satisfied with a little; thou must be gone shortly, eternity is always at hand."

—— " I often resolve to observe these good instructions which I read and write, but am too often disappointed and taken off by worldly business. Such are my present concerns, being born to no estate, that I must pay my rent, and make necessary provision for my family, and this will not be done without care and pains in worldly business; yet I count all things here below but dross and dung, in comparison with God and Christ: on them I desire to set my heart and affection."

—— One says, " The raising up of the soul to God is indeed the greatest work; but the mortifying of the flesh, and denying self, is surely the next to it; for selfishness is the most treacherous, deceitful enemy in the world; and, of all views, the hardest both to find out, and cast out. The world is so great with some men, that God and everlasting life are as nothing: they are so full of the creature, that they have no room for the Creator; so busy about earth, that they have but little time for heaven. Lord, let my meditations of death prove effectual, to wean me from the world, and to make me live a holy life, without which my meditating, speaking, and writing of death, will avail me little. Lord, work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure."

—— " I am told, that " if I be heartily concerned about my soul and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ; if I strive against sin, make conscience of my words and ways, and have respect to all God's commandments, I have reason to hope, that notwithstanding my daily infirmities, my spiritual state is good. I think I can truly say, that I neither love nor delight in any sin, and desire always to be found in the way of my duty. Lord, grant I may not deceive myself."

—— One says, " It is my certain duty to seek heaven with all the fervour of my soul, and diligence of my life. Everlasting glory should be preferred before perishing vanity. I am sure this world will shortly be nothing to me, and therefore it is next to nothing now. Either joy or misery is near at hand to every man. This should awaken us to cry, to search, to beg, to strive, to watch, to spare no care, or cost, or labour, to make all sure in a matter of such weight. This should be done with speed, with zeal and earnestness, and a full resolution of soul. Who can stand dallying, as most men do, at the door of eternity, when they believe their immortal souls must be there shortly?"

" I cannot say that I am prepared for death as I ought to be, but am endeavouring it the best I can. I am sensible that my time on earth is short and uncertain." Mr. Fox says, " You grey-headed sinners, against whom death hath raised his batteries, you have but a few sands in your glass, your departing hour cannot be far off,

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your candle is in the socket, and will be a stinking snuff shortly: the next blast the house may fall. You that lean on staves, and look through your spectacles, you are just ready to enter into eternity: if you do not mind your great work immediately, woe, woe be to you for ever! Poor mortals, since you cannot prevent death, make all the preparation you can for it; for it is the grand business of this life." These good sayings of Mr. Fox I often consult, and am much affected with them. I take them to be spoken to myself; for I am under those symptoms of old age he mentions." On this occasion he writes these verses, which we will insert, though divers such pieces of his plain poetry we have omitted,

My head is gray, my time is almost spent;
Prepare for death, O wicked heart repent.
When death doth call away, then go I must,
My soul to God, my body to the dust.
Christ died for me, my hope is fixed there;
I hope in mercy, yet I live in fear.
I fear my God, yet other fears I have,
I've broke his laws, why should he own and save
A wicked one, that spent his days in sin,
That knew his word, and what's contain'd therein?
In mercy pardon all I've done amiss,
Through Christ, my Lord, my happiness and bliss.

——" I am now at the last stage of my life; I may well expect the summons of death every day; my time is even at an end; O let not me be one of those that desire to die the death of the righteous, but will not live the life of the righteous; but let it be my chief care, my earnest endeavour to serve God, and please him, lest death should come upon me, like a thief in the night, or surprise me at midnight, as the bridegroom did the sleeping virgins that had no oil."

Mr. Gouge says, " O sinner, it had been better for thee never to have been born, than not to be born again; it is as necessary as heaven and happiness. I beseech thee, for thy precious soul's sake, stir up thyself to work out thy salvation. This is excellent advice; Lord, give me grace to take it."

——" I will not for a few merry hours, hazard my eternal safety; I desire not to flatter myself, or think better of my state than it is; but would judge myself, that I may not be judged of the Lord; for, as old Mr. Henry used to say, " when we set our sins before our faces in repentance and confession, God casts them behind his back in pardon and remission; but if we carelesly cast them behind our back, God justly sets them before his face."

——" Whether we are ready or unready, death will not stay; it is the greatest change that can pass upon us; it carries us from all present enjoyments, turns the body to dust, brings the soul into the presence of God, removes us from time to eternity; the awefulness of the change, should make us careful to get ready; and it is no easy thing to prepare, as we should, for death. The whole time of our life, is not more than sufficient; we have no time to lose or squander away; we have many sins to repent of, many graces to obtain, temptations to resist, difficulties to break through, duties to perform: we must get our guilt removed, our hearts purified, our natures refined; the image of God impressed on us, and all our corruptions mortified. O strive to live much in a little time: live apace in this sense; dispatch the great business of life out of hand," This paragraph he gleaned out of Mr. Calamy's sermon on the death of Mr. Sylvester.

——" Meditation of death hath been my frequent practice many years; but, as Mr. Burghal says, " it is but lost labour, unless that meditation draw us to serious preparation for it." Bishop Patrick says, " O let it please my God, to strengthen me in my holy resolutions, till I arrive at his heavenly court: O let his Spirit breathe upon me, and carry away my soul in holy desires towards him; let him guide my course through this troublesome sea, on which I am tossed, and bring me safe to a quiet haven of eternal rest and peace."

——" Death and preparation for it, I desire to make the chief subjects of my meditation, according to my weak and mean capacity. I hope my merciful Father will accept me, who knows my frame, and remembers I am but dust. A religious life is certainly the happiest life we can live in this world: it is pleasant while we live, and comfortable when we die; it makes a death-bed easy."

——" God in his great wisdom hath left us all at uncertainties, as to the time of our death, that we may be always on our guard, and improve our time. Let us frequently put this question to ourselves, Where must I be for ever? I have lived so long, what have I done all this while? Do I find myself better than I was some years ago? Am I more heavenly minded? Do I prepare for another world before I am called out of this?"

About two months before he died, he began to read Monsieur Drelincourt's *Consolation against the fear of death.* " I propose" (says he) " to transcribe several things out of it, since it is a book which treats much of death; for such books I have studied much of late years." The last thing he wrote in his book, and we suppose the last he ever wrote, was a prayer proper for one dying, out of Drelincourt.

June 1, 1709, (which was about ten days before he died) he thus wrote: " It hath been my desire these many years, to prepare for my death: to that end, I have used my best endeavours to make my peace with God. It is my great comfort, that I have taken this method for eight or ten years, to be always expecting death's approach. These endeavours I have used with much weakness and imperfection, so that I may well say I am but an unprofitable servant. If my heart doth not much deceive me, I desire to renounce all things, and to rest only upon Christ: Lord, what need have I of thy grace and favour, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit? which I humbly beg for the sake of my blessed Lord and Saviour."

Almost every page of his books hath some passage or other concerning death. Over his chamber door was written *Memento Mori—Remember death.* Many of those Scriptures which speak of death, he got fairly written, and hung in a frame, with a death's head under them.

XVIII. The meditations and prayers which he prepared for the use of his death bed.

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He began these about 1700, and continued them at times after: He called to his son to read them to him a few hours before he died.

"I am going the way of all flesh, and find that death is very near me, and I am now launching into eternity. What may be the issue of this illness, God knows, who is only wise.—I am often assaulted with doubts and fears concerning the state of my precious soul, which is my chief concern; yet I hope I shall never despair of the mercies of God, for they are infinite, and the sufferings of Christ are meritorious. Here is my main stay and strength: here is the hope of my salvation."

"I humbly confess, to my shame and sorrow, that my sins have been many and great: I cannot plead innocency of life, no, nor justify the best of my actions, but acknowledge myself sinful, and an unprofitable servant. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death! None but Christ, none but Christ."

"My only hope and comfort is, I have to do with a merciful God, who will abundantly pardon all penitent sinners; and a blessed Saviour, who hath redeemed me with his precious blood, and is now interceding with his Father in my behalf: O what a comfort is this to a poor doubting sinner."

I will say with Mr. Gearing, "O Lord, thy Son hath offered satisfaction, and thou hast accepted it.—Thou, O my Saviour, hast laid down thy life for mine: and thy Father and my Father is well pleased with it. Blood is paid, justice is satisfied, heaven doors are widened, thy arms open to receive me, nothing wanting but my heart. Make it such as thou wouldest have it; (good Lord;) then take it to thyself. I have sinned against mercy, but not above mercy; for thou art a God of infinite mercy, to all that repent."

"Lord, I owe thee a death, O let it not be terrible! Then take thy own time. What shall I say or do to make my peace with God, whom I have so much offended: Lord, I repent of all my sins from the very bottom of my heart: I will, with sorrow and shame confess them, and will beg pardon and forgiveness of my merciful Father; I will cast myself on the Rock Christ Jesus, my only Saviour, who laid down his life to save my precious soul; blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the inestimable gift. Lord, increase my faith, without which it is impossible to please thee."

"Why should I be loath to part from this troublesome world, or unwilling to die, and enter into those joys which my blessed Saviour hath purchased for me? All this is for want of assurance: doubts and fears are apt to arise; yet *in thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*"

"O merciful Lord God, whenever thou pleasest to cast me upon my sick-bed, and bring the bitter pangs of death upon me, then be with me, support and comfort me in that time of my distress: strengthen me and help me, that I may have power to resist my enemy, who may strongly assault me when I am weakest: O bring me through that great trial with some ease and comfort; and, for thy mercy's sake, lay no more upon me than I am able to bear; for thou knowest my frame. When thou requirest my soul, embrace it in the arms of thy tender mercy: let thy good angels guard it into its everlasting rest, for Christ's sake."

"Lord, give me wisdom from above, that I may duly consider the shortness and uncertainty of life. Give me grace to make preparation for the hour of death, which time draws very near. It is my resolution, by divine assistance, to submit to the will and pleasure of my merciful Father. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* If he lay his hand heavy upon me, I confess it is my deserts: if he be favourable, it is his mercy and goodness; therefore I hope I shall never repine at the Lord's dealing, nor despair of his mercies."

"When pain, and sickness, and anguish beset me on every side, and death seizeth me, then let me call to mind the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, though he committed no sin: how his precious body was torn, and his precious blood spilt, yet he patiently bore all with submission to his Father's will; and shall not I, a poor, sinful, vile, wretched creature patiently suffer whatever the only wise God pleaseth to lay upon me? Then let me call to mind the folly and wickedness of my younger days, even the sins of my whole life. Sins bring all miseries upon us: *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment, not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* I have deserved thy hot displeasure, but Lord, in judgment remember mercy, and comfort thy poor servant in distress."

"Truly my soul waits upon God; from him comes my salvation. Thy loving kindness is better than life: Lord, help me in this trouble, be merciful to me, for my soul trusteth in thee: In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge."

"*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness,* &c. Ps. 51. 1, 2, 3. It is my greatest trouble that I have sinned against so good a God; yet this comforts me, That *a troubled spirit, a broken contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,* Ps. 25. 16, 17, 18.

"When the pains of death get hold of me, then, good Lord, give me sense to pray, and patience to bear what thou layest upon me; then be thou with me, and comfort me for thy mercies sake. Prayer and patience are the best remedies for a dying man: then let thy strength appear in my weakness, and enable me to overcome all the enemies of my salvation."

"Let the promises of the gospel be comfortable then to my distressed soul. As that John 3. 16, 17. 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Lord, preserve my soul,* for I desire to be *holy,* Ps. 86. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. When the pains of death beset me, where then shall I seek for help, ease, and comfort, but with thee, my God? Then, good Lord, be thou with me, support and comfort me, smile upon me, for thy benignity is better than life."

"Christ is the only physician that can give ease to a poor dying sinner. Remember me then, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest to thy chosen, visit me with thy salvation. Upon my sick-bed I desire to remember thy word, (Prov. 3. 11, 12.) *Despise not the chastening of the Lord,*

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Lord, neither faint. O let me have such a perfect subjection to the Father of spirits, that this chastisement may be for my profit, that I may be a partaker of thy holiness. O thou Captain of my salvation, who wast made perfect through suffering, sanctify to me all my pains and terrors, make me to bear them cheerfully and thankfully: chasten me as thou pleasest here, so that I may not be condemned in the world to come."

"Our afflictions, though sometimes severe and painful, are but for a moment; and they are nothing in comparison with the torments of hell, which are eternal and intolerable. Our God is gracious, and *will not always chide.*"

"If in health I have made preparation for death, when it comes I have not a new work to begin, but an old work to renew."

"Stay thyself, O my soul, upon the Rock Christ Jesus, who is a merciful and faithful Priest, a sweet Shepherd, his rod and staff shall comfort thee. In the agonies of death cast thyself into the arms of thy blessed Saviour. If Satan assault thee, by setting before thee the greatness and multitude of thy sins, remember that sweet place, (Mic. 7. 18.) *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?* And that (Isa. 1. 18.) *Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*"

Out of Dr. Andrew Rivet's last hours; "Lord, let not this trial exceed my strength: O how light is this chastisement if compared with my fault! and this temporal pain, if compared with eternal torments, from which I am redeemed by him that poured out his soul unto death for me! Lord, let not thy good Spirit depart from me, that in this conflict I may be more than a conqueror. Lord, let nothing separate me from thee, or cause me to doubt of thy love and favour."

"Lord, make my pains tolerable, or furnish me with fortitude to bear them, that I may not offend with my tongue. Crucify, O Lord, the old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and I may rise again to a new life."

"Help me to wait with patience till my change comes; continue thy wonted mercy to thy poor servant. Make thou my bed in my distress and misery, that I faint not under thy hand."

"I have cast the care of me, of mine, of all my affairs upon God; let him do with my body as pleaseth him, so it be well with my soul. I lament not my leaving the world; I have lived long enough in it, have made trial of it, and find it is all vanity and vexation of spirit."

"To whom shall I go for help, O Lord? In whom is my hope? Truly in thee. I desire *to depart* and *to be with Christ.* It is enough, Lord, receive now my soul. When I leave my body to the earth, I commit my spirit into the hands of God who gave it. I know this tabernacle cannot be dissolved without pain: the flesh must suffer and fall; but it matters not, provided the soul obtain new strength, and I arrive at a better place. Lord, strengthen me, and help my infirmities; be not far from me in the day of my sorrow; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Have pity on me, O God, and deal graciously with me; let death be my passage to life eternal. I hope the combat will not continue long. Bring to pass, O Lord, that the end may crown the work. Receive my soul to thyself, O Lord; I yield it into thy hands, thou hast redeemed it, O God of truth. The Lord shall perfect that which concerns his glory, and my eternal salvation."

"I desire and hope, that I shall submit to God's good will and pleasure, and not wish to live any longer. When God calls, and my appointed time is come, then will I call on the Lord, and say, *I have waited for thy salvation,* leave me not. When my heart fails, Lord, be thou my helper. *Deliver my soul from hell, my darling from the power of the lion.* Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee."

"Lord, loose these bands; how long, Lord Jesus, how long! Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me, and receive my soul! O happy day, when shall I depart out of this sinful world, and go to heaven! Lord, I feel my strength failing me in this earthly tabernacle: I am ready to depart, breath fails, and death appears ready to strike the last stroke; but I know I shall rise again to behold thy glory."

"It is my thoughts, that these poor meditations may be useful and comfortable to me, when I lie upon my sick and dying bed; then I hope the Lord will in mercy remember me, and take pity on me, and accept of me and my poor services, through Christ my Saviour. Lord, if it please thee, grant me that favour, that when I lie dying, I may have the use of my reason."

HIS DEATH.

IN these his meditations of death, and preparations for it, there appears something extraordinary; and one cannot but wish now to know what was the end, the exit of such a conversation, and how he finished his course at last. Of which, take this short account.

On Friday, June 10, 1709, he rode to Cheerbrook, where he had lived about thirty years, walked with his son in the gardens and orchards: there he was taken with the gripes, a distemper he had been afflicted with some time before, but he rode near two miles after, designed to have given his old minister at Wibunbury a visit, but his pain increasing, he hastened home, and had a bad night. In the morning, when his son came to him, he said, "I am very bad, but I am willing to die, having lived above the age of man." He expressed his hopes of salvation through Christ. He said his house was in order, and he hoped his soul also. He would by no means have any physician sent for, but said, it was time for him to leave the world, and it did not become him at that age to use a physician. About noon on Saturday, he was persuaded to take some drops to ease his violent pain, and had for a few hours great ease; but at night his pain returned again. On the morning of the Lord's day, he spoke to his wife and son about his burial, which he would have to be private, and ordered matters, as if he had known that that must be his dying day, as it proved, though they about him thought he might recover, or at least have continued many

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many days, being of a strong body, and, considering his age, of a healthy constitution, and because he bore his pains with such patience, without groan or complaint. But when he was asked how he did, he said, "Worse and worse, I cannot live long in these pains."

At noon, being the Lord's day, he desired to be prayed for publicly; and called to his son, to read to him the foregoing meditations of death, which he did at several times; and he said, they refreshed and comforted him; and it was for such a time as this that he had drawn them up. They were also very affecting to those about him. He also repeated divers of them himself.

He said to his son, "I would not, for all the world, that I had my work of preparation for death to do now." About two o'clock, he called to his son to pray by him; which he did; and at the close of his prayer, added some of the petitions which the good man had prepared in his book for such a time. He then bid him go to the public worship; which he did, not thinking his father's end had been so near as it proved. In about an hour and an half, he returned, and found a great change. His voice was gone, and it appeared he was dying; but he did not groan, or make any complaint. His son kneeled down to speak some comfortable words to him in his dying conflict; to which he answered, "I shall be well presently," and scarce spoke a word more. The minister of the parish came in, and prayed with him, and commended his soul into the hands of the Almighty. He had just before put out his hand to a friend that came in to see him, by which it appeared he was sensible; but quickly after, while the minister was with him, about six of the clock, he breathed his last, June 12, 1709.

On Tuesday following, his corps was carried on a mourning carriage to Wibunbury, attended by a great number of people. The captain of his company, who was major of the train-bands of the county, attended the funeral with his company, put the drum in mourning, marched with their arms, and gave him several vollies over his grave.

Mr. Bromfield preached his funeral sermon on the text which he himself chose, Ps. 103. 13, 14. *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.* The reason he gives for chusing that text was, because he had chosen that excellent psalm (as he calls it) for the subject of his morning meditations for a great while; and usually repeated it all to himself as soon as he awaked, before he rose: and these words particularly he thought very comfortable to a doubting drooping soul. He had himself drawn up meditations upon those words, to the length of a sermon.

The minister, in the close of his discourse, spoke of him thus—"A good name has this our deceased brother left behind him; and a good character do all those deserve that are so diligent in the discharge of their duty both to God and man, as he was. He gave proof of his love to God, by his constant resort to his house and ordinances, his affection to the prayers of the church, and devout joining in them; his attentive hearing the word read and preached, and his frequent and devout communicating; and he kept a constant course of religious exercise in his family; a thing too much neglected among us. I doubt not, but his worshipping of God in secret was daily and devout, agreeable to his care of family worship. He took great care that the Lord's day was kept holy, both by himself, and by his family; and further evidenced his love to God by his bold and ready appearing against profaneness and immorality."

He was a very useful man in his neighbourhood, being ready to do good to all, both rich and poor, according to his ability and opportunity. He was very happy in the love of his neighbours, was active and successful in the blessed work of peace-making among them; was just in his dealings, a faithful friend, a careful father, and a very affectionate husband; in a word, his conversation shewed him to be a true lover of virtue and goodness, and a very serious Christian.

Upon his death-bed he was patient, and wholly resigned to the will of God, in a humble hope of his mercy in Christ; and at his departure, had the prayers of his minister, by whom his soul was commended into the hands of the Almighty, and into the state of blessed souls. I question not but that our deceased brother is received; for, *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.*

He was generally lamented at his death, as he had been universally beloved and respected by all that knew him while he lived. The members of Parliament for the county, and other gentlemen of the first rank would visit him at his house. When the troubles were in Ireland, Col. Cook's family lodged at his house for some time, and always after expressed a great kindness for him; and he retained a mighty respect for that worthy Colonel, and his family, and friends. He made some verses to be added to the inscription on his grave-stone, if his son thought fit; but this, says he, or any other, or none at all, I leave to your discretion.

Lieutenant Richard Illidge died June 12, 1709, aged seventy-two. In his life-time he had served four sovereigns, three kings, and one queen, as a sub-officer in the militia of this county, for the space of near fifty years.

Now slain by death, who spareth none,
And lies full low under this stone:
Take heed, and read, and thou shalt see,
As I am now, so shalt thou be.
Rotting in dark, and silent dust;
Prepare for death, for die thou must.
Life is uncertain, death is sure;
Sin is the wound, Christ is the cure.

MEMENTO MORI.

He was of a middle stature, strong and well set; of a healthy constitution, comely visage, inclining to feed, which made him spare in his diet, eating little but at dinner.

When his friends told him, that if he should leave off worldly business, and retire into privacy, he would find it a melancholy sort of life: he answered; "I thank God, my time never lies upon my hand, I can cultivate the little garden of my soul, when I have no other business

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siness, and I have good books for my companions.—— I may with shame and sorrow, (says he,) look back upon an ill-spent life; my childhood and youth were folly and vanity; my riper years were mostly spent in carking and caring, and seeking after the profits and pleasures of this world; and I have too much neglected the main business, my duty to God: Lord, I repent; Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief; free me from every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset me."

A SERMON *preached at the Opening of the New Meeting-house at Chester,* AUGUST 8, 1700. *

JOSH. 22. 22, 23.

The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knows, and Israel he shall know, if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord——That we have built us an altar.

THUS the two tribes and a half begin their solemn reply to the remonstrance of the other tribes, who, with sword in hand, ready to make good their challenge, boldly charged them with a crime no less black and dangerous than apostacy from the truth and worship of the God of Israel. Thus the indictment runs, v. 16. that they had rebelled against the Lord, and turned from following him, v. 18. and these were indeed heinous crimes, and, in the sense of the patriarchal age, *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*, Job 31. 28. thus to have denied the God that is above, if they had been really guilty of it.

But never was there any controversy more innocently begun, more prudently and discreetly managed, nor more happily compromised, and taken up than this was; for whereas in most quarrels there is a fault on both sides, in this there does not appear to be a fault on either side; and whereas the *beginning of strife is as the letting forth of water*, the occasion of much mischief, the beginning of this was an occasion for both sides to give evidences of their zeal for religion and love.

Let us look into the particulars of the story:

1. That which gave rise to the controversy was an altar erected by the two tribes over against the land of Canaan in the borders of Jordan, *a great altar to see to*, v. 10. and this done without any leave asked, or warrant obtained from Joshua or Eleazar; without any notice given to, or consultation had with their brethren of the other tribes; yet being done with an honest design to preserve the intail of religion to their posterity, and to be a token of their communion with the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, was not only warrantable, but commendable; this they solemnly declare to be the true intent and meaning of their building this altar; that they had no idolatrous, superstitious, or schismatical design in it, but that they intended it for a witness (*in perpetuam rei memoriam—in perpetual attestation*) of their alliance to their brethren, from whom they were divided by the waters of Jordan. They did not set it up as a mere stone or rock of division, much less *as a stone of stumbling or a rock of offence*, but as a badge of relation, and consequently a *nexus* or bond of union, wisely foreseeing, and providing against so great a mischief, as the alienating of their posterity from the church privileges of the seed of Israel; for fear, say they, lest in time to come *your children might speak to our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel?* v. 24. the consequences of which, in after and more degenerate ages, might be most fatal.

They who have themselves found how good it is to be near to God, and what an unspeakable pleasure and happiness there is in communion with him, cannot but be concerned to take all possible care, and make all probable provision, that their children after them may not be made to cease from following the Lord, or be looked on as having no part in him. With the human nature, which we transmit to posterity depraved and corrupted, it is very desirable to transmit pure and entire those sovereign remedies which religion has provided for the cure of that hereditary disease: not the narrow and private interests of a party, which in kindness to posterity we should study how to bury in oblivion, but the great and noble principles of catholic christianity; these we should desire to entail the knowledge and faith of upon our *seeds seed henceforth and for ever*, Isa. 59. 21. They who rejoice in the light of the gospel, will desire that it may not die in their hands; and they who find themselves enriched with the true treasure, and know how to value it, cannot but wish it may not be buried in their graves, Ps. 22. 30. 102. 28. but well secured to their heirs, that in their tribe, and the families thereof, the name of Christ may *endure for ever, and his throne as the days of old.*

2. The godly jealousy of the other tribes, who suspected their altar to be of dangerous tendency, and to be an ill step towards idolatry or schism, was likewise praise-worthy; and their warm resentments, when they had such a colour of cause for them, were a laudable instance of their pious zeal for the honour of the Lord

* This sermon was not published till some years after the author's death. Dr. Watts wrote a preface to it, dated London, Oct. 6, 1725, in which, after a very high encomium on the author, and this discourse, he intimates that "some expressions in it may not gain the entire assent of his present readers." The Doctor, doubtless, referred to what relates to national establishments of religion, in respect to which the sentiments of the generality of protestant dissenters materially differ from our old presbyterian divines, insomuch that they would not consent that even their own mode of worship should be established by the secular power. While the Editor thinks it his duty to avow his difference from the Author in opinion on this point, he at the same time most heartily concurs with him in recommending love and friendship towards our brethren of the establishment, who may be equally conscientious in their conformity.

God

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God of Israel. The thing *prima facie* looked bad, and gave ground for suspicion. The law of Moses had expressly required them to offer all their sacrifices in the place which the Lord should chuse to put his name there, and not elsewhere, under the severe penalty of excision, Lev. 17. 8, 9. Deut. 12. 5, 6. and it was no strained inuendo, or foreign surmise from the building of an altar in the borders of Jordan, to infer an intention to offer sacrifice there contrary to the law of God. This they take very heinously, and seem to be touched by it in a very tender part; they reckon the confronting of God's altar an intolerable affront to the government, *et altaria contra altaria* no less dangerous than *imperium in imperio*, and to be animadverted on accordingly.

The God we serve is very jealous in the matters of his worship (which are to him as the apple of his eye) and he expects we should be so too, and afraid of all appearances of evil; yea, and dreading the first step towards apostacy from God, and so cordially espousing his institutions, and the honour and purity of them, as to be jealous of any thing that looks like an encroachment upon them: when the cause is plainly God's, our call to appear in it is clear, and when the thing we do is good, nothing better than to be zealously affected in it, Gal. 4. 18. When our Lord Jesus had commended the angel of the church of Ephesus, particularly for her patience, he adds this further character (which though it seem contrary to it, yet is very consistent with it) that she could not bear them that were evil, Rev. 2. 2. It is no part of christian patience to bear with sin; the meekest man upon earth was more than once angry at sin. The nearer any are to us in relation and neighbourhood, the more jealous we should be of their departure from God, and the more industrious to prevent and reduce them, lest we ourselves or ours should catch the infection. *Jam——tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet—Thy own goods are endangered when the adjoining house is on fire.*

3. The method they took in prosecution of their resentments was regular and exemplary; their zeal in this matter was for the most part guided and governed by the meekness of wisdom. An assembly of the states was called at Shiloh, and the report concerning this altar was taken into consideration, the result of which was, that the business should be fairly and impartially examined, and the supposed delinquents heard to speak for themselves; who if they would hear and submit to their reproof, well and good, *they had gained their brethren*, Mat. 18. 15, 17. but if they refused, then, and not till then, it was time to deal with them as heathen men, and devoted Canaanites. These tribes of Israel, though apt to war, yet would not send forth their armies to give them battle, till they had first sent their ambassadors, (and those men of the first rank) to treat of peace, and to inquire into the merits of the cause, v. 13, 14. He to whom all things are naked and bare, would not punish the most notorious criminals, the cry of whose wickedness alarmed heaven itself, but he would first go down and see, Gen. 18. 21. It is the advice of the wise man, and it will be our wisdom in all such cases to take the advice, Prov. 25. 8, 9. *Go not forth hastily to strive, but debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself.* Many an unhappy strife, and all the mischievous consequences of it, would be prevented by an amicable and candid inquiry into the matter of the offence. The reason why we do not love one another as we ought, is because we do not, and will not know one another as we might: the rectifying of mistakes and misunderstandings, and the settling of misconstrued words and actions in a true light, that they may appear as they are meant and not otherwise, would be in many cases an effectual way to accommodate both private and public quarrels, and bring them to an happy period.

4. The defence which the two tribes made for themselves, to clear and vindicate what they had done, was very ingenuous and fair. Though there was somewhat more of warmth in the charge exhibited against them than was needful, and the fault was too much taken for granted; yet they patiently heard them out, and then replied with a great deal of calmness, very fairly stating the case, and shewing the suspiciousness of their brethren to be, (though not without a colourable pretence) yet without a just ground, not doubting but they would lay aside their jealousies, and let fall their action, when they understood their honest and sincere intention and design in building this altar.

Lastly, The effect of this was very good and happy; the princes were satisfied, and receded from their charge, and thereby shewed themselves to be under the government of that great law of charity, which teaches us not *to rejoice in iniquity, but to rejoice in the truth;* hereby further mischief was prevented, the peace and honour of their infant state preserved, and God had the glory of all, v. 33.

The text begins that defence which had so good and happy a success. It may be of use to us to observe how it was managed, that we may learn in the like cases so to vindicate ourselves, as not to provoke but pacify our brethren. Here is not a word of recrimination, no return of suspicion for suspicion, (though nothing is more easy to retort than that); they do not blame their brethren for their rash, and hasty, and uncharitable censures, nor upbraid them with the good services they had done them in helping to put them in possession of their land, nor defy their threatened arms, and bid them do their worst; here is nothing that savours of pride or passion, but all fair and candid: though the periods of their speech are elaborate enough, and the style proper, yet nothing appears to be so much studied in it, *as the things that make for peace.*—Observe,

1. The manner and form in which the plea is drawn up: it runs both as an appeal to God, and an apology to their brethren.

1. Here is a solemn appeal made to God concerning that which they had done, repeated to make it the more solemn, *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knows*—That glorious title of God, which speaks him higher than the highest of the angels in heaven, the princes and potentates of the earth, and the imaginary deities of the heathen (for each of these are called gods) is here made use of, to express a holy awe and dread of that

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that God to whom they appeal, upon their own spirits, and to beget the like in the minds of those with whom they speak. The sense had been compleat if they had only said God knows; but then they had not taken the occasion given them to express their high and honourable thoughts of the great Jehovah. Let us learn hence to speak of God with reverence, and mention his glorious name with a solemn pause. Is it a piece of respect due to earthly princes in addresses made to them, to give them their title of honour; and shall we speak as slightly and carelesly of the King of kings, as if he were not only a man like ourselves, but a common man in our own rank? Is this to fear that glorious and fearful name the Lord our God!

In appeals to heaven it is especially necessary that there be a very awful decorum and solemnity observed, for God is appealed to, not as a common witness, but as a judge, whose tribunal is in the heavens, and by whose definitive sentence all causes must be finally and irreversibly determined; those therefore that appeal to him upon every trivial occasion, and with a slightly superficial God knows, while they never think of God, nor have any regard to his knowledge, profane his name by taking it in vain, and instead of honouring him, put the greatest affront that can be upon him. Appeals thus put into the court above, will not only be rejected and thrown out (how just soever the matter may be) as not being put in due form, but the appellant prosecuted for a contempt of the court.

This appeal here is a good pattern or precedent in drawing up appeals. *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knows:* he that is the God of gods, even Jehovah (so it is placed in the original) is both a rightful and competent judge of all appeals made to him: who should judge and pass sentence but he that is Jehovah, the mighty God, even the Lord? for so this same title which is here used is translated, Ps. 50. 1. where God is spoken of at large as the sovereign and universal judge. If he be Jehovah, he is perfect in knowledge, wisdom and justice, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth; that it is such as the guilty have reason to dread, and the upright reason to rejoice in. If he be the God of gods, the mighty God, his jurisdiction cannot be demurred unto, nor his authority disputed; no further appeals can be made to any higher court, nor can the executions taken out upon his judgments be opposed or resisted: the God of gods is a judge that will not be baffled.

To the tribunal of the mighty God the two tribes here refer the decision of this matter in variance; if we have done this in rebellion, and with an ill design, the Lord God of gods, he knows it, (for he is acquainted with all the transgressions that are committed against him, even those that are gilded over with the most plausible pretences) and he that looks upon it will require it, will revenge it; but we are sure he knows the contrary, and that however it be interpreted, it is honestly intended. From whence we may observe,

(1.) That in every thing we do in religion it concerns us highly to approve ourselves to God in our integrity, so as to be able with a holy, humble, well grounded confidence to appeal to him concerning it; herein we must labour, and this must be the top of our ambition, in every service that we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 9. doing it as unto the Lord, and not to men, and then it is done heartily, Col. 3. 23. It was the total miscarriage of the Pharisees in their devotions, and the dead fly that tainted all their precious ointment, that all their works they did to be seen of men, their approbation and applause they coveted, to them they were industrious to approve themselves, and *verily they had their reward,* Mat. 23. 5. 6. 2, 5. In this therefore our righteousness must exceed theirs, or we shall never get to heaven, Mat. 5. 20. All our works we must do to be seen of God, setting ourselves in the doing of them before him, having our eye towards him in every performance, diligently observing his will as our rule, and his glory as our end, and earnestly desiring and courting his favour and acceptance, as our felicity, recompence and chief good; accounting that if he be well pleased with us, and say well done, we have gained our point, we have all we need, all we would have; if we have praise of God, whether we have praise of men or no, we are happy and ought to be easy. Let us therefore see to it, that in all our exercises of piety and devotion, public and private, our hearts be upright with God, that we be really as good as we seem to be, because God knows whether we be so or no, and will accept us no further than we are so: that our eye be single, our intentions sincere, and all we do be done from an unbiassed principle of regard to God as our ruler and portion, as that which consecrates our services to the Lord, and recommends them, through the mediation of Christ, to his acceptance.

(2.) That when at any time we fall under the censures of men and their reproaches, who condemn us because they do not know us, it is very comfortable to be able to appeal to a God that knows us, concerning our integrity. When holy Job was run down by his friends as an hypocrite, this was his comfort, Job 16. 19, 20. *My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high: my friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.* David oft found relief by taking the same course, and appeals from the unjust and uncharitable accusations of his enemies to God's knowledge of his integrity, and is so far from dreading and deprecating God's judgment (as every wicked man if he knows himself must) that he begs it, and refers himself to it. (Ps. 17. 2.) *Let my sentence come forth from thy presence: let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.* Ps. 26. 1. If God say well done good and faithful servant, the matter is not great who says otherwise; for so shall our doom be as God hath decided it, and not as men give their opinion of it. If therefore he that judgeth us is the Lord, surely it is a very small thing, and not worthy our consideration, or fit to affect us much, especially so as to turn the scale of our resolves, how we are judged of man's judgment, 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. If men brand our devotion as counterfeit and hypocritical, and put us under the blackest characters, let it not disquiet nor disturb us while we have good hopes through grace that God accepts us and our services, as sincere: let not them therefore that know

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righteonsness (that know what will bear them out, and bring them off) and in whose heart is the law of God, (and not in their mouths only) let them not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their revilings, so as thereby to be either diverted from, or discouraged in their duty; *for the righteousness that will justify them shall be for ever, and the salvation following it, from generation to generation,* Isa. 51. 7, 8. This will be our rejoicing in the day of evil, even the testimony of our conscience, which is God's deputy in the soul, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Let therefore the generation of the upright, when most misrepresented, commit their cause to God. He who knows their righteousness will sooner or later bring it forth as the morning, and if their integrity be manifest to God, (as undoubtedly it is) it shall in due time also be *manifested in the consciences of men,* 2 Cor. 5. 11.

2. Here is a sober apology presented to their brethren. *Israel he shall know.* We are ready to let Israel know; ready to give such an account of our meaning in this attempt as we doubt not will give our brethren other thoughts of us, and it, than they now have: which teaches us this, that though the record on high, and the witness in our own bosoms are principally to be secured for us, yet there is a satisfaction which we owe to our brethren, who doubt concerning the integrity of our actions.

Though our brethren are not our judges, by whose sentence our state is to be determined, yet they are our friends, in whose opinions we should desire to stand right. Though to be accepted of God is without doubt the chief and most desirable good, yet it is also desirable and well worthy our endeavour, like Mordecai, Esth. 10. 3. *To be accepted of the multitude of our brethren.* If our sincerity be known to God, we should study how to let others know it, and to give evidences of it to those that have their eyes upon us. It is part of the debt we owe to ourselves to preserve our own good name, and part of the debt we owe to our brethren, to value and seek their good will, and as far as we can to rectify their mistakes and prejudices.

We should especially study how to give satisfaction to those, who though they misunderstand our words and actions, and judge of us accordingly, yet shew a zeal for the glory of God, as these ten tribes here did. The reproaches of the fools in Israel are to be despised; it is no matter what they speak against us, who profanely speak against God; nor should it much affect us if we be made the song of the drunkards, but the deliberate censures of wise and sober men cannot be made so light of. It is a desirable thing to be accepted of those, who we have reason to think are accepted of God; therefore David prays, Ps. 119. 79. *Let those that fear thee turn in unto me.* Though we ought not to be ambitious of the applause of any, yet we should wish and endeavour not to lie under the hard thoughts of good men; and for this reason we should be always ready to give an answer to those that ask us *a reason of the hope that is in us,* 1 Pet. 3. 15. and not say, What is that to you? though that which satisfies our own consciences may not always be satisfactory to others, nor convince them that we are in the right; yet if it be produced with meekness and fear as it ought to be, it may perhaps beget a more favourable opinion, and somewhat abate the edge of censure, when it appears that we are not altogether without excuse. Perhaps after the two tribes had so fully vindicated themselves, and what they had done in building this altar, their brethren of the ten tribes, or some of them at least, were not fully convinced of the expediency of it, but were still of the mind that they had better have let it alone, and that it was altogether needless; but however it had this good effect, that it made the matter abundantly better than at first it seemed, and prevented the unhappy rupture that it threatened; and the ten tribes, though no great admirers of the contrivance of this altar, yet agreed to be neighbourly and friendly with their brethren, and resolved they would not quarrel about it, nor go up in battle against them.—Observe

II. The matter insisted on in their plea; they plead not guilty to the charge, and though the fact was plain enough, yet they deny the fault, and aver that it was not in rebellion nor in transgression against the Lord, that they had built them an altar: they humbly desired that it might not be misconstrued as done with any design to infringe the honour, or weaken the true interest of the national establishment (which they express a very tender concern for) but only to preserve and promote the common interests of true religion and godliness among themselves on the other side Jordan, in communion with their brethren, and not in any affront or contradiction to them, and therefore not in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord. Learn from this, that it highly concerns those who build an altar for themselves to see to it, that they do it not in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord. Building of altars was an ancient act of piety and devotion, Noah and Abraham were famous for it; but that, as other outward instances of religion, if not done from a right principle, and for a right end, may and will turn into sin. We read of Ephraim making many altars to sin, Hos. 8. 11. The multiplying of his altars was the multiplying of his transgressions, and the righteous God turned it into his punishment, *therefore altars shall be unto him to sin,* that is, they shall be a continual snare to him: and the connection of the parts of the charge against Israel, Hos. 8. 14. is very surprising; *Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples.* —Those who build altars, on which to offer in the Eucharist, a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of quick and dead (as the church of Rome does) do in effect deny the sufficiency of that one great sacrifice, which Christ offered once for all upon the cross; and by the pretended repetitions of it insinuate that it is of no more force to take away sin than the legal sacrifices which were heretofore offered year by year continually; because these could not make the comers thereunto perfect, and therefore those altars are certainly built in rebellion and transgression against the Lord, Heb. 10. 1.—Those that build altars for the maintaining and propagating any heresy, or the promoting and carrying on any design against religion in the power of it, that build altars to support a monopoly of the church, and ingross to themselves its privileges to the exclusion of others, spoil the accepta-

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bleness of the altars they build; and it will be construed to be done in transgression against the Lord. If we bestow all our goods in building temples and altars, and have not charity, the reigning love of God and our neighbour in our hearts, all the cost is thrown away, and spent in vain, and we are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, 1 Cor. 13. 3. and shall be dealt with as rebels against the Lord. Let it therefore be our care to do not only that which is good for the matter of it, but to do it well, for *then and then only we shall be accepted*, Gen. 4. 7.

You see, my brethren, how the further opening of this would lead me to the vindication of what we have done here, in furnishing ourselves with these conveniencies for our solemn assemblies; but it was not for that purpuse that I chose this text, nor shall I enter upon that subject; partly because I bless God I know not of any that exhibits so high a charge against us, as that we have done it in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord, and I am very willing to hope the best concerning our brethren's thoughts of us, and partly because I am resolved industriously to decline every thing that looks like controversy, and I should fear lest our defence be construed our offence, or at least be interpreted an invitation or persuasion of people to our way, and an attempt to make proselytes to a party, which you know I have always been studious to avoid. It is a string that can scarce be touched so tenderly but it will have a jarring sound, than which nothing is more disagreeable to me. I am sure this is not a time of day for us to pick quarrels, while through the clemency of our governors we enjoy great quietness; and we have as little reason to do it in this place as any where, while the prime dignitaries of the established church among us seem to have buried the thoughts of our unhappy differences in such a hearty pious zeal for the reformation of manners, we are very unjust and unwise if we say or do any thing to revive them. Are these thoughts laid to sleep? may they on both sides sleep perpetually! But that which I further intend in the application of what I have opened to the present occasion is from this text and story to borrow some light,

1. For the stating of our case as it truly stands, and giving a just account of what we have here done.

2. For the directing us in the duty of this present day, which I principally aim at.

For the first; our building us an altar, besides that which stands upon the foot of the national establishment, (*altare juxta altare*) is a thing which needs explication, for the preventing and rectifying the mistakes of some unthinking people, who are apt to look upon those who go to church, and those who go to meetings, as of two different religions, and the distance between them is widened to a degree equal to that between papists and protestants; thanks be to God the matter is not so: let us therefore see how it stands between us and our brethren of the ten tribes.

1. We also are Israelites in common, and therefore in communion with those of the national establishment. Are they Christians? so are we; we worship the same God in the same name, and heartily consent with them in all the articles of the ancient creed, holding just the same form of sound words, and contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We are baptized, and do baptise in the same great and sacred name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three persons, but one God. We read the same Scriptures, and adhere to them as the standing rule of faith and practice, and make use of them as our oracle and touchstone. We pretend to no inspiration in our praying and preaching, nor do we set up any light within, in competition with, much less in contradiction to the written word. We build our hopes of salvation upon the covenant of grace, and the promises of it made to us and to our children, and submit to all gospel-ordinances, particularly that of the ministry. Whatever the way in which we worship the God of our fathers is called and counted, we believe all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets, and the everlasting Gospel, and have hope towards God which they also allow, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust*, Acts 24. 14, 15.

We are far from engrossing religion and the Church to ourselves, and those of our own way, or thinking that we are the only elect people of God; from our hearts we abhor and renounce all such narrow principles as are contrary to Catholic Christianity, and undermine and straiten its sure and large foundations. We do hereby solemnly profess, and shall take all occasions to repeat it, that we celebrate our religious assemblies *in communion with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. We neither say nor do any thing here to the reproach or prejudice of the national establishment; we take not upon us to arraign or censure the constitutions of it, or to judge or despise those that adhere to them; but in those few and small things wherein our apprehensions differ (whilst in the most and greatest things of all we cordially agree) we desire faithfully and conscientiously to walk according to the light that God has given us, charitably believing that others do so too, whom we hope to meet in the general assembly of the first born, though now we are divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel. This profession we make in the sincerity of our hearts, with a resolution, by the grace of God, never to act contrary to it.

And now may we not claim it as our right to be owned and looked upon as members of the catholic church, though a weak and small part of it, yet a part of it, and I trust not a corrupt part; and being united with our brethren of the other tribes, under one civil government, and being (abundantly to our satisfaction) within the same allegiance, and even in our religious interests taken into the same protection, we see not why we should not be looked upon as belonging to that part of the catholic church which God's own right hand hath planted in these kingdoms.

2. Though we also are Israelites, yet our lot like that of the two tribes happens to fall on the other side Jordan, a river dividing between us and our brethren, which, without hazarding the peace of our consciences, we cannot wade through or swim over.

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Some of the tribes of our English Israel have been so situated ever since the reformation, as early as Edward the Sixth's time, through a dissatisfaction about the injunction of some indifferent things, the more minute parts of the national establishment. The first settlement of the two tribes on the other side Jordan was looked upon by Moses and the rest of the tribes with a jealousy, as tending to weaken the common interests of Israel; and their proposing of it (as here their building of an altar) was severely censured, till they had given their reasons, cleared themselves of any ill design in it, and promised their best assistance to their brethren in the common service; and then Moses allowed and ratified their choice, as we have the story at large, Num. 32. where we find, that two things induced them to desire their lot on that side Jordan, though thereby they put themselves out of the way of the preferments which attended Joshua and the ark into the land of Canaan, and exposed themselves to the contempt and censure of their brethren, as strangers to the commonwealth of Israel.

(1.) That there was good pasture in the land, v. 4. *It is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:* they would sit down by the *footsteps of the flock, and feed their kids beside the shepherds' tents.*

(2.) That then they should not have the trouble of passing the river, v. 5. *Bring us not over Jordan.* Whether these inducements were justifiable we will not now dispute, but it appears that the rest of the tribes, who could satisfy themselves to go through Jordan, did not therefore disown them for their brethren.

From the first planting of Christianity, there appears to have been a variety of sentiments among wise and good men, concerning the less weighty and less evident matters of the gospel, as concerning the distinction of meats and the observation of days, Rom. 14. 2, 5. some regarding all days and all meats alike, others making a religious difference. The Apostle Paul, by his unquestionable authority, might have determined the matter in favour of one side, and have obliged the other to a compliance; but he chooses to accommodate the matter, without engaging either to change their opinions or their practice according to them, but prescribes a mutual charity and forbearance as a sovereign remedy against all the ill consequences of this variety of sentiments, Phil. 3. 15, 16. *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not,* Rom. 14. 3. *But let every man be persuaded in his own mind,* v. 5. which no doubt were intended to be standing rules for the management of the like differences in all the ages of the church; and if these rules were strictly observed by all churches and all Christians, the river of Jordan would be dried up, at least be *driven back at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,* Ps. 104. 5, 7. the God of peace and love: and a way would be made for those *of the ransomed of the Lord to pass over,* whose lot is on the other side of it; but alas who shall live when God does this!

In the mean time for the divisions of Reuben, (one of the two tribes that was divided from the rest by the waters of Jordan) there cannot but be great thoughts and searchings of heart, as Judg. 5. 15, 16. with all that desire and pray *for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem.*

3. Being Israelites, (though on the other side Jordan) it ought to be our care and endeavour, according as our lot is, to promote the common interests of our holy religion, and to do what we can to preserve and advance them. *And the Lord God of gods he knows* it is with this design that we have built us an altar; not for the support of a sect or a party, or the carrying on of any private interests, but for the service of Catholic Christianity according to the Scriptures. We know very well *that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,* Rom. 14. 17. that it is not maintained either by the imposition or opposition of indifferent things, but that it consists *in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;* these are the things in which lies the being and power of the divine life, and not in a zeal either for or against ceremonies; we know very well that *neither circumcision is any thing, nor uncircumcision any thing* to our acceptance with God, *but the new creature,* and *faith which works by love,* Gal. 5. 6. 6, 15. That therefore which is of uncontroverted necessity, and which is the very life and soul of religion, we would do our endeavour, and make it our business, at this altar, to maintain and carry on, so that we *and our children after us may have a part in the Lord, and may never cease from following him.* We would endeavour to glorify the great name of God in Christ in our prayers and praises, and in concurrence with the universal church, to pay due homage to the universal Lord. We desire and design in the preaching of the word to propagate the knowledge of the *only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal,* to push on the holy war against sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, under the banner of the exalted Redeemer. Our intention in all our ministrations shall be the same with the intentions of the ministry in general, Acts 26. 18. *First to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God;* to recover people from under the dominion of a worldly, carnal, sensual mind, to the faith and obedience of the everlasting gospel; and then *for the building up of the saints in holiness and comfort, and the edifying of the body of Christ, till they all come to the perfect man,* Eph. 4. 12, 13. And herein we are still *determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

And this we do not in opposition to, but a hearty concurrence with, the national establishment, as far as it aims at these ends. *God forbid that we should preach Christ, who is our peace, out of envy or contention;* no, we desire to have all our different apprehensions and sentiments swallowed up in a pious *zeal for the common faith of the precious Jesus, and the common salvation* of precious souls; and in token of this communion with our brethren of the other tribes, we have built us this altar, that we may say as they, v. 28. *Behold the pattern of the altar which we have built!* not to entail a schism, and to perpetuate a causeless separation, but for the solemnity and decorum of our religious assemblies (until God shall open a door into the national establishment) *and the rolling away of their reproach, that it may not be said to us as it was to the Gileadites* (the half tribe whose lot was on the other side Jordan) *Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim,* Judg. 12. 4.

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We need not, we cannot, put it into our apology, that we have not built our altar for burnt offerings and sacrifices; for, blessed be God, we are not under the gospel tied up to worship in one place, John 4. 21. as the Jews were under the law. *The hour now is when neither to this mountain, nor yet to Jerusalem shall religious worship be confined; but in every place incense shall be offered, and prayers made,* Mal. 1. 11. *every where* without respect of places, 1 Tim. 2. 8. we know no temples, *no altar that sanctifies the gift,* or the service, but Christ only, Heb. 13. 20. But this we can say, that we have not built our altar in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord, or to make a breach upon catholic unity. Thus I have endeavoured, with the words of truth and soberness, to state our case, and I know I speak the sentiments of many.

What remains is, Secondly, to direct you in the duty of the present day and occasion. And now, my brethren, *What doth the Lord our God require of us?* I take it for granted you are willing to know, and therefore I beseech you suffer the word of exhortation.

1. Let us give God the glory of our peaceable settlement in the land of our possession. We have reason to acknowledge it to a kind providence, that cast our lot in such a land as this, an exceeding good land like that of Canaan, *a pleasant land,* Dan. 8. 9. a glorious land, or land of delights or ornaments, wherein there is no want of any good thing, nor any reason to envy (all things considered) either the soil or climate of any other land. The constitution of our civil government, and the defences and securities of our liberty and property, are such as make our nation easy, safe, and happy. Our lot is also cast in a good day, wherein we have not for many years felt the strokes of any desolating judgments, either war, famine, or pestilence. While thus we dwell peaceably under fruitful *vines and fig-trees,* we are much to blame if we praise not the name of the Lord.

The two tribes built this altar here to the glory of God, when they were returning triumphantly to settle in their inheritance, as David fetched the ark to the place he had prepared for it, when God *had given him rest from all his enemies round about,* 2 Sam. 7. 1. The Israelites, every time they offered their first fruits, were appointed to make a thankful mention of the mercy of God to them, in giving them that good land, Deut. 26. 3, 9, 10. And we have a great deal of reason to do the same, now we are offering the first fruits of our altar. If we consider how melancholy the reverse of our present circumstances would be, we should see what great cause we have to be thankful to God, for our share in the public peace and plenty. National plenty in the success of trade, and the increase of the earth, contributes to the support and comfort of our religious assemblies; for thus we have wherewithal to honour our God. When famine reigned, *the meat-offering and the drink-offering failed from the house of God,* Joel 1. 13. compare ch. 2. 14. National peace does no less contribute to the comfort of our assemblies, *for in the peace of the nation we have peace.* We have great reason to bless God that our land is not the seat of war, *and that the sword of the Lord is not drawn among us,* (as sometimes it has been) *and commissioned to lay heaps upon heaps: that the city, the place of our solemnities, is a quiet habitation,* Isa. 33. 20. It is easy to imagine what desolations war, especially civil war, would make, not only with our cities and houses, but with our temples and altars. *(Inter arma silent leges & Evangelium—in the din of arms neither the voice of human law nor of the gospel is heard.)* What a mercy is it that we are delivered from *the noise of archers,* and *all other the alarms of war, at the places of drawing waters! and therefore there ought we to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,* Judg. 5. 11. We have reason to call the altar we have built as Moses called his, Exod. 17. 15. (in thankfulness after the discomfiture of Amalek,) *Jehovah Nissi,—the Lord my banner,* in whom we triumph; and as Gideon called his in faith, before the defeat of Midian, *Jehovah Shallom,—the Lord our peace,* in whom we trust.

2. Let us much more give God praise, for the national establishment of our religion, with that of our peace and civil liberty. That our Canaan is not only a land flowing with milk and honey, but (which is a much greater advantage) that *it is Immanuel's land,* Isa. 8. 8. that the Christian religion, that choice and noble vine, which was so early planted in our land, is still growing and flourishing in it, in despight of all the attempts of the powers of darkness to root it out; that it is refined from the errors and corruptions which the church of Rome had (with the help of ignorance and tyranny) introduced, and that the reformation was in our land a national act: that Christianity thus purified, is supported and defended by good and wholesome laws, and is twisted in with the very constitution of our government. It is a maxim in our law books, that the law of God is the law of the land; that the holy Scripture is of sovereign authority; and that if any statute be made directly against the law of God, it is void; and that every thing that is for the support of religion shall be favoured. *Summa ratio est quæ pro religione facit,—that construction is to be preferred which supports religion,* and (which I would observe as a justification of the civil punishment of sabbath profanation) it is a constant rule of our law, *Dies Dominicus est dies non juridicus,—Sunday is not a day in law,* that the law is so far from countenancing, that it nullifies and invalidates all writs, processes, and judicial acts upon the Lord's-day: and if the administration of right and justice, consents to give way to the solemnity of the Lord's-day, shall a common petty trade, or a vain idle sport, intrude or intrench upon these sacred hours, and not be animadverted upon?

The banks and bulwarks which the civil government hath raised, against the threatening force of atheism, deism, profaneness, and irreligion, on the one hand, and of popery and idolatry on the other hand, though they should not make us secure, and, as it were, in no danger from them; yet they should make us thankful, that God has not only set up his tabernacle among us, but hath set such a guard upon it, as we hope will preserve it to the generations to come, that the English nation may never be otherwise than a Christian protestant nation. The encouragement which the government gives to religion, is also a great support to it, and ought to be matter of rejoicing to all good men: that the civil powers speak comfortably

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comfortably *to them that teach the good knowledge of the Lord*, 2 Chron. 30. 22. and take the ministry and the administration of ordinances under their protection and patronage. *God has not dealt so with other nations*, with other churches. True Christianity, we may safely say it, has not such a nursing father of any crowned head in the world, as it has in our land. The mercy is more sensibly great, because it is not long since our religion, and all the defences of it, with all its supports, were at the brink of ruin; and like Isaac upon the altar, lay ready to be sacrificed to the malice of our popish enemies; and had the ship then sunk, our cabin could not have been preserved. Deut. 32. 27. *But fearing the wrath of the enemy, lest they should behave themselves proudly.* Ezek. 36. 32. *And not for our sakes be it known unto us*, God sent from heaven to save us, and raise up a deliverer for us, to whose seasonable and successful application we owe, under God, our present tranquillity. A mercy never to be forgotten, and to which every year's revolution makes a fresh addition! that notwithstanding our manifold provocations, by which we have forfeited our peace under the present government, and the restless and unwearied attempts of our enemies, who have been industrious to overturn it; we are yet in the enjoyment of its benign influences. This ought to be the matter of our wonder and praise. *Surely because the Lord loved us, he hath set a king over us*, and continued him so long, that answers Mordecai's character, Esth. 10. 3. *Seeking the welfare of his people, and speaking peace to all their seed.*

3. Let us acknowledge, with thankfulness to God, the favour which we on this side Jordan have found with the princes of our Israel; that they are so far satisfied, that the altars we build are not in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord; that they do not go up to war against us, as these princes here resolved, v. 33. We have great reason to bless God for our present liberty, and that we have it confirmed to us by a law, and the wide door of opportunity continues open; God grant it may be effectual. Now for a little space, (nay, for a long space, much longer than we would have flattered ourselves with the expectation of) *grace has been shewed us from the Lord our God to leave us a remnant to escape those many dark and cloudy days* which passed over the heads of our predecessors, and some of ours; *and to give us a nail* (a fixing and settlement, and constant abode) *in his holy place:* that *our God may lighten our eyes, instruct and comfort us, and give us some reviving*, Ezra 9. 8. While we enjoy the comfort of our liberty, we ought to repeat our thanksgivings for the mercy of it; and an invaluable mercy it is, that *there is a defence upon our glory*, Isa. 45. 6. and that our religious assemblies are taken under the kind protection and shelter of the government. Would we have this liberty continued? let us be thankful for it, and give diligence to make a good use of it while the gleam lasts. In the receiving of it *we were like them that dream*, Ps. 126. 1. Such was the surprise of it: let it not be said of us, that such is our slothfulness and carelessness, we are like them that dream, in the improvement of it; as the hungry man that dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty.

We have reason to be thankful, that the reproach of sedition, and disloyalty, and disaffection to the government, is quite done away from our assemblies; and that there is now no colour for the imputation of that, (which from our hearts we always abhorred,) the disturbance of the public peace: but that while *we live in godliness and honesty*, we *may live quiet and peaceable lives, and there is none to make us afraid.* If Ezra were so thankful to God for the countenance of a heathen king, and *that God had put such a thing into the king's heart*, Ezra 7. 27, 28. much more reason have we to be thankful, for the countenance of a christian and protestant government; *the good of which we are obliged to seek, because of the house of the Lord our God*, Ps. 122. It adds much to the comfort of our present liberty, that in the ratification of it by a law, it was not intended, (as we have reason to fear it was on the first precarious grant of it) for a trap and a snare, and the serving of a design against our common interests; but for our ease, comfort, and benefit: and that in the preamble of the statute, it is declared to be for no less a public good, than the uniting of his majesty's protestant subjects in interest and affection: *This is the Lord's doing:* And as at first the surprise of it made it marvellous in our eyes; so the continuance of it makes it no less so. The altar we have built, we may call *our Ebenezer, saying, hitherto the Lord has helped us.*

4. While we enjoy the liberty of our altars, let us remember and sympathise with our brethren, with whom *it is a day of treading down, and of perplexity;* I mean the poor persecuted protestants in France, who *are killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter, and whose blood is barbarously mingled with their sacrifices; they are our bone and our flesh, fellow members of the same body*, concurring with us in the same testimony against the antichristian generation. But how is a *flourishing church made a wilderness, the gold become dim, the most fine gold changed;* while we meet together in full assemblies, they are scattered. We have decent and convenient places to meet in; but they are driven into woods and wildernesses, and *are counted as the off-scouring of all things.* We are safe in our assemblies, and there is none to make us afraid; but they are exposed to the cruelty of bloody men, and cannot come together to worship God according to their consciences, but in peril of death, or a slavery much worse, and more terrible. When we consider this, and the sad desolations of the sanctuary in other places, our joy in the altar we have built, admits as great a mixture and allay, as theirs did who laid the foundation of the temple, Ezra 3. 13. *When the noise of the shouts of joy could not be discerned from the noise of the weeping of the people.* What a damp does this cast upon our comforts, and what a sadness does it put upon our countenances? as it did on Nehemiah's, to hear that the remnant that were *left of the captivity were in such great affliction and reproach*, Neh. 1. 3, 4.

Let us therefore, with the greatest tenderness *remember them that are in bonds as bound with them;* let us feel their burdens; and let not all the trouble they are in seem little to us; let us pity them, and pray for them daily,

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daily, and by a christian sympathy suffer with them, as all the members of the body do with a pained one. Let the truths they suffer for be precious to us; and the liberty they long for be valued by us. When we begin to despise the manna, and to call it light bread, and when our full souls loath the honey-comb, think what they would give for one of those peaceable opportunities, which we so easily neglect; and how they would welcome those days of the Son of man, which we think return too fast. Let their calamities also be warnings to us, to take heed of settling upon our lees, *because we have been at ease from our youth*, Jer. 48. 11. Time was when they were as sure of their peace and liberty, as we can be of ours, and *thought their mountain stood strong, and should not be moved:* But God by his dealings with them, will make all his churches to know, that they have no lease of their privileges, but are tenants at will: that they may give diligence while they have the light, to believe and walk in it, *lest darkness come upon them.* When we begin to grow secure and careless, and to leave our first love, *let us go and see what God did to Shiloh*, Jer. 7. 12. and dread *the removing of our candlestick also*, Rev. 2. 5.

But is their wound incurable? Has God cast them off for ever? We trust not. *The rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous*, Ps. 125. 3. *There is a time, a set time to favour Zion*, Ps. 102. 13, 14. which undoubtedly will come: let us therefore believe and hope, and pray, and wait: *the vision is yet for an appointed time; and at the end of it shall speak and not lie. Did God bring back our captivity, and do such great things for us, whereof we are glad?* Let us be earnest with God, to complete the mercy of our peace, by working deliverance for them, and *turning their captivity as streams in the south, being assured that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy*, Ps. 126. 1, 3, 4, 5. Rev. 11. 8, 9. *The witnesses, though they were slain, yet are not buried; and the bones, though they are dead and dried, yet they are above ground in the open valley*, Ezek. 37. 1, 2. which ministers some assistances to our hope that they shall rise again, and even these dry bones live.

5. Let us cordially concur with the other tribes of our English Israel, in driving the Canaanites out of our land: this was that which Moses indented with the two tribes for, when he settled them on that side Jordan, Numb. 32. 20. that they should give the best help they could, to their brethren in their war against the common enemy: and still there are Canaanites in our land; vice and profaneness, and debauchery, are the enemies I mean, which war against both our civil and sacred interests; and as it is said of the remainder of the Canaanites, Josh. 23. 13. *They are thorns in the eyes of all good men*, and a snare to us. It is too plain to be denied, that iniquity abounds among us, and goes barefaced: our air is infected with the poisonous and malignant breath of blasphemous oaths and curses, which are grown so common, that they seem to be idioms of our language. Our land is defiled with drunkenness and uncleanness, which some make a trade of, and others a sport of: the beauty and honour of our religion, is stained by the profanation of the Lord's day, and an atheistical contempt of holy things. *How can we say we are not thus polluted*, Jer. 2. 23. and *shall not God visit for these things; shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Have we not reason to expect, that a deluge of judgments, should follow such a deluge of impieties? And is any thing more the interest of the nation, than to endeavour the rooting out of these Canaanites? that if possible they might not be among us, or at least the putting them under tribute, that they may not rule, or bear sway among us; which surely is not a thing impracticable.

Against these Canaanites, the government hath by repeated proclamations waged war; *and therein God hath given a banner to them that fear him, to be displayed, because of the truth and holiness*, Ps. 60. 4. And now the inquiry is like that of Moses in the gate of the camp, Exod. 32. 26. *Who is on the Lord's side?* or that, Ps. 94. 16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil doers, or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* Who will put a hand to so good a work, as the reformation of the morals of our nation? Who will help to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, and to drive the unclean spirit out of the land? Let us, in our places, be volunteers in this service, and cheerfully put our necks to this work of the Lord's, that we come not under the *brand put upon the nobles of Tekoa*, Neh. 3. 5. When the remains of the Canaanites made head so far, as mightily to oppress Israel, under Jabin and Sisera, Judg. 4. 23; it was the reproach of the two tribes on the other side Jordan, that they came not to the help of their brethren, but basely and ingloriously sneaked, when there was service to be done to the common interest Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and Reuben among his sheepfolds, Judg. 5. 16, 17. which made their division by the river greatly lamented by all thinking men, and occasioned many searchings of heart. Let us be industrious to prevent so ill an effect of our divisions, otherwise unhappy enough. Let us be willing to appear, willing to act, willing to venture, for the promoting of a reformation, which all good men agree to be necessary. Now is a time (when that blessed cause hath life in it, and we have so many good leaders to follow) to shew ourselves for God, *and valiant for the truth in the earth*, Jer. 9. 3. Are not evil-doers afraid, nor ashamed to appear in opposition to religion and virtue? and shall we be either afraid or ashamed to appear for the defence of them? If we now sit still and say, let our brethren of the ten tribes drive out the Canaanites that are among themselves, and we will only look to our own border; surely (as Moses told the two tribes) Numb. 32. 22, 23. *we have sinned against the Lord, and be sure our sin will find us out.* Nothing will contribute more to the healing of our breaches, and the uniting of us one to another in communion, than a hearty concurrence in this, wherein confessedly we are agreed. When God turns to *our people a pure language*, then, and not till then, *we shall serve him with one consent*; for betwixt them there is a manifest connection, Zeph. 3. 9. Holiness and love, purity and unity, mutually befriend and advance each other.

6. Let us be able, with humble confidence, to appeal to

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to God, that our acting separately in building us an altar, is not done in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord. That we may then approve ourselves to him in the integrity of our hearts, we must take heed *to our spirits: the Lord God of gods, he knows*, and he only knows the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by them he judges of us, and of our actions: that we may approve ourselves to him, it therefore concerns us to do all according to the manner, the appointed manner, Neh. 8. 18. and in due order, 1 Chron. 15. 13. Let us see to it, that our eye be single, and our intentions sincere, and our ends right; for it is a pity a good work should be spoiled, and rendered unacceptable by an ill principle; that what for the matter of it is good, should become otherwise by a mismanagement.

If it be in pride and vain-glory that we have built us an altar, only that we may make a fair shew in the flesh, and be like the nations, then it is done in rebellion and in transgression. To be proud of any ornaments, but especially of those that belong to the solemn assemblies, very ill becomes those who are but dust and ashes, and ought especially to remember that they are so when they draw near to the Lord of glory, Ps. 29. 2. *The beauty of holiness*, in which we are to worship the Lord, *is not that outward adorning of magnificent and curious structures, but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible*, 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4. To hide pride from his worshippers, God appointed that they should make him an *altar of earth*, Exod. 20. 24. or if of stone, *not of hewn stone*, v. 25. The garnishing and enriching of temples, by which a gay humour was indulged, and primitive plainness and simplicity lost, never did any real kindness to the Church, but by degrees turned to its prejudice. *Hodie venenum funditur in Ecclesiam—to day is a poisonous mixture introduced into the Church.* If it be in opposition to our brethren, or from a principle of envy, or ill-will to them, it is in rebellion and in transgression; but I hope you have not so learned Christ. Our master will never be pleased with that which is done from a spirit of contradiction to, or contention with our brethren and fellow-servants: the hands lifted up in prayer, will never reach heaven, unless they *be lifted up without wrath and contention;* so it might be rendered, 1 Tim. 2. 8. without disputation, Jam. 1. 20. *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, i. e. it neither gains acceptance with him, nor does any real service to him: but if in building this altar, and in all our attendances upon it, we sincerely design the honour and glory of God in Christ, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of our own souls, and the souls of others; if we make every particular opportunity serviceable to the general interests of our Christianity, to further us in our way to God, and fit us for our rest in him; we may then rejoice in the testimony of our consciences, that it is not in rebellion or transgression against the Lord, but in simplicity and godly sincerity that we have built us an altar.

7. If the Lord knows our integrity, let us study how to let Israel know it also. Let us demonstrate our good principles, by our agreeable practices, and that will be the best and most effectual way, to convince the world that we have not built this in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord: our protestations of our integrity and good intentions, will be of no avail, if our actions give our words the lye. When our lights are thus put on a candlestick, and not under a bushel, so that many eyes are upon us, we ought to take care that our light so shine before men, as that they may not only hear our good words, *but see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven*, Mat. 5. 16. This is the method the Apostle prescribes for silencing gain-sayers, *We must effect it by well-doing, for so is the will of God*, 1 Pet. 2. 15. Having a *good conscience*, let us evidence it by a *good conversation*, ver. 16.

There are three ways by which, if our hearts be upright with God, Israel also he shall know it.

(1.) By our serious piety in all the instances of religious worship and devotion. Have we built this for religious worship, and under the umbrage of a zeal for its purity? Let us then approve ourselves religious worshippers; let your piety towards God appear in the constancy of your family devotions, which I think no good Christian, that has the charge of a family, dares live in the neglect of. Think not that a church here will excuse for the want of *a church in your houses*, Rom. 16. 5. Though public worship have the preference, yet it must not supersede family worship: this ought you to have done, but not to leave the other undone. All the faithful seed of Abraham must herein be followers of him; that wherever Abraham had a tent, God had an altar, at which he called upon the name of the Lord. See Gen. 12. 8.—13. 18. Let our houses be Bethels, houses of God, that he dwelling in them, we may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, even all the days of our lives. Let Joshua's resolution be yours, *that whatever others do, you and your houses will serve the Lord*, Ps. 23. 6. Josh. 24. 15. Carry away the impressions made on your souls by public worship, and bring them with you into your families, and there go over them again, that they may be as a nail fastened in a sure place. It is supposed that the silver shrines for Diana, which we read of, Acts 19. 24. were copies of Diana's temple in miniature, which her worshippers had in their houses, for the use of their families. Had they such respect to a dunghil god, and shall ours be less to the Lord of the whole earth? Religion is then, and not till then, likely to flourish in our land, when all our families are praying families, and nurseries of piety. *Though the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, yet in them also he ought to be praised and *served as the God of all the families of Israel*, Ps. 87. 2. Jer. 31. 1.

Let your piety appear also, by your decent and reverent deportment in our public assemblies. It is true God looks chiefly at the *heart, and bodily exercise profits little*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. if alone it profits nothing; but it is as true, that in concurrence with our spirits, we are to *glorify God with our bodies, and to present them to him a living sacrifice*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Rom. 12. 1. Though the outward expressions of reverence and affection be not an infallible sign of a serious spirit, (a vain and trifling heart may be covered over with a grave and demure appearance;) yet the outward expressions of a carelessness

and

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and unconcernedness, I think, are a certain indication of an evil heart of unbelief; if the special presence and inspection of the angels, in our solemn assemblies, should forbid that which is unhandsome, as the Apostle intimates, 1 Cor. 11. 10. much more should the eye of God upon us oblige us to observe a decorum. Does not even nature teach us, that when we are engaged in serious work, we ought to shew ourselves serious in it? When we are worshipping the great God, we ought to express such an awe of him, as may strike an awe upon others; so that if an unbeliever should come into our assembly, as the Apostle argues, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. he may acknowledge that God is among us, and the fear of God is in us of a truth. The Jews, since their worship came to be a rebellion and transgression against the Lord Christ, have been notoriously irreverent in it; as well did Isaiah prophecy of them. Mat. 15. 7.

It hath been turned to the reproach of the assemblies of dissenters, that in shunning superstition they have run into rudeness and irreverence. If any have given occasion for such a reflection, let them bear their own burthen; but I desire that we, in our assembly, may give no offence of that kind. Standing in prayer is spoken of as a gesture proper enough, Mark 11. 25. *When ye stand praying*, but kneeling is certainly the most fit and proper posture in adoration, and should be chosen rather where the convenience of the place (as I hope ours will) and the ability of the person will allow it. Paul, when a Pharisee, *stood and prayed;* but *afterwards he learnt to bow his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* Eph. 3. 14.

(2.) By our strict purity in our whole conversation: hereby we must let all that know us know that in the integrity of our hearts we have done this. Let it be our daily care and exercise *to keep consciences void of offence towards man as well as towards God:* to pretend to purity in our worship, and yet to allow impurity in our lives, is to contradict ourselves. Let all the days of our lives be of a-piece with our sabbath days, and let a thread of holiness run through the web of all our actions. The best consecration of our place *will be to consecrate ourselves this day unto the Lord,* Exod. 32. 29. Let your sobriety and temperance, in all your enjoyments, your justice and honesty, in all your dealings, beautify that profession, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, Tit. 2. 1. and let not the glory of our assembly be stained by any practices unbecoming christians: *Let your merchandize and your hire be holiness to the Lord,* as is prophesied of Tyre, Isa. 23. 18. and *let every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah,* even the common utensils of your houses, *be like the bowls before the altar,* Zech. 14. 20, 21. of which *it was said, be ye clean that bear them,* Isa. 52. 11. You that in building yourselves an altar, have done more than others, cannot evidence the sincerity of your hearts therein, if in the common instances of justice and friendship, and charity, you do less than others. Remember the hint you just now had out of the psalm that was read in course, Ps. 93. 5. *Holiness becomes thy house, O Lord, for ever,* and therefore unholiness very ill becomes any that belong to it; remember also the good hint you had lately from another hand; that whatever disputes there are about holiness of places, there is none about the holiness of persons; the necessity of that, we are all agreed in, Heb. 12. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

(3.) By our peaceableness and charity towards our brethren, Jam. 3. 17, 18. The wisdom that is from above, is not indeed pure, if it be not peaceable. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, and then it is likely to come up and flourish: they were the sons of peace that bid the gospel welcome, Luke 10. 5, 6. Be at peace with those from whom you differ in opinion, and *receive them not with doubtful disputation,* Rom. 14. 1. Carefully watch that a diversity of communion, cause not an alienation of affection, but be as ready to do any office of love and kindness and respect to those from whom you dissent, as to those with whom you consent; resolve, though you differ from them, you will not differ with them. If our separation be not schismatical in its own nature, (as for my own part I am well satisfied it is not)* let us not at any time make it so by our uncharitable censures, or our unchristian heats and passions.

Be at peace also among yourselves. Let your meeting to worship God in one place prevent and put an end to all the little picques and quarrels which may happen at any time, and *never let us be three against two, and two against three in this house.* Our peaceableness will be both our strength and beauty.

Let me therefore welcome you into this place with the same exhortation with which St. Paul takes leave of his friends at Corinth, *Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in love and peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

* See the Author's *Enquiry into the Nature of Schism, with The Lay-man's Reasons for joining with a Congregation of moderate Dissenters.* 1689.

A FUNERAL

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A FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED AT HACKNEY, JULY 11, 1714,

ON OCCASION OF THE MUCH-LAMENTED DEATH OF THE

REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL THERE.

By W. TONG.

JOHN 13. 36. *latter part.*

Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward.

THESE words are the answer our Lord and Saviour gave to a hasty question proposed by the apostle Peter, *Lord, whither goest thou?* The occasion of that question was a dark saying that our Saviour dropt, ver. 33. *Little children, yet a little while and I am with you; ye shall seek me; and, as I said to the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you.*

This affectionate disciple was so struck with that expression, that he seems not so much to mind what our Saviour added, that *they should love one another as he had loved them all;* but, as one whose heart was full, and could hold no longer, he breaks in abruptly upon his Master with this inquiry, *Lord, whither goest thou?*

Our Saviour thought fit to give a gentle check to the forward temper of his disciple, by answering as in the text, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward.* Yet this did but raise his zeal the higher, and produced that warm expostulation, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee? I will lay down my life for thy sake.* Our blessed Lord, who knew Peter better than he knew himself, saw so much spiritual pride and self-sufficiency in that resolution, that he thought fit to take him down, and tell him of his approaching scandalous fall, v. 38.

In the temper and language of this disciple there was a remarkable mixture of good and evil, grace and corruption, much love to Christ, and too much confidence in himself; and in the reply that Christ makes to him in the words of the text, there is a wise mixture of reproof and encouragement suited to Peter's case.

1. Our Saviour checks the Apostle's curiosity and self-confidence, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now.* I am going to the cross, and thence to the crown and kingdom; but though thou hast been so long in my family, heard my doctrine, seen my miracles, and conversed so freely with me, thou canst not yet follow me; thy work is not yet done, thy soul is not yet ready, thou art not fully prepared for death and heaven.

2. He encourages the hope of his disciple and his honest zeal; "*But thou shalt follow me afterward.* Thou canst not follow me now, and therefore thou must be content to be left behind in this evil world; but my grace shall be working in thee and by thee, and thou shalt in due time be made ready to follow me both to the cross and to the kingdom. Thou shalt not be lost, though thou be left behind; *Thou shalt follow me afterward.*"

I cannot but observe something in the countenance of this great assembly, that tells me it is expected I should take some particular notice, as others of my brethren have done before, of the surprising, lamented, long to be lamented, death of the late excellent pastor of this church.

And indeed it is upon that account that I have fixed my thoughts upon this text, these words of Christ to Peter, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward.* I believe I am not the only person here who feels in himself a secret regret, that so dear, so faithful, so every way desirable, a friend has got the start of me, is gone to heaven before me, and left me behind him in this valley of sin and tears; but when my heart is musing upon this unexpected parting, and wishing I had been so happy as to have gone to heaven with him, he seems to me to look back upon me, and bid me, for a while, farewell, in these words of the text, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward.*

I hope I shall not be thought to presume too far, in accommodating these words of our blessed Lord to any mere man. I intend not hereby to compare the servant to his Lord, so as to set him upon a level with him, either in the excellency of his person, or the nature of his death; in both these respects, I know and believe our Saviour *was alone, and of the people there was none with him.* Nor do I intend to compare myself to this blessed disciple, unless it be in those things in which he was least like himself. But certainly, conformity to Christ is every Christian's duty and honour; and where we see this conformity wrought up to a very eminent degree, our love to Christ will oblige us to esteem such persons the excellent of the earth, precious both in life and death; and we hope we may, without offending God, wish that we might have our lot with them living and dying.

That man must be worse than Balaam, who does not desire *to die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end may be like his,* Num. 23. 10. Good men will be ready to carry their desires farther, not only to die like the righteous, but, if it were the will of God, to die with them; especially with those of them to whom their souls have been long united by the sweet and sacred bonds of an intimate and religious friendship; having been *lovely and pleasant in their lives,* they would have

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thought it a favourable providence, if *in death they had not been divided*, 2 Sam. 1. 23.

When Christ told his disciples that his beloved friend Lazarus was dead, Thomas was so affected with it, that he made a sudden motion to the rest of the disciples, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*, John 11. 16. You will find that affectionate proposal so excellently opened and applied by the late Reverend Mr. How, in his funeral sermon for Dr. Bates, that I cannot but recommend it earnestly to your review on this occasion. I have not the least doubt but that extraordinary person was able to speak the words of Thomas from his very heart at that time, though with a due subjection to the Father of Spirits. I am confirmed in this persuasion, by what I myself had the opportunity to observe for some years together, of those stedfast hopes and holy desires with which he waited for his great change.

And I very well remember what I have heard from an eminent, wealthy, and religious citizen, (alderman Rodbert) in whose house that venerable person Mr. Richard Fairclough died, that when Mr. How visited him on his death-bed, and they discoursed together in a very affectionate manner upon the glory of Heaven, Mr. How familiarly said to him, "To this glory you are hastening; but why will you not take me along with you?" And then answered himself, "But we must, with good old Simeon, have leave to die from him who is the Lord of life."

I could mention some other such instances, which, how much soever they may be derided by men of defiled consciences and earthly minds, plainly shew, there is something in the temper of a serious, godly person, that suggests such desires and wishes as these, when he sees his dear companions in the kindom and patience of Jesus Christ going to heaven before him, What do I do loitering and lingering here? why could I not have gone along with them?

What I shall offer to your thoughts upon this affecting and important subject, will be under these two general heads:

I. To consider, what it is that makes it so desirable to go along with our godly friends into the other world. And,

II. What reason we have to be quiet and patient in continuing here a while longer, even when our best friends are gone before us.

I. What is it that makes it so desirable to go along with our faithful godly friends into another world?

If a man would give his affectionate thoughts their full scope, many things might be mentioned to this purpose; but I shall confine myself to these three:

1. Had we gone along with such deceased friends, we should now have been delivered with them from the evils of this world, which they have left.

2. We should have been now put into possession with them of the blessedness of that world to which they are gone.

3. The sorrow of parting by this means would have been prevented.

1. Could we have gone along with our godly deceased friends, we should now have been delivered, as they are, from the many evils of this world, which they have left.

The present world is an evil world, God frequently tells us so in his word, the faithful servants of God find it so, and even the men of this world themselves, when they come to leave it, confess it is so, though they would not believe it before.

It is so evil a world, that our blessed Lord was resolved he would deliver his people out of it at any rate; and, rather than fail, he would give his life, he would give himself to accomplish the great design; and God the Father approved of the resolution, as worthy of the wisdom and grace of Christ, and exactly correspondent to his own mind and will; *Who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from the present evil world*, (or out of this present evil world) *according to the will of God and our Father*, Gal. 1. 4.

The evils of this present world are innumerable, but the chief of them may be reduced to these three heads; sin, affliction, and the danger we are in of miscarrying for ever.

(1.) Sin; this indeed is the greatest evil, and the procuring cause of all the rest; and it is no small burthen to those whose hearts are tender and upright with God.

They are grieved to see so much sin committed in the world, their righteous souls are vexed at the filthy conversation of those among whom they live; the barefaced atheism and infidelity of some, the gross and scandalous profaneness and immoralities of others, are a trouble and a terror to them; to see the glorious gracious God, so much dishonoured and provoked, to see precious souls in such numbers so desperately destroying themselves, good men have much ado to bear the beholding of it with their eyes, it makes them weary of the world; they think themselves unhappy thus to dwell in *Mesech*, and to sojourn in the tents of *Kedar*, Ps. 120. 5.

They are grieved yet more, to see so much sin in their own families, among their near relations, and how few are there who have not this cause of sorrow, less or more? The daughters of Heth were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca, so great, that Rebecca declared, *She was weary of her life because of them*, Gen. 27. 46.

They are most of all grieved to feel so much sin still remaining and working in their own souls, they have known the evil of it, it has been to them more bitter than death, and yet they are not free from it; it makes them loath themselves, to think there should be still so much in them of that abominable thing that the soul of God hates, and that they should by in-dwelling sin be so often hindered in that which is good and drawn into that which is evil; they sigh and groan for a full deliverance, and a sinless immortality, where they shall never say or do a foolish thing any more, never entertain a foolish sinful thought or desire any more.

Now, in the multitude of those thoughts which they have about their good friends deceased, this presents itself readily to them. They have now ceased from sin; while they were with us, they had their complaints as well as we, they often bewailed the deceitfulness of their own hearts, their unbelief, formality, deadness, and distractions

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distractions in holy duties; but now all is well with them, all their complaints over, sin is abolished, it has no place, no being with them; and if we might have had leave to have gone along with them, our complaints of this kind had been over too, and all had been right and well in our souls; but, alas! we are left behind in a sinful world, and, which is worse, are ourselves daily sinning in it.

(2.) Affliction; this is another kind of evil with which the world abounds; sin has filled it full of sorrow; men are every where *walking contrary to God*, and God is justly *walking contrary to them. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, especially where men hold the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. 1. 18. Not only revealed by his word, but by his providence.

The best of christians not being here free from sin, cannot expect to be free from affliction; they suffer from the hands of men, because they are better than others, and often suffer from the hands of God, because they are not so good as they should be; they are God's children, they are of his family, and he will correct them; judgment usually begins at the house of God, and their spirits being tender, and broken, and impressed with an awe of God, afflictions go nearer their hearts, and make a deeper wound in them than in other men.

Now, as for these our godly friends who are departed, all these calamities are overpast, they are entered into peace, the wrath of their enemies cannot reach them now, and their heavenly Father will never frown upon them any more; he receives their departing souls with this most sweet and gracious welcome, *In a little wrath I hid myself from thee for a moment, but with everlasting loving kindness will I now have mercy on thee*, Isa. 54. 8.

And if we could have gone along with them to heaven, our troubles would have been over too, and all tears wiped away from our eyes by the tender hand of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we still remain in an evil world, and seemed to be reserved for yet greater trials, since so many that stood in the gap are removed, we can conclude no other, but that they are taken away from the evil to come; that they are safely housed before the storm comes; they are gone to a good home, and gone home in a good time; *henceforth, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;* and it had been happy for us, if it had been the will of God, that we had died with them; especially considering,

(3.) The danger that we are yet in of miscarrying for ever; and this is not the least of the evils we groan under in this world, *fightings without, and fears within;* dangerous temptations are daily assaulting our souls, and these occasion sad misgivings of heart, lest we should one day fall by our spiritual enemies.

The serious Christian has his hopes, and though they are often but weak and wavering, he would not be without them for a thousand worlds; but he has his fears too, and not without cause; the concern is vastly great, the battle is not yet over, he has not yet reached the mark, nor won the prize, a disappointment would be fatal and irrecoverable. The heart is deceitful, many have flattered themselves to their own ruin; and the humble Christian thinks with himself, what if I should do so too! The very possibility of being deceived in a matter of endless consequence, is enough to shake the firmest mind, and to make it tremble.

The case of a Christian in his journey to eternity, is like that of a man that is to go over a narrow and long bridge, that lies upon high and rugged rocks, from whence there is a mighty precipice to the deep waters; though the bridge be strong and his hold sure, yet he cannot forbear looking down to the rocks and river so far below him, and he is ready to shiver and tremble when he thinks, if I should fall, what a dreadful fall would this be! Though the Christian has the strong bridge of the covenant to go over, yet he cannot avoid meditating terror, when he thinks what it is to fall into the bottomless pit and lake that burns with fire and brimstone; he is upon a sure foundation, he has sure hold of Christ, or rather Christ has sure hold of his soul, and yet he trembles when he looks down and thinks, if I should fall, what a desperate fall would that be!

Now, those holy ones who are got safe over the narrow bridge of death, have nothing more to fear; they are safe landed, the risk is run and over; the matter is fixed, they are in heaven already; they are where they would be, and where sometimes they were afraid they should never have come; but those fears have now no room in their souls; the battle is won, the victory gained, the day is their own, and they are safe for ever.

And if we had gone along with them, our dangers and fears had been over too, but we have not attained, we are not already perfect; we know not what deep, what dark and dangerous steps we have yet to take, how often our feet may slide; we know our Blessed Saviour is able to keep us from falling, and we hope he will do so, but *hope deferred maketh the heart sick*; and when such a one as Paul was at so much pains to keep under *his body, and bring it to subjection, lest while he preached to others, he himself should be a cast away*, (1 Cor. 9. 27.) we cannot think ourselves above all fear: we are admonished to fear, *lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it*, Heb. 4. 1. It was from this text that your deceased minister preached the Lord's Day before he died; and I doubt not but it was with a serious concern upon his own soul, that he might not come short of the promised rest; but now all the care is over, he enjoys that everlasting rest that he so unweariedly pursued and pressed after; but we are left to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*. This is one consideration that renders it desirable to have gone to heaven with our godly acquaintances, that we might with them have been fully delivered from all the evils of this present world.

2. We should have now possessed with them the blessedness of that world which they are gone to. How great that blessedness is, none among the living can tell; we understand but as children, and speak but as children, when we think and speak of the glories of heaven. Though we have now the evidence of our adoption, and know that we are the children of God, yet we know not what we shall be; but this we are sure, to be dissolved and to be with Christ, is far better than to be in the most prosperous condition

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condition in this world. Permit me here to give a few short hints.

(1.) In heaven the principles and habits of grace in the soul are all perfected; those who are arrived safely there, know as they are known; their apprehensions are clear, distinct, and as adequate to their objects, as a created mind can admit of, in its highest improvement and most enlarged capacity; their love to God is now without any coldness or inconstancy, it is most pure and perfectly refined from all sinister and selfish ends and interests. Their delight in God is now full, the top-stone is now brought forth to crown the building, and grace is ripened into glory.

(2.) The operations of these perfected graces are perfect too; their knowledge, love and delight in God, are in continual exercise without any interruption; they are in more easy and pleasant exercise, without any opposition; they are in the most lively and vigorous exercise, without any weakness or weariness; they worship God day and night, and their work is their felicity, their rest and reward.

(3.) The blessed objects of their graces are now near to them, viewed by them, and fully enjoyed; they are made like to the angels of God, and with them by a spiritual sight they see God face to face; they behold him in his glory, that which Moses desired, but was not then able to bear, they enjoy with infinite pleasure; *God shews them his glory*, Ex. 33. 18. They look with stedfast pleasure and wonder upon the Lord Jesus Christ; they walk with him in white in the heavenly paradise; and what soul can imagine the delightful conversation they have with him in those most pleasant walks; with what mutual joy and satisfaction their Redeemer and they record the wonderful steps of that rich grace, that found them in such depths of misery, and raised them to such a height of glory? They have the fullest, sweetest, and most satisfying sense, relish and assurance of the free, unchangeable, peculiar, distinguishing love of God to them; God rejoiceth over them, and rests in his love towards them, and they rejoice and rest in him and his favour for ever.

I am persuaded none will blame me, if I here insert some passages, which your deceased minister has gathered up out of a sermon preached by his excellent father, on the death of Mr. William Laurence: addressing himself to the widow and fatherless children, he uses the words of Christ in Luke 23. 28. *Weep not for me*, &c. and thus enlarges upon them: "It is said of Abel, that being dead, he yet speaketh; if our deceased friend and brother who is dead, could be heard speaking, this is what he would say, "My dear wife and children, my dear brothers and sisters, my dear neighbours and friends, weep not for me, for you have something else to do with your tears." And having described the evils he was freed from, he proceeds thus.

"Consider the happiness I am entered into. Would you know where I am? I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansion prepared for me there: I am where I would be, where I have long and often desired to be; no longer on the stormy sea, but in a safe and quiet harbour; my working time is done, and I am resting; my sowing time is done, and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of the harvest."

"Would you know how it is with me? I am made perfect in holiness, grace is swallowed up in glory, the top-stone of the building is brought forth. Would you know what I am doing? I see God, I see him as he is, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face, and the sight is transforming, it makes me like him: I am in the sweet enjoyment of my Blessed Redeemer, my Head and Husband whom my soul loved, and for whose sake I am willing to part with all: I am here bathing myself at the spring-head of heavenly pleasures and joys unutterable: I am here keeping a perpetual sabbath; what that is, judge by your short sabbaths: I am here singing hallelujahs incessantly to him that sits upon the throne, and rest not day and night from praising him."

"Would you know what company I have? Blessed company, better than the best on earth; here are holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: I am set down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, with blessed Paul and Peter, and James and John, and all the saints; and here I meet with many of my old acquaintances that I have fasted and prayed with, who have got before me hither."

"And, lastly, Will you consider how long this is to continue? It is a garland that never withers, a crown of glory that fades not away; after millions of millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now; and therefore weep not for me."

I have taken only so much as relates to the blessedness of heaven, and it is described in such sweet, lively, and unaffected strains, so suitable to the excellent heavenly spirit of him that spoke it; I am sure it deserves to be often read over, and seriously considered by us all.

3. If we had gone with our godly friends to heaven, the sorrow of parting had been prevented: and I need not tell some of you, that is no little sorrow; the experience of those who have lost such relations and friends will speak for me, and speak much more emphatically than I can. It is hard parting with a faithful minister, who *naturally cares* for the spiritual state of his people. It is hard parting with a tender, faithful, affectionate yoke-fellow, who has been for many years helping you forward in the way to heaven; with an affectionate parent, who was as compassionate to the souls of his children, as careful of their bodies and outward welfare. To part with such, is like cutting off a right hand: when such a one leaves us, he takes part of our very life and soul along with him, and we feel ourselves only in part to survive. Such a parting, such a loss, imbitters every thing in the world to the sorrowful survivors. Nothing is now to them what it was before; life itself is less valuable; house, family, food, raiment, rest, conversation, none of these things are what they used to be. There is a kind of blast and death upon every thing, an emptiness in every thing, when we can no longer enjoy the endeared friend who made every thing else pleasant to us. To souls united, not only in the bonds of nature, but of grace too; a separation, though it be but for a time, is hard to be born. Now all this trouble and sorrow had been prevented, if we could have gone to heaven with them.

Such

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Such considerations as these represent it to us as a desirable thing, if it had been the will of God, that we had died with our excellent departed friends, and gone to heaven in company with them.

I now proceed,

II. To consider what reason we have to be quiet and patient in continuing here a while longer, even when our best friends are gone before us.

To men of carnal minds, who have their portion in this world, this will appear very needless: they are willing enough to stay here, whoever goes before, and would rather be left alone upon the earth, than leave a world they love so well, to enter upon a state their hearts are wholly strangers to. When they hear that death is to the righteous a deliverance, and that Christ gave himself to procure for his people such a deliverance, the secret language of their souls is, "God deliver me from such a deliverance."

But as for those who have laid up their treasure in heaven, and whose hearts are there, they find it more difficult to be content to live, than willing to die, and especially when they see one intimate faithful Christian friend after another, go before them.

But yet, even these, if they would recollect themselves, and consider every thing with a calm, composed, and dispassionate mind, may see sufficient reason to acquiesce in the will of God, who has ordered it so, that when others are taken they should still be left in a sinful calamitous world: and that they may be enabled in holy patience to possess their own souls, I would suggest a few things to them.

1. Consider, that in dying-work, every one must expect to be alone; though you should die in the same place, and at the same time with your best friends, yet both they and you must be alone in dying. It is a work by itself, and every one must die for himself, and enter into eternity as much alone, as if none else had died besides him. Departing souls cannot help, cannot comfort or counsel one another in the article of death; it does not appear that they can have any communion with each other in dying. While they lived, they could converse together about death and eternity, and comfort and encourage each other about those awful concerns; but though they should enter together into the valley of the shadow of death, they must expect to part there, and lose the sight and society of each other there, and each of them must have to do alone with God, the Father of their spirits, in that important moment of dying. And why then should any be impatient, because they are left behind their godly friends, since there must have been a parting in death, though they should have died in the same moment? But,

2. You would do well to inquire, whether you are yet so thoroughly prepared for death and heaven as those who are gone before you. If you are not, you have not only reason to be patient, but to be thankful to God that he has given you a little more time. Dying-work is hard work; it requires not only an habitual but an actual preparation; and there needs a great deal to actual meetness for death and heaven: it is not a passionate wish for death, or weariness of life, that makes the soul ready for another world. You sometimes think you would be glad to be gone, but are you as ready as you are willing?

Are you sure there is not yet something wanting in you, which you cannot so well die without? Is there no breach between God and your souls, that you have not so seriously considered, and endeavoured that it might be made up by a particular application to the blood of Christ? If there be, you cannot imagine how difficult that very thing might have rendered your dying-work to you.

You seem to be very much weaned from the world since your best friends are gone out of it; but is this weanedness as great in reality as it is in your present opinion? For all your haste to be gone, if the world and you were just now to part, it may be you would find your hearts cleave faster to it, and come with more difficulty from it, than you imagine.

It may be your house is not yet set in order; something is omitted, that both in prudence and in conscience ought to be done; and if that defect be not supplied, it may prove a great distraction to your dying thoughts.

Perhaps there is some latent corruption in you not yet sufficiently lamented and subdued. This was the very case of Peter; his self-confidence must be discovered to him, and repented of, and mortified, before he was fit to die; perhaps it may be so with some others, who in a warm and affectionate frame may seem to themselves very willing to be gone.

Now if any of these things be your case, you have cause to bless God, that he has been so tender of you and indulgent to you; he has given you more time, that you may be better prepared to encounter your last and great enemy, and to make the state and concerns of your souls more sure and clear, before you go to that place where there is no farther work to be done for eternity.

You are ready to think God has been more kind to your deceased friends than he has been to you; but if you better consider the matter, you may see cause to be very thankful to him, that he had more regard to the real wants of your souls, than to their hasty wishes. Jonah was impatient to live when his gourd was withered, he *wished for death, and said it is better for me to die than to live;* (ch. 4. 8, 9.) but he was not so ready to die; that was no good frame to be found in at death, he must be more calm and cool, and better reconciled to the will of God; and therefore God condescends to reason the case with him in a most kind and compassionate manner, to bring him to himself; God would not let him die in that peevish humour; and doubtless Jonah was made sensible before he died, that his God had dealt tenderly with him, in giving of him time to recover a better frame of soul than that which he was in, when he so passionately wished for death.

3. But though you are ever so well prepared for death and heaven, yet if God has any more work for you to do in the world, it becomes you to stay with patience till you have done it.

You are Christians, and you have been often told, that Christians *do not live to themselves nor die to themselves, but whether they live they live to the Lord, or whether they die*

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die they die to the Lord; and this you have been very seriously and very seasonably put in mind of, but a few days ago, on this very occasion.* It is not for you peremptorily to choose either life or death, but to refer it to him who is the Lord of life, to appoint that for you which may be most for his own glory. You are serving your heavenly Father and your blessed Redeemer, to whom you owe all you are, and have, and can do, and you are serving your generation according to the will of God, and you should be well pleased with it, both for the work's sake, and for his sake who has called you to it.

If others have done their work before you, it was fit they should go to heaven before you; it will be time enough for you to rest, when your work is done; would you leave any part of it undone? This very case is well stated and determined by the Apostle Paul, in Phil. 1. 21, &c. *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I should choose I know not, for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

It becomes you as the servants of the Lord, redeemed by him, to be willing that your rest and happiness should be deferred for a while, if in the mean time you may bring more glory to God and your Saviour, and do more service to his interest in the world; and if you are doing his will on earth, while others are beholding his face in heaven, you must think yourselves well employed, for his glory should be dearer to you than any interests of your own.

You are servants to your Creator and Redeemer, and you must stay till you have leave to die. He who called you to your work, expects you should abide by it with obedient patience till he also call you from it, and in due time he will call, and then you may give a cheerful answer, knowing that he will have a desire to the work of his own hands, Job 14. 15.

It is not for want of love to his disciples, that Christ keeps them in this world sometimes longer than they could wish; he has a desire to them, and to the work of his hands in them, but yet he will not have them (like your season-birds) all to take wing and fly away together, for what then would become of his cause and interest in the world? In the same prayer where he declares it to be his will that all those the Father had given him, should be with him wherever he is, to behold his glory, yet he also declares it is not his desire they should all leave the world now, or all at one time; *I pray not that thou wouldest take them out of the world, but that thou wouldest keep them from the evil,* John 17. 15.

4. You complain that some of your best friends have got the start of you, and reached heaven before you; but pray consider, is it not well for you, if they left you in the way to heaven, following after as you are able? All travellers are not of the same speed, some have more strength, more activity, and are better furnished for their journey, and meet with fewer hindrances, and so move faster, and get sooner to their journey's end; but it is some comfort to those who cannot keep pace with them, that those who are gone before can tell their friends at home, that they have left them upon the road, in the right way, and making what haste they could after.

You find it is some exercise of your patience, to see that those who did not set out for heaven before you, but some of them perhaps after you, have quite outgone you, and have got home before you, but if they can carry this good report of you to heaven, that you are in the ready road thither, that you are not loitering, that you are not gone the wrong way, but that they left you in the King of heaven's high-road, making the best speed you can, walking in the same spirit, in the same path of the just; this will cause joy in heaven, and may afford you comfort in the land of your pilgrimage. Are you moving God-ward and Heaven-ward? It is well, thank God, and take courage; remember how great a support this was to the blessed Paul, even while he was bemoaning himself that he had not yet attained to sinless perfection; *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus; Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,* Phil. 3. 12, 13.

5. Though you are left behind for a little while, yet if you keep close to God, and maintain communion with him through Christ, you may have even a heaven here upon earth: communion with God will make life comfortable, at the same time that it makes heaven so desirable. You think it long till you be joined to the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, and till you begin your everlasting sabbath. Come, sirs, thank God through Jesus Christ, that you have a nail in his house here, and a place in the assemblies of his saints, and such comfortable sabbaths and sacrament-days; that God thus vouchsafes to come down to you, before he thinks fit to take you up to himself.

The presence of God is the highest happiness of heaven itself; *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Ps. 73. 25. If you have the presence of God with you on earth, though it be not in so immediate a manner, and in so high a degree, yet it ought to be greatly valued by you, and should not only keep you quiet, but cause you to rejoice: you cannot have the presence of deceased friends any longer with you, and that makes you weary of the world, but you may have the presence of God even here, and is not that infinitely more? Good old Jacob left this with his children as a sufficient support to them, *Behold I die, but God shall be with you,* Gen. 48. 21. Is the gracious presence of God nothing to you? Is it not a great thing that the tabernacle of the Lord should be with men, and that he should dwell with you here on earth?

You say this is something, but it is not heaven: it is true, but it is the next door to heaven. Wherever we meet with God, we may say of that place, *This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven,* Gen. 28. 17. Have you communion with God in secret and solemn acts of worship? Why then you are got within the

* By the Rev. Dr. Williams, on Rom. 14. 7, 8.

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the borders, and even in the suburbs of heaven. You are in the very gates of the city, and their God is preparing your souls, and making them ready for his more immediate glorious presence. Here is no room for discontent, but abundant cause for holy love and thankfulness.

6. You lament it that you are not yet in heaven: but know this for your comfort, that if you be in Christ Jesus, you shall as sure be there in a little time as if you were there already. I speak here of the objective certainty, the certainty of the event; not of the subjective certainty, the assured persuasion of your souls concerning it. In this respect, you may be in doubt, and apprehensive of the danger of missing your way, and being lost for ever, as I have already observed; but if you be in Christ, there is no condemnation to you, Rom. 8. 1. Your state is safe, and your end shall be peace. You are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. Your spiritual life is hid with Christ in God; it shall not be lost. Your salvation is nearer than when you first believed, Rom. 13. 11. It will not be long but you will overtake your friends who are gone before; you will come up to them at your father's house; though death has separated you for a while, yet that same death shall bring you together again; when they died, then you parted for a while, and when you die you shall meet them again. The great boat that carried them over Jordan, to the land of promise, will, in a little time, come back again and fetch you, and bring you together. This Christ assured Peter of, *Thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

The same grace that has brought them to glory is ready for you, and sufficient for you. If your hearts be right with God, you and they are built on the same foundation: you have embarked in the same vessel; you have the same skilful pilot to steer you; and after you have been tossed to and fro on a tempestuous world a while longer, you also shall come safe to the desired haven. They once had their fears as you now have; *but the foundation of the Lord stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows who are his,* 2 Tim. 2. 19. The same evidence you have of the sincerity of your faith and holiness, the same you have of your eternal happiness; for it is unalterably settled between the Father and the Son, that of all that are given to Christ, none should be lost, but all forth-coming at the last day; that every one that believeth in Christ should have everlasting life, John 6. 39, 40. You are in the hands of Christ; all his saints are in his hand, and none shall be able to pluck you out of that safe and powerful hand.

7. And lastly, When you are once got safe to heaven, you will have as long a term in your happiness as those who are gone thither before you. Yours is everlasting, and theirs can be no longer. If the blessedness of the saints in heaven were only for a limited season, though ever so long, you would have some excuse for envying those who are gone before; for they would enjoy more of heaven than you; their lease would be longer than yours, because it commenced before yours. But in eternity there is not properly a longer or shorter term; *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day:* When you have been a thousand years in heaven, your happiness is as much beginning, and as far from ending, as it was at the first moment of your entrance there.

The Apostle observes, (1 Thes. 4. 17.) that the different circumstances of dying before Christ's second coming, or remaining alive at that day, would make no material difference in their happiness, because they *shall all be for ever with the Lord.* This being for ever with the Lord, makes up all; it swallows up all lesser distinctions of the time and manner of going to heaven; this will effectually silence all emulous complaints, and perfectly unite the sons of God in holy love and joy; *they shall all be for ever with the Lord.*

I have now considered both what it is that prompts us to wish we had died with our holy acquaintance who are gone before us; and what reason we have patiently to wait here, till our great Lord shall give us a kind dismission.

It remains that we should bring these things home to ourselves by a close and serious application. I can but give you a few hints, and must leave you to enlarge upon them yourselves, depending upon the help of God's Holy Spirit to make all effectual.

1. Instead of repining that our best and most beloved friends are gone before us, let us set ourselves to improve their life and death for the establishment of our souls in the belief of an unseen eternal world, and of the blessedness of the saints in that world. If you say, Who does not believe this? I am sure I may say, Who is there that does not need to pray, *Lord, help my unbelief?* We are dull of understanding, and slow to believe the invisible realities of the other world. A strict observation of wise and good men is a great establishment to our faith. Let us remember their holy conversation, their zeal, their diligence, their self-denial, their fervent desires after God and Christ, and the delightful hopes they had of the glory to be revealed; how they fetched their comforts from heaven by faith and hope, when this world frowned most upon them. What shall we think? were they deceived? Is all this come to nothing? Was their faith a mere fancy, and their lively hope only a pleasant dream? It can never be: there is a life beyond this, they knew it to be so; they had tasted of the powers of the world to come, not in a superficial manner, but by deep and satisfying experience; they had heavenly affections, excellent designs, and delightful expectations, all which centred in a world of everlasting rest with God. Are all these perished with their dead bodies? No, surely: who that believes a God, can think he would suffer the wisest, the most holy, and every way the best men in the world, thus to flatter themselves: and that only the foolish, vicious, unthinking part of mankind should happen to be in the right? It can never be. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous, and his expectation shall not be cut off.

2. Let the death of our godly friends teach us to think of heaven more frequently, and with greater affection and delight. Indeed when we consider heaven as the glorious throne of God, and the seat of the blessed angels, we should for that reason raise our thoughts

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thoughts and our hearts thither: but no man hath seen God at any time; we have little acquaintance with the holy angels; but we have seen and known many of the blessed saints who are now in heaven; we had familiar acquaintance with some of them, our souls were knit to them. Now though we should chiefly value heaven for the sake of the Divine Presence that shines most gloriously there, yet we may ascend in our thoughts to God by the scale of the creatures; and what we saw in good men of God, of Christ, and heaven, while they lived with us here, should make us to love God, and Christ, and heaven more, and meditate more upon them, since so many who bore the image of the heavenly are now gone thither.

It has been often observed, that when Esther was taken into the court of Ahashuerus, *Mordecai took a walk every day before that gate*, ch. 2. 11. We should follow our friends in our thoughts and desires, to that blessed state into which they are entered.

Nature teaches us to love the place of our father's sepulchres; we look with affection upon the very graves of our friends, and take pleasure even in their dust. Should we not then much more frequently and affectionately meditate upon the glorious world to which their precious souls are gone? By this means, we not only shew our affection to them, but we maintain some kind of communion still with them.

3. Instead of passionately wishing that we had died with our friends who are gone to heaven, let us be followers of them, as they were of Christ; if we ever expect to come to them in heaven, we must be such as they were upon earth. Natural conscience and natural affection may put us upon wishing we had gone with our pious acquaintance into the other world, because we believe they are happy. This amounts to no more than Balaam's wish; but we must be found walking in the path of the just, if ever we arrive at their happiness; and whenever we think of them with affections of love and sorrow, we should presently charge ourselves not to be slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. 6. 12.

Let us consider with ourselves, we have heartily wished that we had died with those excellent ones; but if God had taken us at our word, and death had found us out of Christ, out of the covenant, out of the way of good men, it would have separated us from them; though we had died with them, our souls and theirs would have taken a quite contrary way; we should have lost their company not only in dying, but after death, and never have met them again, till we had met at the judgment seat of Christ, they on the right hand, and we on the left; and if indeed we loved them so well, let us think with ourselves what a woeful meeting that would be to us! The very sight of them would add to our confusion and misery.

4. Since we must not yet enjoy their company in heaven, let us converse more with their surviving labours here on earth; these are like the mantle that Elijah dropt when he left this world, and Elisha so carefully preserved and used. Some of the servants of Christ who are gone, live still in their excellent works; and by these being dead, they continue to speak to us. This is the case now before us: your laborious faithful pastor has left behind him most excellent remains, such as shall never die. I am persuaded, as long as the Bible continues in England, those admirable expositions of his upon it will be prized by all serious christians. In them you have his clear head, his warm heart; his life, his soul appears to be in them; prize them more, read them more than ever you have done; and while you are seriously perusing those excellent books, besides many others published by him, you will seem to yourselves to have Mr. Henry still with you. It is in vain for us to pretend that we had a great value for the lives of such as he, if we neglect their labours in which so much of their life was spent.

5. Since it is the will of God that we should be still alive when our best friends are gone, let us endeavour to fill up their places as well as we can here on earth; their death is a public loss, and leaves a wide breach in our fence: let us all, according to the duty of our several places, stand in the gap, and endeavour to turn away the anger of God from the land. Are so many of our humble, praying, wrestling Israels gone? Let those who remain pray more, and pray better. Are so many diligent ministers gone? Let those who remain be more than ever *instant in season, out of season*, and look up to him who has the residue of the Spirit to pour it forth afresh, that the church and nation may be as little losers as possible. If we do not so, the churches of Christ will have *sorrow upon sorrow*; sorrow for the loss of those who are gone, and sorrow for the sloth of those who are left behind.

6. And lastly, Let us live in the well-grounded hope of following our godly friends to heaven, and meeting them there, and being together for ever with the Lord; lay the ground-work of such hope sure and strong, for the superstructure is to reach as high as heaven; and when you have done this, then rejoice in hope. I know nothing that can better support your spirits under the loss of such excellent ones, than a lively hope of a speedy meeting again in a better world; the time of separation is but short, yet a little while and you shall see them again; you parted in sorrow, you shall meet in joy. Perhaps you had not the opportunity of seeing some of them die, of closing their eyes, and bidding them farewell: but that shall not hinder your joyful meeting; and how will you then welcome each other into a world of bliss, and wonder to see how much you are all changed for the better, since your last parting? How will you congratulate each other in the favour of your blessed Lord, who has washed your souls so clean, and made them so glad? But I must stop my thoughts here, that are ready to run out beyond bounds. Comfort yourselves and one another with these things.

I know I speak to many this day who need such comforts. Here is a great congregation, bereaved of a most faithful, wise, laborious minister; here is a disconsolate family, bereaved of one of the most exemplary and useful relations that I ever knew any family blessed with: How is a great blow given to us all? The death of Mr. Henry is an universal loss! It is and will be universally lamented.

Expect

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Expect not, Sirs, that I should enter upon the particulars of his excellent character; very much has been said of him already in a little compass, by that worthy aged minister who first preached to you on this mournful occasion.

I hope this will be more fully done in an account of his exemplary life; that constant diary he kept, will furnish out proper and excellent materials, besides what may be added from the observation of others.

But that which chiefly restrains me now is, that it is needless to do it in this place; for though you have not enjoyed him much above two years, yet in that time you *have known his doctrine, his manner of life, his purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity and patience,* 2 Tim. 3. 10.

And who has not known him? His works praise him in the gates, and will do so; his great and good works from the pulpit, from the press, his immense labours, his incredible diligence in preaching, in expounding, in writing, his care of all the churches; he, like *Demetrius, had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself; and we also bear witness, and ye know that our witness is true,* John 3. 12.

He had in him that happy mixture of exellent gifts and graces that seldom meet in the same person, and they made him very amiable to all who knew him.

In him you had the happy mixture of great strength of judgment and fervor of spirit; some are very zealous, but not so judicious; others judicious but not so zealous; he was both a burning and a shining light.

In him you had a true greatness of soul, mixed with exemplary modesty and humility; nothing in him appeared sordid and abject, nothing vain and supercilious.

In him you had a most agreeable cheerfulness, with a due temperament of solidity and seriousness.

In him you might observe a strict regard to the dictates of his own conscience, joined with a most candid tenderness to those who differed from him.

In his preaching you had a very just and close way of thinking, with the most plain, proper, natural and easy expression, and a great regard to the honour of Christ and free grace, joined with a constant endeavour to beat down sin, and revive the power and practice of godliness.

It was this happy conjunction of excellent gifts and graces, that made him live so much desired, and die so much lamented.

I am a witness of that tender and conscientious concern with which he left his old and dear friends at Chester, and of that comfort and satisfaction he had in his acceptance and usefulness in this part of the vineyard: I am persuaded, these last two years of his life and labours have been a great blessing to many souls in and about the city of London.

Mine own interest in his acquaintance and friendship for the space of above 28 years, is a thing of too private a nature to mention upon so solemn an occasion; but it must never be forgotten by me. I own it as a precious talent put into my hand, and to be accounted for. He was a most cordial, prudent, faithful, unalterable friend: and if a passionate affection does not deceive me, I think verily I shall less value this life and world, since he is gone from it.

The death of this faithful servant of Christ at this time is a very dark and threatening providence: God calls us to more than common sorrow by it; he expects we should lay it to heart; and all the circumstances of it considered, both those of a private and public nature, we should lay it nearer to our hearts than ordinary. We should not suffer it to pass over us lightly; we should feel our loss, and fear the displeasure of our God, and tremble because of the ark of God.

But yet we must not abandon ourselves to inconsolable grief, nor quarrel with God, nor despair of his mercy to us.

As for the broken family, I am persuaded there are great mercies in store for them: the fatherless children are left with God, and he will keep them alive; and let the widow trust in him. Though God in this sad providence seems to have spoken against them, I believe he will earnestly and affectionately remember them still.

I know no family in which the entail of the covenant from one generation to another has more evidently appeared. I know no family more enriched with a large stock of treasure of prayers by religious predecessors on both sides. And a family that is thus rich in prayer, is rich in the promises too, while the present branches of it adhere to the covenant, and live up to their education; and we rejoice to see that it is thus with them, and daily pray for their growth and establishment in wisdom and grace.

And for this afflicted broken congregation, though they ought to be sensible what they have lost, a skilful guide, and a faithful helper of their souls; one who, they hoped, would have been the happy instrument of great good, not only to themselves, but to their families; one that was wonderfully fitted to feed the lambs of the flock, and took great delight in that part of his work.

Yet let them not distrust the care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, This place and people have been signally owned and favoured of God, from one time to another. In the mount it has been seen that God has provided; and we hope he will have the same care and concern for you still. And the great respect you always had for your faithful ministers while they were with you, and the true Christian generosity with which you have treated their families when they have been gone, gives us good encouragement that the presence of God shall be the glory in the midst of you; and that you shall yet have a pastor according to his own heart, who shall carry on the same work, feed you with the same sincere milk of the word, and be a great blessing to you, and the rising generation among you.

And though the Church of God in general feels this loss, and laments it greatly, that this your minister was taken away before he had finished the great undertaking, his noble delightful task, the exposition of the Bible; yet we have all cause to bless God who spared him so long, and helped him to carry it on so far.

It is the observation of a worthy minister, on the death of a person of great note in all the churches, who had an heart enlarged for God, and bent upon doing more eminent

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eminent service, that "no one ever finished all the great designs he had for the glory of God in this world, excepting the Lord Jesus Christ. He indeed could say, *It is finished.*" As for others, their good desires and purposes go beyond the limits of their time and life; but they have finished all that God designed to do by them: and he is able to carry on his own work by other hands, and thereby to make it evident that he is to his people *All in All.*

And I hope those who have attended long upon the ministry of good Mr. Henry, and taken down his expositions upon that part of the Bible that yet remains, whether in the public assembly or in his family, will carefully gather up those precious fragments, that none may be lost; and will communicate them to the world in the best way they can, that this great work may be finished, and be as much as possible his own performance.

To conclude: We must flee to this as our last resort; though ministers, the best of ministers die, the gospel does not die with them? 1 Pet. 1. 24, 25. *All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

THE END.

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